



Gregory P. Kurtz

Mayor

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To: Council Members & City Directors
From: Mayor Kurtz
Subject: Administrative Update for August 14, 2020

Securing the City's Financial Future

Once we emerge from this coronavirus pandemic, we will be living in a different world. How and where we work, attend school, church and other activities, and interact with people will have changed significantly since March 2020. Despite these difficult times, I am optimistic about the future of the City of Independence. We have aggressively adapted to the evolving health emergency and are carrying out enhanced due diligence to plan for our future.

As I said in my report to City Council this week, as Mayor, it is my responsibility to prevent this health emergency from turning into a catastrophe for our City, residents, and businesses.

City Council passed two ordinances on Tuesday that will provide the City the financial flexibility to take advantage of exceptionally low, long-term interest rates and get the most value out of every tax dollar. One measure clears the way for the City to renew existing notes for up to 12 months and the other allows the City to convert \$15.5M in short-term notes into long-term bonds.

The pandemic has put pressure on many cities that are hemorrhaging money, dealing with depressed tax revenues, and facing potential cuts to education, infrastructure and other investments.

Under the stewardship of Finance Director Vern Blaze, the action City Council has taken along with our conservative budgeting practices and careful expense management will ensure the City's long-term stability. Borrowing money for less than 2% is the smart, common sense option.

I remain committed to downtown development and was pleased that City Council approved hiring Dimit Architects, LLC for professional architectural and planning design services.

After the health crisis, remote work is expected to continue and that will bring more activity to neighborhoods, restaurants and local entertainment venues. There may be fewer major retail stores and more and different, local shopping experiences.

Having Dimit Architects' expertise and vision in planning the downtown development during this time of transition will be invaluable.

Upper Hillside Road Sidewalk & Drainage Improvements Project

On Friday, August 14 a drill rig was used to perform required soil testing and analysis on Upper Hillside Road between Hawthorn Trace and South Great Oaks Parkway. The work was part of the Upper Hillside Road Sidewalk & Drainage Improvement Project.

The City has contracted with Euthenics, Inc. to finalize the engineering and develop a set of detailed plans and bid documents for the project.

Any questions about the project should be directed to the Engineering Department at 216-524-1374 (or via e-mail at engineering@independenceohio.org).

Economic Development



The City mailed postcards to Independence businesses this week to introduce them to our new Economic Development Director Jessica Hyser. Since coming on board in July, Hyser has been calling local companies, delivering JobsOhio Business PPE Kits as well as “Open for Business” signs that are part of the Independence Open for Business Toolkit.

The signs are available for [download on our website](#).

You can sign up for the [Economic Development E-Newsletter here](#).



Welcome to Independence!



After more than 50 years in Beachwood, the global commercial real estate brokerage firm NAI Pleasant Valley has relocated its Cleveland office to 6155 Rockside Road in Independence, Ohio. The local firm acquired NAI Daus of Beachwood and NAI Cummins of Akron in January 2019 and is part of a cohesive global organization that provides clients with solutions to their construction and commercial real estate needs, locally and globally.

Alec Pacella, president of NAI Pleasant Valley said Independence's central location, "will better support the broadening regional footprint of our brokerage and property management business as well as better align the Cleveland office with the Akron office and the Medina headquarters."

Improving Workflow & Communication

A core team at City Hall continues to research and evaluate different business enterprise solution software to bring the City more fully into the digital age. We need to improve how departments collaborate, expedite workflow, and efficiently serve our residents to enhance productivity and maximize assets.

Many of the technological tools that are available today can be customized to meet the specific needs of our community and operating structure. The core team will be inviting software providers to demonstrate their programs to Department Directors in the coming weeks. We want to invest in software that will increase productivity, manage costs, eliminate duplicate tasks, digitize record-keeping, and is designed to adapt and expand in the future.

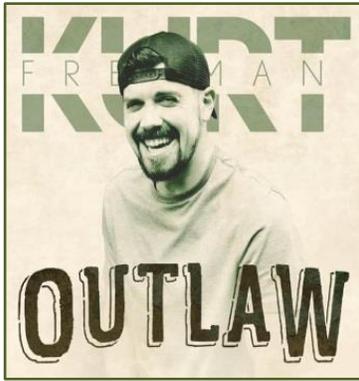
Can you hear me now?

Every week more and more people are visiting Public Square to enjoy the Summer Community Concerts. The Indy Drive-In night outside the Fieldhouse a few weeks ago was also a huge hit. These family events have brought to our attention the need for the City to update its communication system.

The social distancing required by the pandemic is unlikely to end soon. The existing audio system on the east and west sides of Public Square and the large portable speakers cannot provide the fun, entertaining experience residents deserve.

I have asked the Technical Services staff to explore how we can bring concert-quality sound to City venues.

Summer Community Concerts



Independence-native Kurt Freeman will perform at the Summer Community Concert on **Thursday, August 20 from 7 – 8:30 PM on Public Square.** The Original Steaks & Hoagies Food Truck will be there too!

Freeman is a true local success story. He went from singing and playing guitar in high school and with his church group to writing and recording his own music. The country singer is known for his distinctive bluesy, soulful voice. His newest EP, “Outlaw” was released today, August 14.

Masks are mandatory at all concerts. We do ask everyone to bring a chair or blanket and social distance.

Celebrating 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment

FOOD TRUCK FRIDAY - AUGUST 14, 2020



The Independence Historical Society invites everyone to a special Food Truck Friday event outside **Historic Hall on August 14 from 4 - 7 PM.**

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote, they have created a unique poster. They also discovered an Independence voter registration book from 1917 that shows women were allowed to vote on local issues.

Women of all ages are encouraged to wear white, make a suffrage sash, and bring a sign supporting "Votes for Women" to Friday's event.

Barrio's Food Truck

Mark Your Calendar

The August Board of Zoning Appeals Virtual Meeting is next Thursday, August 20 from 5:30 – 6:30 PM. Please [register here.](#)

If someone forwarded this email and you would prefer to receive it directly from Mayor Kurtz, please send your email address to CityHall@IndependenceOhio.org.