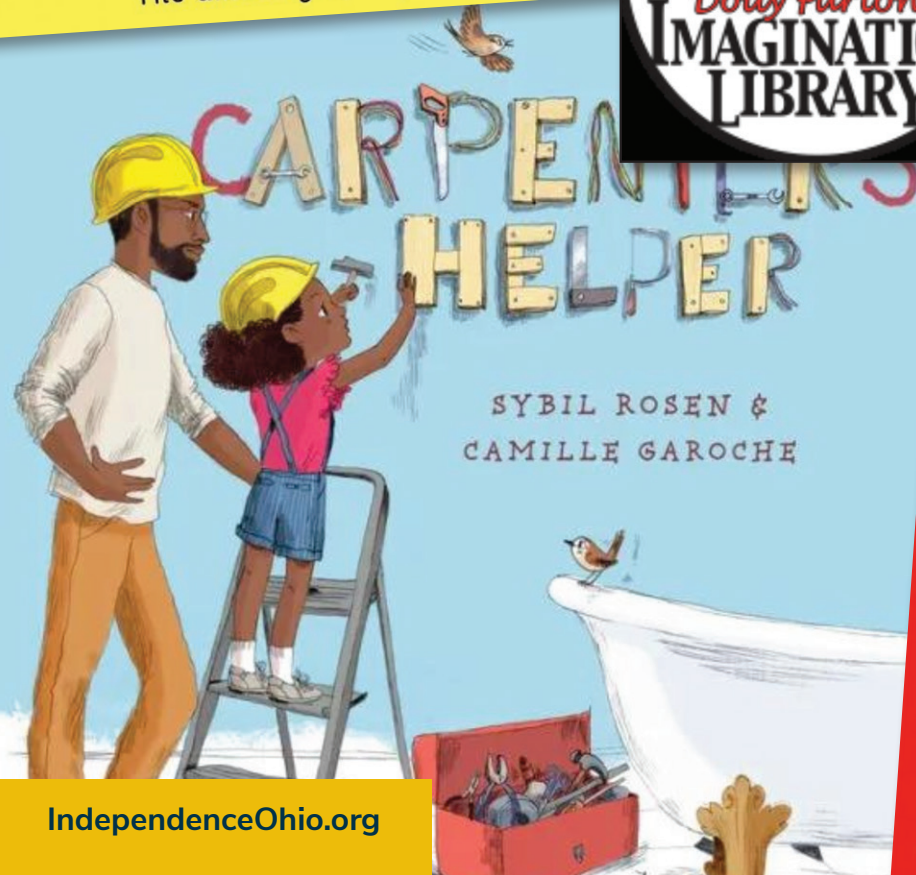
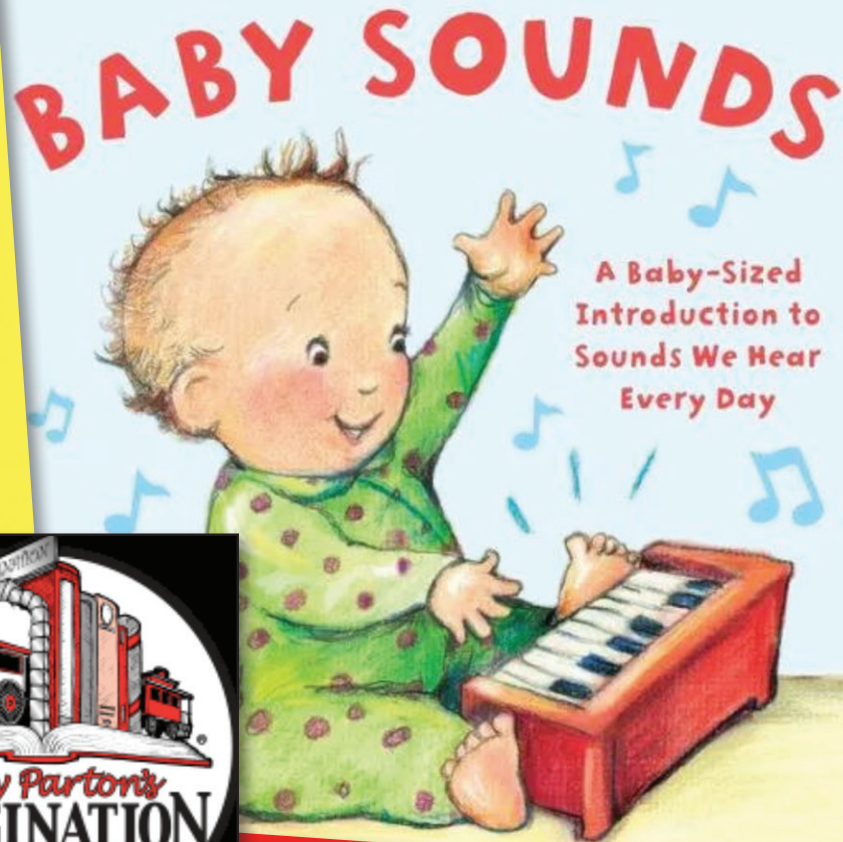
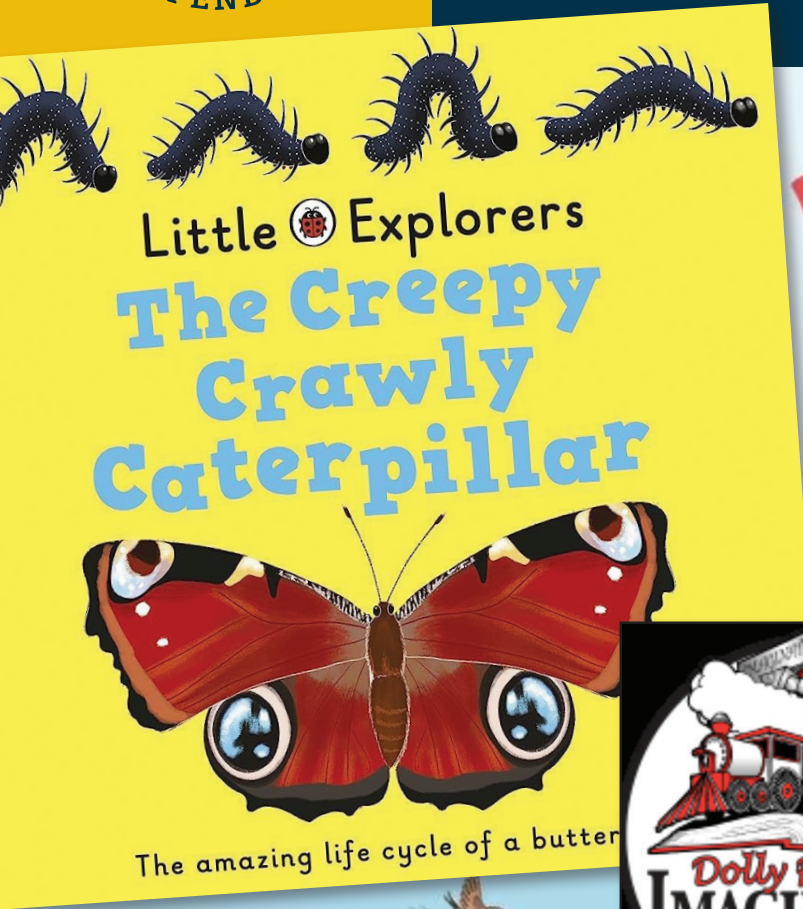




THE Independence POST

July 2023



IMPORTANT Numbers

POLICE/FIRE EMERGENCIES	911
Police Anonymous Tip Line	216.524.9699
Animal Control	216.524.3940
Building Department	216.524.1019
Chamber of Commerce	216.573.2707
Council Meetings	216.328.1477
Clerk of Courts	216.524.7719
Community Services	216.524.7373
Council Clerk	216.524.1008
Economic Development	216.524.4131
Engineering Department	216.524.1374
Finance Department	216.524.4131
Fire Department	216.524.4001
Human Resources	216.524.4131
Independence Fieldhouse	216.524.0088
Library	216.447.0160
Maple Shade Cemetery	216.524.9191
Mayor's Office	216.524.4131
Outdoor Pool	216.524.3711
Parks & Recreation Department	216.524.3262
Police Department	216.524.1234
Post Office	216.524.9614
Service Department	216.524.9191
Tech Services Dept.	216.524.9200



The Independence Post is a publication of the City of Independence.



Cover photo courtesy of City of Independence

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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

1st & 3rd Thursday each month, 3 PM
Norman Casini Chairman

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

1st Thursday each month, 9 AM
Mark Kwiatkowski Chairman

COUNCIL

2nd Tuesday each month, 5:30 PM caucus
(may vary), meeting follows.

PLANNING COMMISSION

1st Tuesday each month, 5:30 PM
David Grendel Chairman

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

3rd Thursday each month, 5:30 PM
Mark Moreal Chairman

A MESSAGE FROM *Mayor Gregory P. Kurtz*

Dear Neighbors,

I hope everyone will pause this Fourth of July weekend to salute the true meaning of Independence Day – a celebration of our freedom and patriotism. This year the fireworks display will be on Monday, July 3.

The Summer Concert Series on the Town Hall Bandstand continues every Friday in July starting at 7 PM. You can check out the line-up of entertainment and food trucks on page 5.

Home Days 2023 is just around the corner. The City staff has been working hard to make sure this year's celebration is bigger and better. There will be a bike race before the parade on Saturday, August 5, more entertainment, and expanded food and refreshment options. You can find details on pages 6 and 7.

Finally, a reminder to parents about **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Program**. All Independence children under the age of five are eligible to receive a brand new, high-quality, age-appropriate book every month at no expense to families. You can find more information about this amazing program on page 27.

I wish you and your loved ones a spectacular summer filled with fun adventures and cherished memories in the making.



Sincerely,

Discharging consumer-grade fireworks is illegal within the City of Independence (Ordinance 1519.04).

Call the Police at the non-emergency number 216.524.1234 if you believe someone is violating this ordinance.

The ordinance was put in place against Ohio House Bill 172 which permits discharging consumer-grade fireworks during certain holidays.

CITY *Directory*

Gregory P. Kurtz, Mayor
kurtzg@independenceohio.org

Vern Blaze
Finance Director

Gregory J. O'Brien
Law Director

Robert Butler
Police Chief

Steve Rega
Fire Chief

Jessica A. Hyser
Economic Development Director

Donald Ramm
City Engineer

Anne Lynch
City Planner

Michael Gero
Building Official

Alla Lora
Communications Director

Angela T. Zidanic
Clerk of Courts

Emily Thomas
Community Services Director

Tom Walchanowicz
Parks & Recreation Director

Ron McKinley
Service Director

David Snyderburn
Technical Services Director

Bridget Day Kozub
Human Resources Director

Dennis Zdolshek
Procurement Coordinator

City Hall General Email address
cityhall@independenceohio.org

SEASONAL *Events*



HOME BEAUTIFICATION AWARD

This is a friendly and spirited annual competition among Independence residents who share a love for landscape, plants, gardening, and general home upkeep.

This award was established to encourage, promote, and recognize individuals who invest in their homes and properties through proper upkeep to keep the Independence community a desirable place to live.

Judging will be based on the following aspects: curb appeal, visible maintenance of the property, combination of live plant material, originality, and friendliness to the environment.

- **Any Independence resident is eligible** to enter the competition.
- **Applications are available on the City website: www.IndependenceOhio.org.** Paper copies are available at the Civic Center.
- **Homeowners must provide a minimum of three photos with the application.** Applications and photos can be emailed to CS@IndependenceOhio.org or mailed to Community Services Department, Independence Civic Center, 6363 Selig Drive, Independence, OH 44131
- **Awards will be presented at Home Days, Saturday, August 5.** Winners will be notified in advance.

Questions? Call 216.524.7373.

Past winners are encouraged to volunteer as judges.

Please get in touch with Councilman Dale Veverka at 216.407.8657 if you are willing to help judge.



SEASONAL *Events*

2023 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Town Hall Bandstand, 6652 Brecksville Road

- Free admission!
- Bring a chair or blanket!

Friday Concerts, Food Trucks & Farmers Markets

July 7 – July 28

Concerts: 7 – 9 PM

Food Trucks: 6 – 9 PM

Farmers Markets: 5 – 8 PM

- **July 7: Concert:** **The Alley Katz** featuring Logan Wells & Patti Ann (Variety Music)
Food Trucks: Boss Chickn Beer + Feelin Good Ice Cream
- **July 14: Concert:** **Blue Evolution** (British Invasion Era Rock)
Food Trucks: Cravings + Kona Ice
Special Event: Porsche Car Show at Historic Hall @ 4:30 PM
- **July 21: Concert:** **FM77** (70s Tribute/Disco)
Food Trucks: Barrio + Sweet! The Mobile Cupcakery
- **July 28: Concert:** **Sumrada** (70s, 80s, 90s Rock)
Food Trucks: Twisted Grill & Grind + Sprinkles & Milk

In case of inclement weather, concerts will be held at the Independence Civic Center, 6363 Selig Drive. Call 216.524.7373 to confirm or visit our Facebook page for the latest updates: [Facebook.com/IndependenceOHRec](https://www.facebook.com/IndependenceOHRec)

Studio 108

Body | Mind | Soul

YOGA ON THE SQUARE
Independence Public Square
Fridays, July 7 – July 21
5:15 - 6:15 PM

- Free!

Instructor: Tracy Rhinehart
All ages, all skill levels! No registration required!
Bring a yoga mat (or beach towel) and water.
Stick around to enjoy our Farmers Market,
Food Trucks, and FREE Live Concert!

In inclement weather, yoga will move to Studio 108, 6487 Brecksville Road

SEASONAL *Events*



THE CITY OF **Independence** *106th Annual* **Home Days 2023!**

Friday, August 4, 6 - 11 PM
Saturday, August 5, NOON - 11 PM
Elmwood Park

Visit the Home Days page on
www.independenceohio.org
for more information!



Main Stage Entertainment Schedule

MAIN STAGE SOUND & HOME DAYS EMCEE:

Dave Synek – DB Entertainment

Friday, August 4

- 6 PM: Welcome Message from the Mayor & National Anthem Performed by IHS Vocal Ensemble
- 6:30 PM: The Studio Dance Performance
- 7 PM: Independence Historical Society Cake Walk
- 8 - 11 PM: The Element

Saturday, August 5

- 1:30 - 4:30 PM: Caliber
- 4:30 - 5 PM: IPD Canine Demo
- 5:15 - 6 PM: Rick Smith, Jr. Magic Show
- 6 PM: Mayor's Address & Hometown Awards
- 7 - 11 PM: Collage
- 9 PM: Grand Prize Raffle Winners Announced
- 10 PM: National Anthem Followed by Fireworks

Civic Center Entertainment

- Friday, August 4, 6 - 9 PM: The Wayne Tomsic Band
- Saturday, August 5, 6 - 9 PM: The Wayne Tomsic Band



Home Days Activities

- Carnival Rides
- Kiwanis Beer & Wine Garden
- Food Trucks & Booths
- Magical Train
- Hourly Drawings
- Grand Prize Raffle

Friday Night Fun

- 6 - 9 PM: Family Fun Zone
- 6 - 9 PM: Zoo2Go
- 6 - 11 PM: Bingo
- 6 - 11 PM: Teen Scene
- 7 - 10 PM: Cornhole & Volleyball Tournaments

Saturday Festivities

- 8:30 AM: Pickleball Tournament
- 9 - 10 AM: Yoga
- Noon: Parade in the Park
- Noon - 8 PM: Zoo2Go
- Noon - 11 PM: Live Painting
- 1 - 3 PM: Mini-Regatta
- 1 - 3 PM: Yoga
- 1 - 8 PM: Family Fun Zone
- 1:30 - 4 PM: Car Show
- 2 - 5 PM: Volleyball Tournament
- 5 PM: Egg Toss
- 5 - 10 PM: Bingo
- 6 - 11 PM: Teen Scene
- 7 - 10 PM: Cornhole Tournament



KIWANIS *Korner*

Back by Popular Demand!

KIWANIS CLUB OF INDEPENDENCE FALL CHICKEN BARBECUE Sunday, September 10 11 AM-2:30 PM

Rain or shine, while supplies last!

Elmwood Park, Kiwanis Pavilion

Your Kiwanis Club of Independence will be donning aprons and firing up the grills to barbecue chicken for a wonderful fall event!

Enjoy delicious, barbecued chicken while supporting Kiwanis charities. Proceeds benefit projects for children!

- BBQ Chicken
- Corn on the Cob
- Dessert
- French Fries
- Coleslaw
- Beverages

Adults \$20
Children \$12

Dine in or take out!

*To purchase advance tickets,
contact Chuck Soeder (216.633.0600),
John Kapusta (216.219.8639) or
IndependenceKiwanisBBQ@gmail.com*



THE 300 CLUB WINNERS

May

- \$100 Lori Pesek
- \$75 Evelyn DiGeronimo
- \$50 Michael Habeeb

June

- \$100 Karen Shallcross
- \$75 Wayne Slota
- \$50 Judy Scouloukas



Save The Date!

INDEPENDENCE KIWANIS FOUNDATION ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Friday, August 25

Briarwood Golf Club

2737 W. Edgerton Road, Broadview Heights, Ohio

The Annual Independence Kiwanis Golf Outing is back! Our mission is to support the Children of Fallen Patriots with scholarships and other much-needed services. Please join us on Friday, August 25, at Briarwood Golf Club, 2737 W. Edgerton Road, Broadview Heights, Ohio.

The Golf Outing will include a continental breakfast, lunch, 18 holes of golf, a golf cart, a gift of appreciation, drink carts, and dinner for \$150 per golfer.

In addition, please consider becoming a sponsor. All sponsors will be recognized during the event, in the program, and on the Independence Kiwanis website. If we receive your donation before June 1, please submit a short synopsis of your business to be published on our social media. We offer a variety of sponsorship and donation opportunities, as noted below (check all that apply).

- Hole in One Sponsor – Car (includes prominent signage & four (4) golf registrations)
- Continental Breakfast Sponsor – \$500
- Lunch Sponsor – \$1,500 (includes prominent signage)
- Dinner Sponsor – \$1,500 (includes prominent signage)
- Drink Cart Sponsor – \$2,000 Full Sponsor (\$1,000 Co-Sponsor)
- Keg-Sponsor \$300 (includes prominent signage)
- Longest Drive Women & Men – \$300 each (includes signage on a hole)
- Closest to Pin Women & Men – \$300 each (includes signage on a hole)
- Longest Putt Women & Men – \$300 each (includes signage on a hole)
- Individual Hole Sponsorship – \$150 (includes signage on a hole)
- Golf Ball Sleeve Sponsor (144 golfers) – \$500 (includes prominent signage)
- Golf Towel Sponsor (144 golfers) – \$650 (includes prominent signage)
- Swag Bag Contents (144 golfers) – Donate items or cash
- Financial Donations, Gifts, or Gift Certificates accepted for raffles
- Recognition Sponsors – \$100 to honor your veteran, Kiwanis member, or loved one
- Water – \$400 (includes signage) 40 cases needed

Register online at independencekiwanis.com.

You can also download forms at independencekiwanis.com

and mail the completed registration to:

Independence Kiwanis Foundation

6491 Pebblecreek Dr.

Independence, Ohio 44141.

Questions? Call Chairperson Jackie Horn at 216.524.6297

or email independence.kiwanisgolf@gmail.com.



**The Independence
Kiwanis Foundation
is an Ohio non-profit
corporation recognized
by the IRS as a charitable
501(c)(3) organization.**

**We appreciate your
support of our Veterans
and Kiwanis.**

FIRE *Department*

HAVE A SAFE FOURTH OF JULY

Taking a few precautions and using some common sense will help to ensure you have a safe Fourth of July! State law allows the unrestricted sale and use of novelty fireworks such as sparklers, snaps, low snakes, and smoke bombs, except where prohibited under local laws.

Note to Parents: Actions by children under the age of 18 are the legal responsibility of parents. Misuse of fireworks, causing death, injury, or property loss, could incur civil liability.

Note to Pet Owners: The Humane Society encourages pet owners to keep their pets indoors and ensure pets have identification tags in the event they become separated from their owners. Pets may refuse to eat, become hyperactive, or run away from home due to the noise from fireworks.

FIREWORKS SAFETY

- NEVER ALWAYS
- **Always** read and follow instructions.
 - **Always** buy from a reliable firework dealer.
 - **Always** ignite outdoors, away from buildings and dry fields.
 - **Always** store in a cool, dry place.
 - **Always** have a responsible adult present.
 - **Always** have water and/or a fire extinguisher at hand.
 - **Always** light one at a time, move away quickly, and keep a safe distance.
 - **Always** soak used fireworks in water before disposing of them.
 - **Never** re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks.
 - **Never** give fireworks to small children.
 - **Never** carry fireworks in your pocket.
 - **Never** alter or experiment with fireworks.
 - **Never** discharge fireworks near flammable liquids or on a glass or metal container.
 - **Never** use fireworks in a crowd or throw them at people, animals, or vehicles.

Despite the changes to State law, it is still illegal to shoot off fireworks in the City of Independence.

FIRE HYDRANT MAINTENANCE

The Fire Department will continue to perform fire hydrant maintenance throughout the summer months. Please look for posted signs on your street.

If you find that the water coming out of your faucet(s) has a brownish tint after your fire hydrant is serviced:

- Run the cold water faucet at the lowest level of your house until clear.
- Avoid using the hot water to keep discolored water out of the hot water tank.
- Avoid washing clothes when hydrants are being flushed.



POLICE *Department*



SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES

Presented by Independence Police Department

Thursday, July 27

Independence Civic Center- 6363 Selig Drive

• Residents only: Free

Females, 6-8 PM

Class size limited to 30 participants.

This class will include discussion of several safety topics and an optional hands-on defensive skills section. Topics will include walking to and from your vehicle, mentality of an attacker, parking garage/lot safety, reporting crimes, self-defense tools that are typically carried, and much more. The optional hands-on section will cover striking, defense against grabs, counters, and general self-defense.

This will be an excellent class for adult women (18 and older) as well as recent high school graduates planning to attend college.

Register online or by calling 216.524.7373.

Seniors (60+), 10-11 AM

This class will include discussion of several safety topics and a brief, optional hands-on defensive skills section. Topics will include walking to and from your vehicle, mentality of an attacker, parking garage/lot safety, reporting crimes, self-defense tools that are typically carried, and much more.

The optional hands-on section will cover light striking of a bag and defense against grabs.



PUBLIC SAFETY *Promotions*

THE FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS CELEBRATED THE PROMOTION OF THREE OF THEIR OWN IN JUNE.

Firefighter/Paramedic Jason Fahl and **Austin Dapsis** were promoted to Lieutenants during a swearing in ceremony at City Hall on June 13, 2023.

Jason Fahl has served the IFD for 23 years and is a certified EMS instructor and has worked as the department's EMS coordinator. He is the Local Union President and lives in the City with his wife Kristine and son Carter.

Austin Dapsis has seven years of service with the City of Independence. He is a certified CPR instructor and a certified State Fire Investigator

serving with the Southwest Emergency Response Team. Austin lives in North Royalton and is engaged to be married this fall to his fiancée Danielle.

After serving 15 months as a patrolman and jailer for the Independence Police Department, **Charles "C.J." Billy** was sworn in as a full-time police officer. Billy has a black belt in jiu jitsu and was the lead instructor for the City's Self-Defense for Joggers class.



*L-R: Police Chief Robert Butler
C.J. Billy and Family
Mayor Greg Kurtz*



*L-R: Fire Chief Steve Rega,
Lt. Austin Dapsis,
Lt. Jason Fahl,
Asst. Chief Jim Wheeler,
Mayor Greg Kurtz*

BUILDING *Department*

WARM WEATHER MAINTENANCE

Warm weather is here. Is your property maintenance done?

HERE IS A QUICK CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE WORK:

- Clean up accumulated debris from around your yard.
- Prep the lawn, flower beds, and garden areas for the growing season.
- Remove foliage touching your home and prune trees and shrubs. Removing the vegetation touching your home will reduce damage to gutters and siding and lessen the odds of insect infestation.
- Inspect and clean out gutters and downspouts.
- Replace weather stripping and caulk around windows and doors. Extreme temperatures can cause cracks and allow air and water to leak into your home.
- Check wood decks, railings, windowsills, and trim for rotting areas. Over time, boards can become soft or splinter from water damage and should be replaced.
- Inspect and clean windows and screens. Ensure no cuts, rips, or hardware needs to be replaced to prevent insects from entering easily.
- Sweep and clean walkways and driveways and check for frost damage. Replace any areas that are affected.

The City will perform property maintenance inspections to maintain the community's quality appearance. If the inspector finds an area of your property that needs attention, you will be notified. Remember: maintaining your property is your responsibility as a homeowner.

The Building Department is available to answer your questions and provide additional information regarding the maintenance of your home. Please feel free to contact the Building Department at 216.524.1019, email Building@independenceohio.org, or visit www.independenceohio.org/Departments/Building

PLANNING COMMISSION RESULTS June 6, 2023

5997 Brecksville Rd., PPN 561-15-006 & 561-13-045, – Proposed lot consolidation of two existing parcels and requesting a special conditional use variance for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. **Tabled – will hold a Public Hearing on July 10, 2023, at 5 PM for a special conditional use permit.**

BOARD OF ZONING RESULTS June 15, 2023

5407 Brookside Rd., Theresa Salupo & Michelle Metz – Requesting a variance to Chapter 1383 to permit encroachment into the steep slope setback for the construction of a new garage. **Approved subject to:**

- a. BZA approval of side yard setback.
- b. Structural footers and wall designed and stamped by a licensed registered Professional Engineer.
- c. Compliance with Ordinance 1380 regarding best management practices for erosion and sediment controls during construction.
- d. Detailed site plan review and approval by the City Engineer.

SERVICE *Department*

Call the Service Department at 216.524.9191 for information and registration

JULY 4TH HOLIDAY RUBBISH PICKUP

Rubbish, recycling, and yard waste that the Service Department would typically pick up on Tuesday, July 4, will be **picked up on Wednesday, July 5**, after the Independence Day holiday. Please have your rubbish, recycling, and yard waste out for pickup before 8 AM on Wednesday, July 5.

All other rubbish, recycling, and yard waste pickups that week will remain the same.

YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Yard waste consists of **grass clippings, leaves, and branches** and will be picked up on your rubbish day. Yard waste must be contained in brown paper bags, open cardboard boxes, 35-gallon garbage cans, or the green-lidded yard waste container which residents can purchase through the Service Department.

Dirt, stones, and rocks are NOT yard waste and should be thrown into your rubbish container.

SPECIAL PICKUP OF QUALIFYING ITEMS (CALL BY THURSDAY)

The items listed below are the only items that qualify for a Friday Special Pickup:

- **Appliances:** Washers, dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators (doors removed), stoves, and ovens.
- **Solid Metal:** Grills, pipes/poles, metal file cabinets, metal swing sets, lawnmowers, snow blowers, etc.
- **Chemicals:** Paint, oil, gasoline, anti-freeze, propane tanks, and miscellaneous chemicals.
- **Computer Equipment:** Desktop computers, laptops, monitors, keyboards, and towers.
- **Bulbs/Batteries:** Lights bulbs, CFL bulbs, batteries, and fluorescent tubes.

Please call the Service Department at 216.524.9191 by Thursday of each week to schedule a Friday Special Pickup of qualifying items.

LOGS & TREE STUMPS

Logs and tree stumps will be picked up on your **regular rubbish day**. They must be cut into small, manageable pieces (not weighing more than 25 pounds apiece) and placed at the tree lawn. **Any large amounts of logs and stumps require the rental of a dumpster.**

RUBBISH DAY PICKUP

The items listed below will be picked up on your regular rubbish day – **you do not need to call the Service Department.**

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| • Furniture | • Toilets |
| • Hot tubs (cut up) | • TVs (all sizes) |
| • Ladders | • Wooden Cabinets |
| • Lumber | • Carpet & Padding |
| • Mattresses & Box Springs | (must be rolled in |
| • Microwaves | 4-foot lengths and |
| • Pool & Ping Pong Tables | not weigh more |
| • Pool Covers | than 50 pounds |
| • Shower Stalls | apiece) |

Place the items above on your tree lawn next to your rubbish container. *All items will be picked up on your rubbish day – no exceptions.*

If you have a large amount of rubbish, construction debris, or yard waste, please call the Service Department to reserve a dumpster.

CHIPPER

Chipper service is available year-round by request. Chipper material requirements:

- Branches must measure between 1 and 8 inches in diameter and be less than 4-feet in length.
- Place cut ends towards the street.
- Branches over 8 inches in diameter must be cut up into log-size pieces and placed at the tree lawn.
- Branches smaller than 1 inch in diameter are considered **yard waste** and should be placed in a yard waste container (see YARD WASTE COLLECTION).
- **Any large amounts of chipper material require the rental of a dumpster.**
- Residents **must call the Service Department at 216.524.9191** for chipper service when branches are placed on the tree lawn.

All **CONTRACTOR** material including branches, logs, and tree stumps must be disposed of by the contractor and will not be picked up by the City.

PARKS & RECREATION *Department*

SUSTAINABILITY

Last month, resident Sal Caruso offered some helpful tips for other residents on how he and his family take a two-prong approach to sustainability at home: ecology-oriented and consumption-oriented.

Ecology-Oriented Sustainability: For the Caruso family, it is a multi-year process to build a more resilient ecosystem and homestead on their three acres. To support abundant plant life and develop healthy soil, they have bees, a couple dozen fruit trees and bushes, about 2,000 square feet of vegetable beds, and large swaths of flowers planted in several locations to support pollinators.

Consumption-Oriented Sustainability: The Carusos try to limit the consumption of goods and foods with a high energy footprint or single use. They will be the first to admit they are not perfect, but they aim to be intentional in their choices.



Here are a few tips to become more ecology- and consumption-oriented:

1. Increase soil organic matter for resilience, water holding capacity, and erosion control. For each 1% increase in soil organic matter, an acre of land will hold an additional 16,500 gallons of water, creating more abundant plant life and mitigating both runoff and the wet/dry cycle from which much of the clay soil in the area suffers.
2. Grow and preserve foods like vegetables, fruits, honey, and eggs to minimize fuel consumption and nutrient loss that occurs when we consume produce grown from far away. Local food production also helps to build more resilient communities.
3. Use energy strategically. For example, rather than running the air conditioning, use window shades to keep your home naturally cool.
4. Limit or avoid consumption of high energy and single-use items. Focus on reducing/reusing before you decide to recycle it.
5. Compost! Redirecting plant waste from the garbage helps to build healthy and biologically active soils.
6. Install a rain catchment system on your outbuilding to preserve water for plants.

***Please submit your sustainability stories to Ryan Wancata,
Parks & Recreation Manager at wancatar@independenceohio.org.***

CITY COUNCIL News

Council Meeting June 13, 2023



MAYOR GREGORY P. KURTZ'S REPORT

We learned this morning that the inflation rate cooled in May to its lowest annual rate in more than two years. The biggest drivers – lower prices at the gas pump and the easing

of price hikes on some grocery store items.

This is excellent news for residents and the City of Independence as we are perpetually planning and budgeting for the future. In fact, one of the items on tonight's agenda is the 2024 tax budget.

I am proud that my team is always looking for ways to save money, identify efficiencies, and maintain outstanding services and residents' quality of life while protecting the City's competitive edge to attract and retain new businesses.

For years, the City has participated in several purchasing cooperatives that provide enhanced buying power because of the many state and public entities involved. Tonight, Council will vote on an ordinance to allow the City of Independence to participate in the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) "Cooperative Purchasing Program" to utilize ODOT's competitively bid contracts to purchase machinery, materials, supplies, and other equipment and vehicles.

Independence is a vibrant community that carefully balances quiet, charming neighborhoods with bustling business districts. The city's collaborative nature and superior location attracts and maintains a robust business community — which in turn provides the foundation for safe, harmonious living with an abundance of high-quality services and amenities for its residents. Whether it's your home, headquarters, or place of work,

INDEPENDENCE WORKS HARD
to instill an experience that never leaves you.

The calendar indicates we are days away from summer, but tonight Council will vote on an ordinance to purchase rock salt for the 2023–2024 snow season at the same price per ton as last year with the same terms and conditions of past contracts.

Finally, Council will be voting on legislation to hire a contractor to begin renovation of the Civic Center kitchen, including reconfiguring the existing space and adding a commercial dishwasher and other appliances. The redesign will allow Community Services to elevate and expand its program offerings and improve residents' room reservation experience.

I want to wish everyone a very happy Independence Day! We are fortunate to live in a country where people celebrate life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with family picnics, barbeques, and fireworks!

FINANCE DIRECTOR VERN BLAZE'S REPORT



Ordinance 2023–54 on this evening's Legislative Agenda is the City's 2024 Tax Budget. An annual Tax Budget is a requirement in the State of Ohio, of which the primary purpose is to "certify tax rates for each subdivision or other taxing unit."

The City of Independence is the subdivision/taxing unit, and the Tax Rate is the 2.20 Mills of the 65 Mills (Gross Rate) in property taxes paid by residential property owners in Independence (The current "Effective" Rate after certain reduction factors is 58.51 Mills).

What 58.51 Mills means is that for every \$1,000 of Assessed Valuation (35 percent of Market Value), a residential property owner in Independence pays approximately \$58.51 in property taxes before the HB 920 Reduction and other credits.

How this translates into what a residential property owner in Independence pays would be as follows:

Since properties in Ohio are assessed at 35 percent of Market Value, a residential property

in Independence with a \$300,000 Market Value would have an Assessed Value of \$105,000 (\$300,000 x 35%).

Divide the Assessed Value of \$105,000 by 1,000 (a Mill representing 1/1000 of a dollar) and multiplying that by the Effective Rate of 58.51 results in a Gross Tax of \$6,143.55. After the House Bill 920 Reduction and other credits, a residential property in Independence with a \$300,000 Market Value would pay approximately \$5,496 a year in property taxes.

The City itself only receives 2.20 Mills of the 58.51 Effective Residential Mills which shows how little of the total residential property taxes paid in Independence goes to the City.

Which then begs the next question – If only 2.20 Effective Residential Mills of property taxes goes to the City, where do the other 56.31 Effective Residential Mills go? Great question!

The following is how residential property taxes in Independence are broken down by taxing entity, how many Mills each receives, and what percentage of the total paid that is:

	MILLS	
Independence Local School District	32.45	55.46%
Cuyahoga County	12.25	20.94%
Cuyahoga Community College	3.95	6.75%
Cuyahoga County Library	2.83	4.84%
Cleveland Metroparks	2.74	4.68%
City of Independence	2.20	3.76%
Cuyahoga Valley Career Center	2.00	3.42%
Cleve-Cuy. County Port Authority	0.09	0.15%
Total Mills	58.51	100.00%

Standing Committee Reports



David Grendel
FINANCE

The Planning Commission met on June 6, and there were three items on the agenda. The Commission heard a request from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day

Saints for a proposed lot consolidation of two existing parcels (561-15-006 & 561-13-045 as well as requesting a Special Conditional Use Permit to build a 9,900 square foot single-story

religious facility on Brecksville Road between the Cavaliers practice facility and Longano Drive. The facility will consist of 25 modules built off-site with structural steel framing to support GFRC cladding and a church spire of 100 feet. In addition, the temple will be supported by a 2,300-square foot Utility/Welcome Center. The Planning Commission will conduct a Public Hearing at the July meeting on Monday, July 10, at 5 PM.

The panel unanimously approved a request by Theresa Salupo and Michelle Metz to permit a variance for full relief to permit encroachment into the steep slope setback for the construction of a new garage at 5407 Brookside Road.

Finally, there was a discussion of a proposed ordinance regarding electric vehicle charging stations within the boundary of the City.

On Second Reading, I support the passage of Ordinance 2023-54, which approves the Tax Budget for the Year 2024.

On First Reading, I support the passage of Ordinance 2023-65, which creates a new TIF District at 5959 Rockside Woods North. Welty is constructing a new 155,000-square-foot Class A office building at the site. CBIZ is the leading tenant of the structure and will occupy 60,000 square feet. This proposed TIF program will yield to the City approximately \$150,000 per year or nearly \$5,000,000 during the 30-year life of the TIF. The Independence Local Schools and the Cuyahoga Valley Career Center would stand to receive yearly payments of \$223,000 or \$6,700,000 during that same timeframe.

My heartfelt condolences to Dorothy Vodrazka on the passing of her husband, Jack Vodrazka. Jack was buried on June 10. He will be greatly missed by the residents of Independence and the surrounding communities. Mr. Vodrazka brought great comfort to me and my family when we suffered the loss of our loved ones. Jack, your kindness will always remain in my heart.

Congratulations to Coach Jim Crooks and the I.H.S. Varsity baseball team for making it to the Sweet Sixteen Regional State Tournament.

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Likewise, congrats to Coach Lexi Prokopius and her Blue Devils boys' volleyball team for winning the regional championship and making it to the State Semi-Final Championship game.

Finally, best of luck to all our student members of the Class of 2023.



John DiGeronimo
**ECONOMIC GROWTH
& DEVELOPMENT**

At the June meeting, Council passed Ordinance 2023-65, which relates to economic development and creates a new

TIF Fund for the CBIZ property currently under construction. Economic Development Director Jessica Hyser believes CBIZ will occupy the space later this year. Including this property in our TIF program is consistent with our approach to past projects.

Council also approved increases to the compensation of elected officials beginning in 2024. Although opinions vary as far as what the "right" compensation for our Mayor, Finance Director, and Councilpersons should be, these wages have not been adjusted in a number of years. We are fortunate to have residents willing to fill these positions, however, when those residents put their previous career aspirations aside for public service, the compensation should be fair and worth their time.

Council also approved hiring a general contractor to begin the renovation of the Civic Center kitchen. Based on the number of positive reviews I have received about our Community Services Department, I am confident that this renovation will further enhance our service offerings. The programming within Community Services has really stepped up in recent years. The collective effort of the group is even more apparent in the summer months: from the growth of the Summer Concert Series to hosting a cookout at a Metroparks reservation, the Community Services Department offers our residents a multitude of ways to enjoy the summer months.

Happy Independence Day!



Tom Narduzzi
**SAFETY/RULES &
ORDINANCES**

Good evening, everyone. The Safety Committee met on June 6. There were 12 items on the agenda. Fire Chief Rega gave the Fire Department updates. We discussed the new agreement for firefighters' wellness exams through the Cleveland Clinic. This is a way to make sure that the employees are fit for the job; although this is not a fit-for-duty type of exam, it is more or less to find out if there is something seriously wrong and to inform the employee of any serious problems with their health.

Also, Chief Rega discussed purchasing a utility terrain vehicle. He is currently researching several different vehicles, including a Kubota, a Polaris, and a Kawasaki. We should have a decision by next month.

Fire Chief Rega was also happy to report that, working with the Allison Rose Foundation, we have installed four Epi Auto-Injector kits in our City. The kits are now at the Civic Center, the Outdoor Pool, the Elmwood Pressbox concession stand, and the Fieldhouse.

Updates from the Police Department: Chief Butler was happy to report that the department is fully staffed at 37. There will be a swearing in on June 13 for Charles Billy. Charles was our full-time jailer for 15 months and now has become part of our police force.

Also on the agenda was a discussion of the blue light CCTV cameras pilot program. The two cameras will be located at the intersections of Selig Drive at Brecksville Road and Chestnut Road at Brecksville Road. Chief Butler plans to add more cameras, but he believes this is a great starting place for the first two.

Lastly, I would like to give my condolences to Dottie Vodrazka and the whole Vodrazka family on the passing of Jack. Jack was one of the kindest, most personable human beings I have ever met. Jack's contribution to this community is irreplaceable. Rest in peace, my friend.



Anthony Togliatti
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Coming from the Community Services Department on tonight's agenda is the acceptance of the bid of Infinity Construction for the total remodel of the

Civic Center banquet room kitchen at the cost of \$254,500. This project cost will be reduced by a \$100,000 grant provided by the State of Ohio. Once completed, the kitchen will have a much more efficient layout, resulting in a more user-friendly workspace for both City employees and residents renting the kitchen and banquet rooms. I applaud the Community Services team for all the hard work and effort that has gone into the planning and design of this much-needed capital improvement.

I am happy to see that our Finance Department is continuing the TIF program that former Finance Director John Veres began many years ago. The TIF financing program allows the City and schools to collect the portion of property tax that would otherwise be paid to Cuyahoga County. These funds can then be used to pay for public improvements within the TIF district. In the first six months of this year, the City has collected \$1.5 Million that would have otherwise been paid to Cuyahoga County, with the largest TIF collection coming from the property taxes paid by Topgolf. The Topgolf TIF paid the City over \$219,000 during the first six months of the year and paid even more to the Independence Local School District and Cuyahoga Career Center. From an economic perspective, it is fantastic to have this nearly \$3 million annual revenue stream for our City.

Tonight's agenda will add to the City's number of TIF districts and further increase our TIF collections by including the newly constructed CBIZ building across from Topgolf. Based on the Economic Development Director's estimates, the CBIZ building's TIF should yield approximately \$150,000 per year to the City, and the Independence Local Schools and Cuyahoga Valley Career Center should stand to gain approximately \$233,000 per year. This is much-needed revenue for both public entities.



James P. Trakas
UTILITIES & SEWERS

Good evening, Mayor Kurtz, Vice Mayor Grendel, Finance Director Blaze, members of Council, and citizens of Independence. The mild spring has lessened the usual

erosion and water flow problems that we have experienced over the last few years; a welcome sign that has less inconvenience to residents, and hopefully, with our creek maintenance programs, residents will experience less of the flood-related problems than ordinary. To the residents and commuters on Pleasant Valley Road, the water main breaks have highlighted the importance of good maintenance and replacement projects that have been the hallmark of the City's annual infrastructure program.

Tax Increment Financing, or TIFs, brought to our City by former Finance Director John Veres 30 years ago, remain important economic development tools to benefit the long term of City and school district finances. Last year, after painstaking negotiations by Mayor Kurtz, Economic Development Director Hyser, and Finance Director Blaze, Council approved an agreement to keep the regional financial giant CBIZ in town and bring an exciting deal to build a new six-story office building on Rockside Woods Blvd. Tonight, Council is voting on a TIF district for this new building which will provide revenue in lieu of income and property taxes to both the City and Independence Public Schools. Ordinance 2023-65 creates a TIF District that will last 30 years. It is estimated that the TIF will generate \$150,000 for city services and \$223,000 new annual revenue for the Board of Education.

Economic Development helps Independence provide superior services and a strong safety force protection and response, keep our streets, sewers, and sidewalks maintained and replaced regularly, and offer recreational and high quality of life amenities that residents have the chance to enjoy. All this while maintaining the lowest property tax of any incorporated city in Cuyahoga County and the second lowest income taxes. Hats off to Mayor Kurtz and Jessica Hyser for helping

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keep CBIZ in Independence, and for this project which will add value to our City and schools.

Ordinance 2023-72 under my sponsorship and 2023-73 refer to updates in the City's Public-Private Partnership Program that help residents with maintenance for stormwater management and creek and sewer maintenance. These ordinances redefine the program that is starting to create interest among residents to help solve expensive water and erosion-related problems on private property and allocate funds to this purpose. The Ordinances were referred to Committee, and we hope that this summer they will be ready for Council's consideration. I was pleased to work with the City Engineer's office and Community Services to help add rules to this program that may be able to help residents solve long-term problems with the City's assistance.

The Tree Commission met last month, and I am happy to report that the City has applied for a grant from the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, which we hope could be in the area of \$50,000 to buy trees, conduct a tree inventory, and establish a Tree Plan to increase our City's tree canopy from the Healthy Urban Trees Initiative - we are hoping to find out by mid-summer if we are successful. Sadly, one of our most engaged citizens, Mr. Al Klonowski, an arborist who helped inspire the Tree Program, passed away a few weeks ago, but his legacy will live on with a healthier and greener community to which he dedicated his life.

Not on the agenda but important for our community, the Ohio General Assembly is about to pass into law Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted's initiative, which would make social media usage by anyone under 16 years of age illegal.

I enjoy social media and maintain several accounts, but as an adult, I have had training in the potential pitfalls of social media through the military. Unfortunately, not every experience on social media is positive for young people. Heavy adult and sexual themes are prevalent on social media, and sometimes very adult themes confuse children and encourage anti-

societal behavior. Sadly, young people today, in part because of social media influences, have much higher rates of depression, suicide, and questioning their own lives and very being, and receive many contradictory messages that conflict with parental wishes and values. The General Assembly will pass this policy into law soon. Young people under 16 will not be able to use social media until that age and only with parental permission, and parents will have filters on social media accounts. Our children can focus on school and normal parental approved activities rather than what turned out to be a dangerous forum with many ill consequences.

The Republic celebrates 247 years of Independence on Independence Day. I hope you have the chance to join friends and neighbors in Elmwood Park for fireworks this year. Former Councilperson Jim Crooks sponsored a reading of the Declaration of Independence each year on Public Square. It was a poignant tradition, and I encourage everyone to read the document that is credited with being the founding document of the United States of America. The Revolution had broken out on April 19, 1775, and the rag-tag Colonial Army led by General George Washington needed inspiration to continue the fight against the world's greatest Empire. The Declaration Committee was established in June 1776, and of course, Thomas Jefferson wrote the bulk of the document. From this founding has emerged the greatest nation on Earth. We should be proud of our achievements. We have also learned from our mistakes. I close with this quotation from Founding Father President John Adams ***"Our obligations to our country never cease but with our lives. We ought to do all that we can."***



Dale Veverka **STREETS & SIDEWALKS**

The Streets and Sidewalks Committee met on May 11, 2023. Service Director McKinley reported on the cleaning of pavers and restoration of the planters on Brecksville Road. This year

approximately \$12,000 was spent on flowers for Brecksville Road from Rockside to Sprague Road, in addition to other areas in the City. Areas along the streets and sidewalks that plows had damaged were repaired and replanted. Efforts are being made to replace equipment so that it is standardized so that maintenance (greases and oils) is similar. Mechanics are working toward routine maintenance being completed on schedule.

City Engineer Ramm provided a summary of the Mannik and Smith report on road conditions, but as of today, the committee members have not received copies of the report. New traffic signalization will be an ongoing cost on Rockside Road as the signals will be upgraded to today's technology. Road maintenance contracts for 2023 were discussed. Sidewalk replacement will be a major focus this year. The Fieldhouse drive and parking lot were discussed as their conditions have deteriorated. The Kleber Court reconstruction project was discussed (gas line replacement and some tree removals have taken place at the time of this report).

Three residents of Longano attended the meeting to express concerns about the fact that they felt as if their project was placed on the back burner. Included in the discussion was a conversation about a greatly enlarged boulevard entrance to their development with an exit from Cornerstone of Hope onto their residential street and an extra lane for turning. The Meadowbrook bridge was completed in the fall, and the roadway will soon receive poured concrete. The final topic covered in the meeting was the engineering for McDonald's exit onto Brecksville Road and a possible turn lane from Pleasant Valley north to Brecksville Road.

Ordinances 2023-60,61, and 62 – the pay for Council Members, Mayor, and Finance Director should also include the value of hospitalization along with consideration of inflation in the discussion of any change in pay or whether a position should be part or full-time. Would changing Finance Director to an appointed position reduce citizen control of their government?

Happy Father's Day to all fathers and father figures who have molded us into the men and women we have become.



Chris Walchanowicz
PUBLIC LANDS
& BUILDINGS

Hello, fellow residents. I hope everyone had a fantastic Memorial Day weekend. Thank you to all the residents who were able to attend

our Memorial Day services. It was very nice to see so many people.

On May 11, we had a Streets & Sidewalks meeting. We discussed many items: road maintenance contracts, the 2023 sidewalk plan, etc. The highlight was a long discussion on the Kleber Court and Longano Drive reconstruction projects.

On Tuesday, June 6, we had a Safety meeting. Both Fire Chief Rega and Police Chief Butler updated us. Chief Butler would like to start a blue light CCTV program in our residential area, and he would like to add more speed signs throughout the community.

This month's legislation has a lot of contract renewals and some amended ordinances.

I hope everyone has a great month of June, and I hope to see everyone around town.

Finally, I would like to send my deepest condolences to the Vodrazka family. I have known Jack and Dottie since the late 1990s. Jack was one of the nicest men I ever met. He will truly be missed. I was happy to call him a friend. God Bless my friend.

Directors' Reports



Michael Gero
BUILDING OFFICIAL

The Building Department is using electronic plan review submittal for commercial projects. This reduces the amount of paper used, reduces the length of

time for plan review, and expedites the issuing of permits. E-mail or call us if you have any questions.

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Over the last month, the Building Department sent out six sets of construction drawings for plan review. Nineteen commercial permits were issued, and 25 commercial construction inspections were performed. Plans were approved for a 4,500 sq. ft. tenant build-out at 5505 Valley Belt Road. Construction projects for new buildings on Rockside Woods Blvd. and Rio Nero Drive are progressing toward completion.

The Department also issued 49 residential permits and performed 85 residential construction inspections. Three new dwellings are currently under construction in the City.

Please contact the Building Department to discuss potential projects you may be thinking about.

As spring has arrived, inspectors will be out actively addressing issues to improve the appearance of our community.



Don Ramm
CITY ENGINEER

A total of twenty (20) permits were issued: **Eleven (11) Concrete Permits** were issued for:

- Nine (9) residential driveway and/or service walk replacements.
- One (1) for a concrete encasement of a commercial trench drain.
- One (1) commercial parking lot repair.

Three (3) Change-of-Grade Permits were issued to residential properties for:

- One (1) for landscape grading.
- One (1) for a new deck and front porch elimination.
- One (1) for a “sport court” installation.

One (1) Grade Permit and one (1) landscape Permit were issued for a new dwelling on Hemlock Road. **One (1) Right-of-Way Permit** was issued to Dominion to replace gas services for the Kleber Court Reconstruction Improvements Project. **Three (3) Sanitary/Storm Sewer Permits** were issued:

- Two (2) for new residential drainage pipe installations.
- One (1) for a commercial drainage pipe replacement.

A subcontractor working for **Catts Construction** performed tree removals in connection with the **Kleber Court Reconstruction Improvements project**. **Prusa Construction**, a contractor for **Dominion**, also completed the gas service relocations needed for the project. Water main installation is scheduled to begin later this month.

Catts Construction has been performing work in connection with the **2022/2023 Concrete Road Maintenance and Repairs Contract**. Curb and gutter replacement, including asphalt pavement restoration, was completed in the **Dalebrook Estates**. They are currently constructing a new sidewalk on the west side of **Rockside Woods Boulevard North**. The City received an **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** grant in the amount of **\$186,000** to partially-fund this sidewalk project. They have also been busy assisting the City to repair sections of roads damaged by recent water main breaks on **E. Pleasant Valley Road**. **Ordinance 2023-71** on tonight’s agenda authorizes the 2023 funding appropriation in the amount of **\$150,000** to pay for various repairs needed throughout the City.

Specialized Construction is performing partial-depth joint repairs at night on Rockside Road in connection with the **2023 Crack Seal Contract**. Work is anticipated to be completed this week, weather permitting.

We have been overseeing the work of **Geotech Services, Inc.** this past month who have been performing various creek maintenance, ditching, and culvert repair activities throughout the City.

We have been internally reviewing the existing **Ordinance 2021-56** for needed updates regarding the residential **Public Private Partnership** program. **Ordinance 2023-72** on tonight’s agenda proposes modifications to provide a more defined framework for the program, and to allow for a more streamlined, administrative day-to-day management of the program. The proposed amendment will be further discussed at an upcoming **Utilities & Sewers Committee** meeting.

Lastly, a contractor for the **Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS)** began performing stream restoration work on **lower Brookside Road** to remediate their property at 8970 Brookside Road. The project also includes streambank stabilization work behind the homes immediately upstream of the project site. The duration of this work is expected to take approximately seven months to complete.



Emily Thomas
COMMUNITY SERVICES
DIRECTOR

School's out for summer and we once again look forward to welcoming more youth into our community than ever before to

IDEA Camp and Summer Playground! I want to extend a special thank you to Marcia Abbadini, Claudia Duhan, Erin Spencer, and ALL our counselors for everything they are doing to ensure our campers have an amazing experience this summer.

There is plenty of summer fun to be had at our Friday Summer Concert Series with food trucks, a Farmers Market, and new this year, free pre-concert yoga sessions, now through July 28!

- **Farmers Market:** 5 PM – 8 PM
- ***NEW* Yoga:** 5:15 PM – 6:15 PM
(through Friday, July 21)
- **Food Trucks:** 6 PM – 9 PM
- **Concerts:** 7 PM – 9 PM

Mark your calendars for Home Days 2023 on Friday, August 4 from 6 to 11 PM and Saturday, August 5 from Noon to 11 PM in Elmwood Park! There will be something for everyone and fun for all ages... music, food, beer & wine garden, carnival rides, raffles, prizes, drawings, car show, cornhole, pickleball and volleyball tournaments, Family Fun Zone, Teen Scene, bingo, fireworks, and more! We hope you will join us for this celebration of our wonderful community!

At our upcoming summer events, we encourage everyone to keep an eye out for the INDYAlive! Community Perception Survey! INDYAlive!, formerly known as 25&Alive, has a new mission: to care for, support, and inspire our whole community through every stage of life. To

determine how to bring its mission to life, we need your input on the four (4) areas most impacting our community where INDYAlive! could make a difference.

Last but certainly not least, please join us in giving a warm welcome to Aimee Miller, our new Community Services Coordinator! Aimee will play a key administrative role on the Community Services Team as well as take the lead on activities, programs, events, and services for young and active adults in our community! Welcome to Independence, Aimee!



Steve Rega
FIRE CHIEF

I would like to congratulate Firefighters/Paramedics Jason Fahl and Austin Dapsis, who were promoted to Shift Lieutenant positions today. Both Jason

and Austin have been active members of the department since joining our team. They have prepared themselves well, and I look forward to working with them in their new positions.

On tonight's agenda is Ordinance 2023-63, which will allow applicants who are in the process of obtaining their State required certifications to take our entry-level firefighter examination. They will still have to have these certifications prior to appointment.

Also on the agenda is Ordinance 2023- 64, which authorizes the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Cleveland Clinic AtWork to provide a wellness program for the Fire Department. This will include annual medical evaluations and fitness assessments of all firefighters based on industry standards. This will be a three-year agreement for these services. Through this program, we seek to improve firefighter health and wellness through early recognition, treatment, and prevention of the known health risks in our profession.

With July 4th fast approaching, I would like to remind everyone that nationwide there is always an increase in the number of fires and injuries caused by fireworks in the weeks

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leading up to and after the Independence Day holiday. Even novelty fireworks commercially available at most stores can cause serious burns if handled improperly, especially by young children. They can also easily ignite grassfires during periods of dry weather. The best way to protect your family and friends is not to use them at all.

As a reminder, the City of Independence has opted out of the new State of Ohio law for fireworks that took effect last year. This means it is still illegal to discharge fireworks in the City of Independence.

I would like to wish everyone a safe and happy 4th of July holiday.



Tom Walchanowicz
PARKS & RECREATION
DIRECTOR

A reminder to everyone that our Independence Day July fireworks celebration will be held on Monday, July 3 with a rain date of Friday, July 7. Food vendors will begin serving food at 7 PM. We still have space available for non-profit groups looking for a fundraising opportunity!

Our Outdoor Pool opened on Memorial Day weekend to nice weather and a lively crowd. I just want to thank everyone involved in the start-up of this facility. There is a lot of preparation that goes into getting this facility re-opened each year! The new cabanas can be rented by calling either the Outdoor Pool or Civic Center.

Our new Co-ed Softball League is now in full swing! We have a total of six teams and over 100 players participating in this new program. Come out and watch your friends and neighbors play on Sunday mornings from 8:30-11:30 AM at the Zuber Field!

Finally, I am happy to report that we have a new Youth Kickball Program which will begin on July 19. We currently have over 80 1st-4th graders already signed up! We have more space

available, so make sure to sign up if you haven't already!



Robert Butler
POLICE CHIEF

On June 13, Mayor Kurtz swore in Patrolman Charles Billy as a full-time officer for our department. By adding this officer, we will be at full staffing! While many departments throughout the country have publicly stated they are unable to fill positions and are operating well below necessary or safe staffing levels, our department has consistently been able to attract top-tier candidates. This is a testament to the support IPD receives from the Mayor, Council, Finance Director, and our residents.

The goal for our department was to be 37 full-time officers. This hiring will put us at 37. However, we expect two retirements later this year and two in early 2024. I am confident that we will continue to attract exceptional candidates as these retirements approach. It is important to me that we find officers who fit with our team and community and know that we will uphold our standards and not alter those just to fill the ranks. I would rather delay hiring than add someone who does not meet our high standards.

I would like to thank all the members of our Volunteers In Police Service (VIPS) program for their assistance during our Memorial Day Services and Procession. They will also be helping us during July 3rd fireworks and Home Days. The VIPS meetings have evolved over the last 12 months, and I encourage more residents to attend these meetings to learn about policing and valuable information about our department. These one-hour meetings provide in-depth looks at certain aspects of our jobs. Recent meetings have included discussions on fingerprinting at a crime scene, SWAT team operations, how officers test potential drunk drivers, domestic violence investigation, and much more. The meetings bring the residents and police closer together and allow attendees to bring concerns or questions directly to our

officers. The meetings occur at the Civic Center at 7 PM on the first Thursday of each month.

We will host a Senior Self-Defense course on July 27 at 10 AM and a Female Self-Defense course on July 27 at 6 PM. Both classes will be held at the Civic Center and will be free to residents – more information is on our IPD Facebook page.



Ron McKinley
SERVICE DIRECTOR

The Service Department has been busy maintaining the beautiful flowers within the City. Weeding, planting, mulching, spraying, watering, grass cutting, and

landscaping are completed each day to assist in beautifying the City.

Compost deliveries continue during May and June. The Service Department has delivered over 200 loads of compost to residents on the list. If any resident would like compost delivered to their home, please contact the Service Department.

Maple Shade Cemetery Burials: There were two (2) burials in May.

Catch basin cleaning took place in the Great Oaks and Chestnut Woods area.

Tent and dumpster rental is each weekend from May until October at residents' homes, City functions, and school events.

The chipper crews were dispatched when applicable.

Service Department Totals for May

- **Rubbish disposed:** 291.60 tons.
- **Recycle disposed:** 59.73 tons.
- **Metals:** 128 items
- **HHW:** 276 items

HHW (Household Hazardous Waste) dropped off at the County: 858 pounds.



Dave Snyderburn
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIRECTOR

The Technical Services Department is preparing for the upcoming July 3 Independence Day and the August 4 and 5

Home Days events. This year's events will have

a large variety of foods along with plenty of entertainment and awesome firework shows. All departments work in unison to provide our residents with a safe, clean "First Class" celebration.

We look forward to providing a pleasant enjoyable experience. Enjoy the sunbeams of summer!

LEGISLATION

ORDINANCE 2023-54 An Ordinance approving the tax budget for the year 2024. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-60 An Ordinance fixing the compensation of Council members and the Vice Mayor in the City of Independence. **As Amended 6 yes/1 no (VE)**

ORDINANCE 2023-61 An Ordinance fixing the compensation of the Office of Mayor in the City of Independence to be full-time and establishing compensation. **As Amended 6 yes/1 no (VE)**

ORDINANCE 2023-62 An Ordinance requiring the position of Finance Director in the City of Independence to be full-time and establishing compensation. **As Amended 6 yes/1 no (VE)**

ORDINANCE 2023-63 An Ordinance amending Section 143.16 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Independence relating to paramedic certification. **As Amended 7 yes/0 no.**

ORDINANCE 2023-64 An Ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an agreement with Cleveland Clinic AtWork for professional services in connection with the Fire Department's wellness evaluation program. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-65 An Ordinance declaring improvements to certain parcels of property in the City of Independence, Ohio to be a public purpose for purposes of sections 5709.40 and 5709.42 of the Ohio Revised Code and exempt from taxation, describing public improvements to be made to directly benefit the parcels, requiring the owners of parcels to make service payments in lieu of taxes; establishing a municipal public improvement tax increment equivalent fund for the deposit of service payments, making related authorizations pursuant to Ohio Revised Code

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sections 5709.40, 5709.42, and 5709.43.

Enacted 7 yes/0 no

ORDINANCE 2023-66 An Ordinance authorizing participation in the Ohio Department of Transportation Cooperative Purchasing Program. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-67 An Ordinance authorizing the renewal of the agreement with Kimble Companies, Inc. for recycling processing services. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-68 An Ordinance accepting the bid option of Cargill, Inc. for the purchase and delivery of rock salt for the 2023-2024 snow season pursuant to the joint municipal improvement consortium. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-69 An Ordinance authorizing the purchase and delivery of a ride-on zero turn 72" mower for the Recreation Department. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-70 An Ordinance authorizing the disposal of unclaimed or forfeited property held by the City's Police Department pursuant to Ohio Revised Code section 2981.12(a)(2). **Enacted 7 yes/0 no**

ORDINANCE 2023-71 An Ordinance authorizing funding for road and right-of-way repairs necessitated by numerous water main breaks, leaks, and/or water valve and/or hydrant repairs 2023. **Enacted 7 yes/0 no.**

ORDINANCE 2023-74 An Ordinance accepting the proposal of Infinity Construction Co., Inc. for professional general contracting services in connection with the Civic Center Kitchen renovation project. **Enacted 6 yes/0 no/1 abstain (DI)**

Independence City Council meets the second Tuesday of every month. The public is invited to attend in person at City Hall or virtually via Zoom. Virtual attendants must pre-register on the city's website: independenceohio.org/government/city_council

The Council Caucus meeting usually begins at 5:30 PM but it is subject to change. Please check the website or call 216.328.1477 for the latest information.

The Council Meeting will start immediately following the Council Caucus meeting.

The July City Council meeting will be on Tuesday, July 11, 2023, and will start immediately after the Caucus meeting concludes.



FREE BOOKS *From Birth*

INSPIRING A LIFELONG LOVE OF READING

Since 1995, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has mailed **free**, high-quality books to children from birth to age five, no matter their family's income. The Queen of Country music – who prefers “The Book Lady” – created the book gifting organization in honor of her father to improve the lives of children, encourage literacy, and spark a lifelong love of reading and learning.

The nonprofit organization works with publishers to buy children's books at wholesale prices. Then, they work with U.S. Postal Service to get a reduced mailing rate through their nonprofit to mail the books directly to children. In Ohio, all children under the age of five are eligible to receive a brand new, age-appropriate book every month, instilling a love of books and family reading from an early age.

FREE BOOKS FROM BIRTH

The day a child is born, a parent can sign up to have books delivered to their home. The goal is that the children will be prepared for kindergarten and be at the expected literacy level.

The Literacy Cooperative leads the program throughout Cuyahoga County, where 37,000 children are currently enrolled. Parton's Imagination Library of Ohio mails kids one free book each month until their 5th birthday at no cost to families.



Enroll your child today
by scanning the QR code,
visit www.literacycooperative.org,
text FREEBOOKS to 216.412.9005, or call
The Literacy Cooperative at 216.776.6180.





Independence City Hall
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July 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	1 Saturday
2	3 Independence Day Celebration 7 PM 	4 Independence Day 	5	6	7 Summer Concert 7 PM  Farmers Market 5 – 8 PM 	8
9 Farmers Market 9 AM – 1 PM 	10 Mayor's Listening Night 5 PM Planning Public Hearing 5 PM Planning Commission 5:30 PM	11 Caucus 5:30 PM Regular Council Meeting 7 PM	12	13 Board of Zoning Appeals following Caucus 5:30 PM	14 Summer Concert 7 PM  Farmers Market 5 – 8 PM 	15
16 Farmers Market 9 AM – 1 PM 	17	18	19	20 Architectural Board of Review 3 PM	21 Summer Concert 7 PM  Farmers Market 5 – 8 PM 	22
23 Farmers Market 9 AM – 1 PM 	24	25	26	27	28 Summer Concert 7 PM  Farmers Market 5 – 8 PM 	29
30 Farmers Market 9 AM – 1 PM 	31	Please confirm Caucus and Council Committee Meeting times by calling the “Council Meeting Line” at 216.328.1477 or check the website www.IndependenceOhio.org				