



Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc.
P. O. Box 34044
Parma, Ohio 44134

Please visit our website at www.noccassoc.org Spring 2012

President's Piece:

National League of Cities ("NLC") Ambassador Program

Danita Love, NOCCA President and Highland Hills Council President

NOCCA President Danita Love volunteered to become a National League of Cities ("NLC") Ambassador to share experiences and advice on being a local elected official with fellow leaders. President Love will help leaders from across the nation, and right here at home, navigate challenges, discuss creative solutions to common problems, and share valuable skills and perspectives.

The NLC Ambassador program is a field team which links tenured elected and appointed officials to share their experience with the next wave of city leaders. By serving as an NLC Ambassador, established NLC members may help new members navigate their position in public office, discuss creative solutions to common issues, work with NLC staff to ensure an engaged membership and share the value and importance of NLC has had for their city. Ambassadors are volunteers who are committed to serving cities by helping NLC build better communities. Ambassadors serve a special role in the organization and in municipalities by being able to connect members from one leader to another.

The NLC Ambassador program was officially launched during the NLC Congressional City Conference, March 10-14, 2012 in Washington, D.C. The program was created as a platform for experienced officials to foster connections and encourage engagement.

"Seasoned local officials have an opportunity to reach out to fellow members so they can get the most out of their NLC membership," said James E. Mitchell, Jr., NLC Immediate

PLAN TO ATTEND OUR SPRING FORUM

Thursday, May 17, 2012
Brook Park Recreation Center
17400 Holland Road
Brook Park, Ohio 44142

Cuyahoga County: Past, Present and Future Growth

Special Guest Speaker:
Tom Bier

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| Registration | 6:00 p.m. |
| Program | 6:30 p.m. |
| Speakers | 6:45 p.m. |
| Q&A | 7:45 p.m. |

Dr. Bier has conducted housing studies for 25 years and has investigated the influence of public policies on cities. He has worked with local governments and community organizations to implement strategies for housing improvement. Dr. Bier has been instrumental in the development of the "first suburbs," or inner ring suburbs movement. His articles on urban topics frequently appear on the forum page of The Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Contact Linda Young at 216.548.7800 or via e-mail at lindacrossyoung19@att.net to make your reservation.

President's Piece: (continued)

Past President and Councilmember, Charlotte, NC. "Our 'members helping members' model allows us to make these important connections through personal engagement."

NLC Ambassadors can volunteer at NLC conferences and events, State Municipal League meetings or by making personal connections with local officials in their own city. President Love did just that during the conference by mentoring and engaging her two newly elected Highland Hills councilmembers, Lillian Moore and Jean Smith. The program currently has more than 30 volunteer ambassadors. NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

Membership Corner:

Benefits of NOCCA Membership

Peggy Cleary, NOCCA Secretary and Fairview Park Councilwoman

As revenues decrease and expenses increase, municipalities, townships and villages are working harder than ever to maintain and ensure the efficient and effective delivery of city services. In order to accomplish this, many mayors, city managers, councils and trustees are reaching across city borders to engage in conversations and work in collaboration with other cities to reduce the cost of city services and share in the purchase and/or use of equipment.

NOCCA membership provides members with the opportunity to meet and collaborate with their local council colleagues; improve their skills and effectiveness; discuss and develop solutions to common problems; focus on mutual solutions to growing economic development; and attend quarterly forums relevant to effective and responsible government.

Mayors and Managers from our region report that membership in the Cuyahoga County Mayors and Managers Association to be an essential, professional asset. Membership in NOCCA provides similar value to council members and trustees. At \$400 per year, NOCCA membership is a fraction of the cost for annual membership in the Mayors and Managers Association or National League of Cities.

If your municipality, village or township is not a current member, please consider joining NOCCA. We have intentionally kept the annual membership fees at a minimum to increase the opportunity for all municipalities, villages and townships in Northeast Ohio to join.

NOCCA members are encouraged to attend the upcoming forum on Thursday, May 17th. More details for the forum will be listed on our website.

To view a complete listing of upcoming and past forums, or to view webcasts of our most recent forums, please visit our redesigned website www.noccassoc.org.

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Forum Wrap-Up:

Working Together to Strengthen Our Region

Matt Zone, NOCCA Past President and Cleveland Councilman

On February 16, 2012, the Northeast Ohio City Council Association (NOCCA) sponsored their quarterly forum titled: **Working Together to Strengthen Our Region**; which featured Mayor William Currin of Hudson, past NOCCA President Councilman Matt Zone of Cleveland and Tom Tyrrell. As many of you know, the job of any mayor, council member or township trustee is to provide the best possible services to his or her constituents while trying to keep tax rates low.

When all communities in a region like Northeast Ohio *independently* seek to maximize their tax base, a number of problems arise:

- **Accelerated Outmigration:** New communities at the edge of the metro area are under pressure to build their tax base, so they encourage the migration of development from older communities;
- **Competition Rather Than Cooperation:** In a fragmented region, there's little incentive to cooperate for the greater good; and
- **Distorted Land Use:** Some communities, such as those with a lot of environmentally sensitive land, are pressured to develop at greater intensity than they should.

The historical structure of local government and tax policies in Ohio encourage adversarial relationships among public sector institutions, perpetuate fragmented planning, and compel community leaders to compete against one another for tax base, particularly commercial and industrial development. The Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI), an initiative of the Northeast Ohio Mayors and City Managers Association (NEOMCMA), seeks to alter this situation by building coordination and collaboration among public sector institutions. The goal is a cohesive, collaborative regional strategy for economic development, more effective and efficient government and a more sustainable future. The RPI focuses much of their effort on land use and infrastructure planning and new growth gain sharing as means to that goal. Thus, the RPI seeks to advance:

Strategic Regional Planning

The NEO Consortium for a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development is a major three-year undertaking, involving 12 counties, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The project represents an unprecedented opportunity to engage existing institutions in coordination of planning and information systems from a strongly regional perspective, and to bring that perspective to bear on local government policy and allocation of public resources. Success of the project depends heavily on engagement of the public sector and its commitment to the project's goals. The RPI has been working for four years to this end and will expand this success by building that engagement and commitment.

At the outset of the RPI it was recognized, in order for cooperation and coordination on strategic regional planning among public officials to advance, that the incentive to compete for tax base (which dominates existing relationships) would have to be mitigated. The mechanism RPI chose to overcome this inter-community competition is new gain sharing. In sharing, a portion of a jurisdiction's cumulative annual income tax is pooled. The pool is then distributed by group-determined formula to those jurisdictions based on relative tax capacity, generally favoring older communities with low or no growth.

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Forum Wrap-Up: (continued)

RPI initially modeled a sharing system that would involve commercial and industrial property value and income tax, but determined this methodology too confrontational for early success.

In its initial promotion of the system across NEO, RPI found more support than resistance and was encouraged to advance the initiative to the point of draft state legislation that would enable sharing to occur. It also found that property tax sharing was not feasible at this time because of constitutional constraints and the complexities involved with school funding. Thus RPI is moving ahead with gain sharing, and requests support for its efforts involving state legislation and further development of support among regional leaders.

Opportunities

Ideas and efforts to recalibrate local government to better serve the public interest have been developing for a number of years. During the past four years the RPI has advanced a substantial conversation regarding regional and collaborative principles. RPI has focused on the two core areas of gain sharing and strategic regional planning.

The environment for consideration of major change has improved substantially, particularly; this has been influenced by fiscal stress at state and local levels. Researchers and policy makers in Northeast Ohio have talked about these problems for decades without much impact on regional land use trends. The most promising response has been the Ohio Lake Erie Commission's Balanced Growth Program, an innovative framework to promote collaborative planning within river watersheds in order to protect water quality.

In 2008 a group of politically influential mayors, council members and commissioners, came together to put a new idea on the regional agenda—gain-sharing from new development so that all communities in the region can benefit from smart growth. It's an idea that has worked well for many years in other regions of the United States.

The initiative's final report, released in June 2010, presents a methodology for "gain-sharing" among communities related to the future smart growth of commercial and industrial development in the region. The report also recommends a process of coordinated land-use and infrastructure planning for the 16-county region, recognizing that economic development needs to be based on sustainable patterns of land use.

To implement the RPI, its leaders are promoting state policy reforms that will make it easier to collaborate at the regional level. Ideas from the RPI were incorporated into Northeast Ohio's recent successful proposal for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant offered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Once implemented, the RPI will provide the structure for coordinated regional land use planning and new growth gain-sharing in the 16-county Northeast Ohio region. In short, the RPI will allow our region to plan, gain-share and grow...together. This effort—to benefit through collaboration—is an important step toward government reform at the municipal, county and regional levels, with comprehensive results that can propel our region into a new and prosperous era.

For more information: www.neo-rpi.org

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Opinion Matters:

Oakwood Village Youth Council ("OYC")

Anthony Akins, NOCCA Treasurer and Oakwood Village Councilman

The Oakwood Village Youth Council ("OYC") was established by Councilwoman Eloise Hardin, Council Clerk Deb Hladky, and Councilman Anthony Akins in October 2010. These three individuals saw the need for local youth to be involved in civic engagement and took steps to make it possible.

Oakwood Village youth who are enrolled in school and are ages 12-17 are eligible to apply and become youth council members. Eight youth council members have served on the OYC during the 2011-2012 school year. Ten youth council members served on the OYC during the 2010-2011 school year. The group meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month. When OYC convenes, past and future community service events are discussed. They also discuss fundraising opportunities. The OYC serves as a voice for the youth of Oakwood Village, and the group has a responsibility to report any needs and concerns to the Mayor and Village Council.

The OYC has a community service initiative called "Step-It-Up." Through "Step-It-Up," OYC has assisted Oakwood Village Mayor Gary Gottschalk in distributing Thanksgiving baskets to underprivileged residents. The team served dinner to elderly residents at an Oakwood Village nursing home. The students have written letters to our troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and they participated in a blood drive. OYC has also signed up to become part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative and hosted a Let's Move! Wii tournament in 2011, meant to encourage indoor physical activity. To view the video of the Wii Tournament you can visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mYfXF7mFbU&feature=relmfu>. The group is also in the process of working on an initiative to address bullying in the Bedford School District.

Although community service is a major part of the OYC, it is not the group's only purpose. The OYC was originally created to provide Oakwood Village youth with hands-on experience in government leadership. The OYC diligently learns roles and processes of the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government. That's why the OYC teamed up with Hi-Y of Ohio/West Virginia in the Fall of 2011 to work on drafting legislation they will propose at the annual "Youth in Government" conference at the Ohio State Capitol in April 2012. To find out more information about Hi-Y and Youth in Government, please visit www.hi-y.org.

OYC charter members who were active during the 2010-2011 school year were not a part of Hi-Y. However, the charter group established by-laws and officer positions such as President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Historian, and Marketing Coordinator. The charter members of OYC were responsible in setting the foundation for future OYC members.

In the future, the group plans to raise enough money to attend the annual National League of Cities (NLC) Conference in Washington, D.C. At this conference, the OYC would have an opportunity to meet and network with youth council members from other parts of the country, and gain more ideas on how they may better serve their community. To keep up with the latest updates about the OYC, visit Councilman Anthony Akins' Twitter Page: @CouncilmanAkins.

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Municipal Topic:

Statewide Regulation for "Internet Cafes"?

Danita Love, NOCCA President and Highland Hills Council President

Cleveland's new Horseshoe Casino will open its doors soon and plans are moving forward for slots-only racinos at the state's seven horse racing tracks.

These businesses are all regulated by the state, but what isn't regulated by the folks in Columbus are the Internet Cafes that are popping up all around us.

"There are now over 300 sweepstakes parlors, Internet parlors, that are in this state that are totally unregulated," said Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine.

"They're really a consumer rip-off. There's no regulation though in regards to these unregulated gambling places that we find all over the state of Ohio that we refer to as these Internet cafes," said DeWine.

There is an argument though that while each casino employee will have to go through an extensive background check before going to work, the state has no idea even the names of those working in these sweepstakes parlors.

"We don't know if any of these individuals has a criminal background. We don't know where that money is going. We don't know who the investors are, so that's a huge problem," said DeWine.

The Attorney General's field staff visited 103 of these locations last month and found most allowed smoking, with some even handing out ashtrays at the door, most were located near a cash checking/payday lending business and some swipe driver's licenses upon entry though it wasn't clear where that information went.

"I asked the state legislature a year ago to take action on this, last week I again renewed my plea." DeWine sent a letter to lawmakers highlighting what his staff found and asking them to put in place the regulatory framework that will enable his office to make sure that these operations are not taking advantage of Ohioans.

"I think that they are getting ripped off because there is no guarantee what the payoff is," said DeWine. "Look, someone comes in a casino and everybody knows kind of what the deal is, the game is set so that a certain percentage has to be paid out."

This seems to be a very pressing issue for most cities, with a definite need to impose regulations on a statewide basis!

NOCCA E-NEWS

April 2012

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