



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

Please visit our website at [www.noccassoc.org](http://www.noccassoc.org) Fall 2013

## President's Page:

### Benefits of NOCCA Membership

*Peggy Cleary, NOCCA President and Fairview Park Councilwoman*

As members of municipal councils, townships and villages return from summer recess, we resume the continued tasks of establishing policy, prioritizing and allocating resources for city services and projects, and responding to the needs and concerns of our constituents. Many councils also begin to prepare for annual budget reviews to ensure that programs are working and budgeted funds are being well-spent.

Membership in Northeast Ohio City Council Association (NOCCA) assists Councilmembers in these efforts by increasing understanding of local and regional trends and best practices in local government, providing access to resources and information, and improving skills and effectiveness.

Current members find NOCCA membership to be an essential and valued professional asset, that is similar to the benefits many Mayors and Managers from our region find in their membership with the Cuyahoga County Mayors and Managers Association.

As Councils review and plan for their 2014 budget, they are encouraged to consider the benefits and bargain of renewed NOCCA membership. The annual fee is only \$400 per city for up to nine Councilmembers. If your city, township or village is not a current member, we look forward to you and your city becoming members in the coming year.

### PLAN NOW TO ATTEND OUR FALL FORUM

Thursday, September 19, 2013  
Embassy Suites Independence  
5800 Rockside Woods Blvd.  
Independence, Ohio 44131

### Fighting Blighted, Vacant & Foreclosed Properties in Your Community

#### GUEST SPEAKERS:

Colleen Majeski  
Michael Schramm  
Michael Sweeney

Registration	6:00 p.m.
Program	6:30 p.m.
Q&A	7:15 p.m.

The negative impact and consequences of blighted, vacant and foreclosed properties on communities are far reaching and continue today. They create economic, physical and social suffering that can result in increased crime, a significant tax base reduction, and decrease overall neighborhood property values as blighted properties begin to deteriorate. Cuyahoga County was the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis that left vacant and abandoned properties scattered across the county. The Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, Treasurer's Office and Land Bank responded with initiatives and programs designed to partner with local municipalities, townships and communities

Contact Linda Young at 216.548.7800 or via e-mail at [lindacrossyoung19@att.net](mailto:lindacrossyoung19@att.net) to make your reservation.

# Municipal Topic:

## Can a Costly iPad Reduce Costly Expenses?

*Anthony Akins, NOCCA Treasurer and Oakwood Councilman*

How many times have we heard the phrase, “Less is more”? This popular saying is especially true in our era, otherwise known as the digital age. Just take a look around. Pretty soon email usage will annihilate 90 percent of U.S. Postal Service functions. Also, the average American trades tangible, hand-held music albums for MP3 and iTunes purchases. Even DVDs are on the verge of becoming extinct, as technology gradually makes it easier to share and download digital copies of movies. Paper and material clutter are on the decrease in our physical world, as megabytes and gigabytes rapidly expand their territory in the virtual world.



But whether we like being part of the fast-growing digital age, we must accept technology’s ability to reduce material clutter, free up home and office space, and reduce costs...significantly. Who could possibly compete with that? Reducing costs and saving money has been a priority for municipalities since the beginning of time, and our country’s recession has forced city leaders to make hard choices that have cost jobs, raised taxes, closed businesses, and limit beautification efforts. Cities are also cutting costs through paper reduction. Here’s a scenario that explains the costly method of paper mail:

**Step One:** Clerk of Council spends hours printing large sums of paper correspondence that is soon to be hand delivered to councilpersons. Why the large sums of paper? Info such as Meeting Agendas, Mayoral Court Reports, Police and Fire Reports, and other affairs are included in the correspondence.

**Step Two:** Authorized city employee hand delivers the correspondence to the home of each councilperson. Factor in the cost to compensate this employee on a weekly basis, every year.

**Step Three:** The correspondence is received and reviewed by the councilperson. It is then placed in a workspace in his or her home and over time, additional correspondence dominates the workspace. True, the councilperson could take the time to regularly toss and shred old papers, but due to his or her demanding schedule, the likelihood is slim.

**Step Four:** When the workspace clutter becomes unbearable, huge amounts of paper are disposed. Waste Management arrives to retrieve what has been disposed, and delivers it to a general trash facility.

The constant, growing buildup of paper material at a waste management plant can eventually lead to hazardous effects on our environment. In an effort to reduce paper mail and usage, the Village of

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## Municipal Topic: (continued)

Oakwood decided to investigate methods neighboring cities used. It was discovered that some cities switched to the paperless route through the use of Apple iPads, and as a result, Oakwood Village chose the same path. Today, its councilpersons are each assigned a single iPad which connects to a “cloud” service known as “Dropbox.” Using the Dropbox method, the Clerk of Council scans and saves agendas and other documents to a shared folder. Instantly, the information becomes available to the entire Council. Dropbox helps eliminate the need for hand-delivered, weekly, paper correspondence (in most cases). The dramatic cost reduction in paper communication and postage is expected to greatly outweigh the initial monetary investment of the iPads.

Our iPads are useful in handling local issues a variety of ways. For example, the iPad enables councilpersons to take notes, keep a database of concerns, and take pictures when meeting with residents at their homes. Long gone are the days of trying to remember pertinent details that took place in past conversations. WiFi or a mobile data plan permits councilpersons to immediately connect to our codified ordinances and pull up relevant legislation. We are then able to determine how closely that particular legislation pertains to a resident’s concern. Furthermore, our iPads make it easy to schedule appointments through the use of “Siri,” which is a digital assistant that comes standard with recent iPads and iPhones. Simply say, “Siri, schedule an appointment with me and Mr. Jones on Friday at 2pm” and Siri will create a calendar entry and reminder on your iPad so you never have to miss an appointment again. You can even purchase a keyboard case with your iPad for those who may not care to type on a touch screen.

So basically, the use of an iPad has allowed our village to save money, reduce paper mail, and work more efficiently as we serve our community. Is an Apple iPad right for your city? I highly recommend you start the research and see for yourself whether going paperless is right for you.

## Opinion Piece:

### **My Opinion!**

*Jackie Albers, NOCCA Vice President and Maple Heights Council President*

Something is missing in my daily routine, creating challenges that are forcing new methods, new paths to information that previously was readily available. Local news arrives in brief side bars, world events in full pages with colorful photos that provide information if you subscribe to the online newspaper and purchase the actual paper.

Talking with residents, family and friends you will discover that few actually read and digest the news through the Plain Dealer. Usually it’s the quick trip to any one of the numerous social media sites or television news for our busy lifestyle.

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## Opinion Piece: (continued)

Where do we verify facts, separate bias opinions, and determine truth? Recall the telephone game when a local story travels and grows with each telling? That back fence news travels faster than logging onto Wikipedia.

Local and state politics, national decisions that affect us all need to be investigated with actual facts separating individual opinions. We can also take some responsibility and honest effort to research.

I also mourn the loss of POLITIFACT, which has not reappeared in the new format as yet. And here is another venue . . . the educational forums provided throughout the area from organizations like NOCCA.

## Membership Matters:

### **Understanding Membership**

*Lloyd Anderson, NOCCA Nominating Committee and Bedford Heights Councilman*

When I was elected to City Council approximately two years ago, I wanted to bring more to my Council caucus and committee meetings than just my knowledge and personal experiences pertaining to government. Even though I was a 15-year resident of my city and was involved extensively in community service, I wanted to ensure that my four year Council term did not become embedded in just local politics. Fortunately, my City Council was a member of NOCCA and I received all of the ongoing information about NOCCA in my Council packets. Consequently, I attended my first annual dinner meeting in February of 2012 and also attended other selected forum meetings thereafter.

These venues have afforded me the opportunity to not only hear informative speakers on various governmental topics and issues, but has also allowed me to meet my peers in a casual setting where I could talk politics and network with them. This was and continues to be my opportunity to engage in politics outside of my local arena and share these experiences, either directly or indirectly, when I return to my local turf.

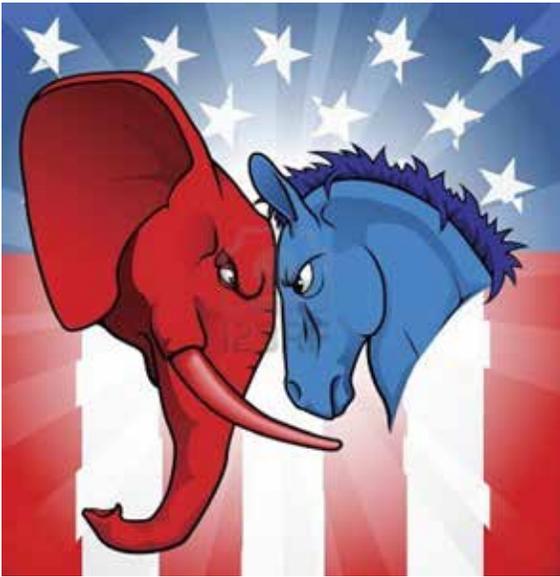
NOCCA has been an excellent venue for me to learn and share experiences with other local City Council members, including my home city. I am also proud and humbled that various Executive Board Officers asked me to serve on the Nominating Committee this year. It has been an enjoyable experience and I encourage any Council member to attend NOCCA events. I plan to continue to be at all of their functions, unless I have a conflict, proudly wearing my NOCCA board member nametag. Please don't hesitate to engage me or any of our board members in conversation. We attend functions to be accessible to you!

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# Forum Wrap-Up:

## **The Art of Civility in Politics: Reaching Across the Aisle**

*Lloyd Anderson, NOCCA Nominating Committee and Bedford Heights Councilman*



On February 21, 2013 NOCCA had the distinct pleasure of having Steven C. LaTourette deliver the keynote address at the annual dinner forum. The topic was “The Art of Civility in Politics: Reaching Across the Aisle”. After a noteworthy introduction by NOCCA Vice President and Maple Heights City Council President Jackie Albers, Steve took the podium and was quick to declare that after 18 years of public service in the Ohio House of Representatives he decided to leave “unindicted and undefeated”. He also firmly believes that had he chose to seek a tenth term this upcoming November, he would win. That being said, Steve was also critical of his colleagues for their failure to simply reach across the aisle to approach and solve problems. This is what he called “Civility in Politics”.

Steve emphasized that during his 14 years of service on the transportation committee he never encountered a republican road or a democratic bridge. He marveled about one of his favorite highways; the northern part of Route 8 in Summit County. He explained that a federal highway bill, six years in the making, didn’t get passed simply because of the 18 cents federal tax on a gallon of gasoline; of which 2.8 cents per gallon was set aside for mass transit.

Moreover, other enhancements which equate to quality of life, such as biking, walking and hiking paths; rails to trails, etc. couldn’t receive the requisite 218 votes needed to pass in the House. He cited other bills that he became frustrated with as well, which contributed to him not seeking re-election.

Nonetheless, Steve’s new job is President of Main Street Partnership. He explained that this partnership is set up to provide aid, comfort, safe haven and protection for those who choose to govern from the center. Steve also stated that we can disagree without being disagreeable, and that he would rather solve five out of ten problems, rather than solve nothing at all.

Summarily, this is what he will be aspiring to accomplish in his new position and we wish him well!

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# Scholarship Advantage:

## The Value of Scholarships?

*Danita Love, NOCCA Past President and Highland Hills Council President*

Scholarships are essentially free money to pay for education. Scholarships do not have to be paid back and many do not have any criteria you have to fulfill in order to get them, except applying for them and fulfilling the application criteria. However, each year our scholarships do not get awarded because our members simply do not apply for them. If someone were passing out free money, would you pass it up?

One of the most common reasons that scholarships are not applied for is because there is a common misconception that scholarships are difficult to apply for and is a tedious process. This may have been true in the past, but with the advent of personal computers and the internet, and now even cell phones with all of its functionality, the process for a scholarship is now very easy. It really is as simple as filling out the application. By simply applying for our free scholarship, you are literally giving all of the necessary information needed in order to be approved for a scholarship, and it's free.

The benefits of applying for our scholarships is to further your education, enhance your skills and abilities, and have an opportunity to network with colleagues. Potential scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

By participating in our application process, you could potentially receive free money for your continued education in the form of a NOCCA scholarship. So don't pass up this opportunity! In the long run, free scholarship money could save you thousands of dollars while affording you the opportunity to further your education.

To obtain a scholarship application please visit our website at [www.noccassoc.org](http://www.noccassoc.org) or call 216.548.7800.

	<b>SAMPLE</b> <b>Request for Scholarship Funds</b>
<small>Northeast Ohio City Council Association (NOCCA) Board of Directors voted to provide an amount of \$1,500.00 for the Membership Scholarship Fund on a first received basis. An amount of \$500.00 per NOCCA member applicable to University offered Leadership Academy programs or an amount of not more than \$200.00 awarded per NOCCA member for any other leadership seminar, conference or other educational offering for Councilpersons which assists with their Council duties. A member may receive only one scholarship per year. Non-recipients will be considered before previous recipients. All scholarships will be reimbursed to the member's city or to the member, upon documentation of payment to an approved program. Please send in your request as soon as possible.</small>	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____	State: _____ Zip: _____
Program I Wish To Attend: _____	
Date Program Held: _____	Reimbursement Cost: _____
Please return your request to: NOCCA (Northeast Ohio City Council Association, Inc.) P.O. Box 34044 Parma, Ohio 44134	
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### NOCCA E-NEWS

September 2013

#### 2013 NOCCA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President:	Peggy Cleary	Fairview Park
Vice President:	Jackie Albers	Maple Heights
Treasurer:	Anthony Akins	Oakwood
Secretary:	Ed Bonk	Orange Village
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	Ann Marie Donegan	Olmsted Falls
	Eloise Henry	Richmond Hts.
	Matt Trafis	Seven Hills
Nom. Committee:	Lloyd Anderson	Bedford Hts.
	Patti Astorino	Brook Park
	Adele Zucker	University Hts.
Past President:	Danita Love	Highland Hills

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