



Hello Hamilton County

October 29, 2007

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the week: *"Part of true success is understanding that there's something bigger and more important than ourselves."*

~Marcia Ann Gillespie

Banks Working Group Unanimously Approves Master Development Agreement



On Tuesday, October 23, the Banks Working Group unanimously approved a master development agreement and other related agreements to advance the Banks project. These documents — including agreements between the City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and the master developer — bring together all the necessary partners to create a vibrant riverfront with a variety of residential options, entertainment venues including restaurants and bars, riverfront office and hospitality space, and an expansive green riverfront park. The Banks will be developed under an aggressive economic inclusion policy, will bring more than \$600 million in private investment to our riverfront, and will become a regional economic force.

This plan works for the City, the County, the region and its citizens because it:

- **Creates a destination** by building a place where people will want to live and play.
- **Brings economic growth** by driving more than \$600 million in private investment, bringing more than 3,000 residents to the area and creating hundreds of jobs during the construction phase alone.

- **Makes downtown Cincinnati more competitive** by providing new sites for businesses so we can better compete with other cities, suburbs and Northern Kentucky.
- **Provides flexibility.** The development is primarily residential, with anticipated office, retail, and hotel uses. Under the zoning recently approved by the Planning Commission, office space is limited to a maximum of 1,000,000 square feet out of the 2,800,000 square feet maximum total development. The plan capitalizes on the new urbanism trend by providing a place for people to move back to the city and be near work, entertainment, and necessities.
- **Provides financial feasibility.** Because the project site must be raised out of the flood plain by construction of supporting parking garages and other infrastructure, the project is expensive no matter what. Increased development density can generate more tax increment financing revenues and other tax revenues in support of the needed public infrastructure to make the plan work.

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Banks, continued.

- **Allows for continued public authority over project design** via the City’s planned development district plan review and urban design review processes.
- **Is economically inclusive.** It brings jobs, economic development, and the economic and workforce inclusion of minorities and women.

In constructing the project, the City and County are also establishing policies and goals designed to

encourage small business opportunities and workforce development. Due to these small business and inclusion policies, the community will not only build an exciting new destination and neighborhood on the riverfront but will also build the capacity of small businesses and the skills of individual workers.

The developer estimates that ground will be broken on the project in early 2008 with construction starting soon thereafter. It is expected that residents will be living on The Banks by early 2010.

The Banks: City and County set a timeline for action

Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory and Hamilton County Commission President Todd Portune have announced a series of public meetings to review the Banks development agreements and to make decisions related to the project.

Schedule:

Meeting: Joint Meeting of the Finance and Economic Development Committees of Cincinnati City Council

Date & Time: Monday, October 29, 2007, 10:00 am

Location: City Council Chambers, City Hall, 801 Plum Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Purpose: Presentation of the Banks Agreements by the Banks Working Group. There will be an opportunity for questions.

Meeting: Joint Meeting of the Hamilton County Commission and Cincinnati City Council

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 1:00 pm

Location: Duke Energy Center, 525 Elm Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Purpose: Presentation of the Banks Agreements by the Banks Working Group to City Council and County Commission. The meeting will be co-chaired by Mayor Mallory and Commission President Portune. There will be an opportunity for questions, but there will be no legislative action at the meeting.

Meeting: Concurrent Special Sessions of the Hamilton County Commission and Cincinnati City Council

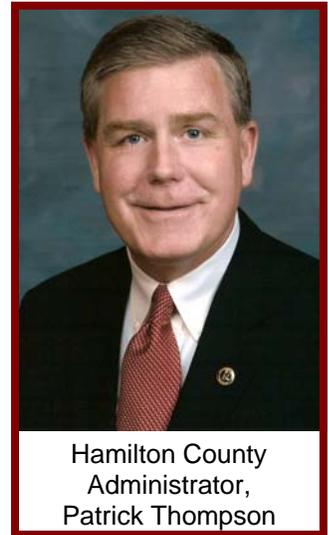
Date & Time: Thursday, November 1, 2007, 1:00 pm

Location: National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, 50 East Freedom Way, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Purpose: Approval of the Banks Agreements.



Hamilton County Administrator Releases Recommended 2008 Budget



On Monday, October 29th, Hamilton County Administrator Patrick Thompson released his recommended 2008 budget to the County Commission. The recommended budget is the culmination of considerable efforts by county departments to develop a balanced budget. The general fund budget totals \$276.8 million and the all funds budget (primarily state and federal pass through resources) totals \$1.2 billion. The general fund budget reflects significant reductions to comply with the Commission's directive that no tax increases be included in the general fund.

"It is a challenging time for the county with stagnant revenue growth, so we've had to tighten our belt and make tough decisions," Thompson said. "But the important thing to me, as well as the Commissioners, is that the citizens of this county receive a balanced budget achieved without a tax increase. We've been as creative as possible to ensure the public receives the best value and services for its investment."

Mr. Thompson emphasized in his briefing to the Commissioners that the recommended 2008 budget does not include the public safety initiatives begun by the Commission in 2006 and 2007 to address jail crowding and that are currently funded from the county's reserves. These initia-

tives, primarily the housing of inmates in Butler County and the Over-the-Rhine (OTR) sheriff patrols, total \$8.4 million in 2008 and are anticipated to be funded from the sales tax proposal supporting the Comprehensive Safety Plan that will be placed before voters November 6, 2007. If the Safety Plan sales tax fails, extensive additional cuts in the county budget will be required to maintain these initiatives in 2008.

As detailed in Mr. Thompson's transmittal letter to the County Commission, the budget represents reductions to nearly every entity that use resources generated by the county. Funding to outside agencies is dramatically reduced, and in some cases eliminated. Every county department, except the Veteran's Commission and the Board of Elections, will realize some level of reduction. According to state law, the Veteran's Commission sets its own budget and the County Commissioners cannot change it. The Board of Elections will see a dramatic increase in 2008 to prepare for and execute the presidential election with new federal voting rules, especially in the area of absentee voting.

The recommended 2008 general fund budget includes a reduction of 107 full-time equivalent positions. Mr. Thompson noted, "These choices were extremely

difficult to make and we will do everything in our

power to help displaced employees re-locate to unfilled county positions within the limits of civil service rules. If that is not possible, we will provide appropriate severance according to current policy."

The budget is structurally balanced with ongoing revenue exceeding ongoing expenditures. A significant factor in balancing the budget is the use of the general fund reserve for one-time expenses in 2008, especially employee separation costs and extraordinary presidential year election costs in 2008.

Thompson said. "I am releasing the recommended budget several weeks early to allow for a thorough discussion on the reductions in my recommended budget and to allow the Commission to develop alternatives."

The County Administrator's briefing and budget transmittal are available on the County website at www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov. If you have questions, please contact Christian Sigman, county administrator's office, at 513.946.4327.



Hamilton County Job and Family Services' Children's Services Hiring Fair A Grand Slam!



Sandra Costa (HCJFS) and Lori Woods (County Personnel) help an applicant during the Children's Services Hiring Fair.

The Children's Services Division of Hamilton County Job and Family Services (HCJFS) will be welcoming nearly 60 new Children's Services Workers, thanks to a recent hiring event that took place on Saturday, September 29th at HCJFS's 237 William Howard Taft location. HCJFS's first ever Hiring Fair was held from 9:00am until 2:00pm and was advertised by a variety of local media, including the Cincinnati Enquirer and Channel 64. You may have even heard an advertisement for the event on Warm 98 or KISS 107.

Two weeks prior to the event, interested candidates were asked to RSVP by going to the Hamilton County website and applying online. In addition, walk-in candidates were accepted throughout the day. This was truly a collaborative effort between Children's Services, County Personnel, and HCJFS Human Resources. Together, these organizations' employees planned and executed an extremely well attended fair.

On September 29th, 83 RSVP candidates were interviewed and met with HR representatives to negotiate a starting salary and begin the rigorous background checking process. An additional 326

walk-ins submitted applications for the Children's Services Worker positions or other Hamilton County positions. Nearly 70 of the 326 walk-ins were also interviewed on the spot.

From the approximately 153 interviews conducted that day, 115 candidates received a contingent offer of employment, pending the results of background checks that were initiated at the fair. To date, a group of 15 candidates have completed the entire background checking process and will begin their employment as Children's Services Workers on November 1st. Another group of approximately 20 new employees will begin with JFS on November 15th. The HR department will continue to process candidates and fill remaining Children's Services vacancies.

The success of this event is proof that when Hamilton County employees pull together, great things can happen. Hamilton County Personnel Director Gary Berger, who volunteered at the event, said it best when he stated with regards to the Hiring Fair, "We were hoping for a home run but what we got was a grand slam!"



Moira Weir’s Appointment as Director of Hamilton County Job and Family Services Made Permanent



Moira Weir, HCJFS Director

Hamilton County Commissioners voted unanimously to permanently appoint Hamilton County Job and Family Services’ Director Moira Weir to her position, and they passed the formal resolution on Wednesday, October 24. Weir was named director in June, following the retirement of Rick Roberts. Commissioner Todd Portune said at the time he would wait until the department had met some of the challenges facing it to make the appointment permanent.

The Commissioners made the appointment permanent at the request of County Administrator Patrick Thompson. Thompson cited Weir’s work on several ini-

tiatives, including increasing background checks for foster parents, child care providers and others; implementing substations throughout the community; facilitating the department’s re-entry into the Protect Ohio program; initiating a Medicaid outreach program; and helping to create a community-wide recruitment campaign for foster care and adoptive parents.

“Ms. Weir’s leadership and commitment to reform has our department on track to being one of the best in the state at dealing with tough issues such as child welfare, child support collection and public assistance programs,” Thompson said.

“I am a product of the input and hard work of so many people in this organization. I see this appointment as validation for the great work of all JFS employees,” Weir said, referring to her fourteen years of service with HCJFS. “I’m excited about the future of this organization and thankful for your support. We are going to do wonderful things together to make this community a better place to live.”

Home Improvements? Hamilton County Can Help You Save Money!

Hamilton County’s Property Improvement Program (HIP) is an initiative of the Hamilton County Commissioners and the Hamilton County Treasurer. A HIP loan allows homeowners in Hamilton County communities to borrow money to repair or remodel their homes or rental property at interest rates 3% below the lowest rate a bank would normally offer. Loans may be used for improvements on things like bathrooms, decks, kitchens, landscaping, room additions, gutters and roofs, and much more!

For more information about HIP, please contact Patrick Hanrahan, HIP Coordinator, at 946-8324 or visit this link: http://www.hamilton-co.org/hc/hc_hip.asp .



November is National Adoption Month

For a child who needs to be adopted, time spent waiting for an adoptive family can seem endless! That need for adoptive (and foster) parents is one of HCJFS' messages as Children's Services marks National Adoption Month in November. Staff from HCJFS' adoption and two recruitment units have united to celebrate and highlight efforts to find permanent homes for our waiting children.

"We've pulled together some events we hope will be fun for adoptive families," said John Cummings, manager of community adoption and foster care recruitment. "At the same time, we're taking the message to Hamilton County residents that they can be the cheerleaders, the confidants, the parents that many of our children are hoping for every day." Events for the month include:

- Nov. 1 – an exclusive pre-release private screening of "Martian Child" for invited adoptive families
- Nov. Nov. 7 – an informal, informational event at

College Hill Coffee on Hamilton Avenue for people interested in finding out more about becoming a foster and adoptive parent

- Nov. 17 – appreciation event for adoptive and foster families at the Cincinnati Zoo's "Festival of Lights"
- Oct. 21 & Nov. 18 – Child-specific recruiters' event: Cincinnati Bengals games with waiting children and prospective parents

In addition to events, Community Recruitment created ads for Metro busses encouraging people to learn about adoption, developed inserts for bulletins at places of worship during November, and placed a survey now on www.hcjfs.org and www.hcadopt.org to test knowledge of the process to become an adoptive parent.

If you're interested in learning more about how to become an adoptive parent or about the local events planned for National Adoption Month, please call 632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.

Sherria and Savannah Born December 1990 and May 1992

A Caring Family is Needed!

Sherria is a fun and energetic teenager who enjoys being around people and making friends in her social studies class at school. After school she enjoys playing outside and going swimming. The neighborhood recreation center is one of Sherria's favorite places to go.

Savannah has a beautiful, bright smile and a warm personality that makes her pleasant to be around. She enjoys school, especially reading and math. After school, like Sherria, Savannah's favorite thing to do is to go swimming. Savannah also likes to read, watch cartoons and listen to music. Her favorite foods are chips and noodles. Puppies are her favorite animal. Like other teenagers her age, she enjoys going to the mall and shopping.



Sherria and Savannah are both courteous young woman who make good grades in their individualized and special education classes. Both will need ongoing therapy, and Savannah will possibly require life-long supervision.

To learn more about Sherria, Savannah, and others available for adoption, please call 513-632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.



Hamilton County Public Defender’s Office Honored With the “Forward Together” Award

The Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati (BLAC) and the Cincinnati Bar Association (CBA) honored the Hamilton County Public Defender’s Office during their October 6th “Forward Together Celebration Dinner.” The Public Defender’s office received the Forward Together Award in the Public Institution category. This award was given to the Public Defender and his office for their contributions toward fostering diversity within the Greater Cincinnati legal community.

The BLAC-CBA Round Table encourages and supports the creation of opportunities for minority attorneys in the legal community of Greater Cincinnati. Public Defender Lou Strigari and his office have supported this goal.

Strigari says, “We’ve participated in their internship program, their extern program, and outreach programs.” Strigari says the Public Defender’s Office likes to use these programs as recruiting tools.

County Commission President Todd Portune sent a letter congratulating the Public Defender’s Office for receiving the prestigious award and noting that the Board of County Commissioners plans to recognize the outstanding achievement with a proclamation.

When asked how he feels about receiving the award, Strigari said, “It’s a proud feeling of accomplishment.”

Congratulations to the Public Defender’s Office!



Lou Strigari, Public Defender, accepts the BLAC-CBA Round Table 2007 Forward Together Award in the Public Institution Category on October 6th.



Please post “Hello Hamilton County,” so everyone can see what’s going on!

Hello Hamilton County is published twice each month. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County’s web pages. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus or Eric Stuckey.

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