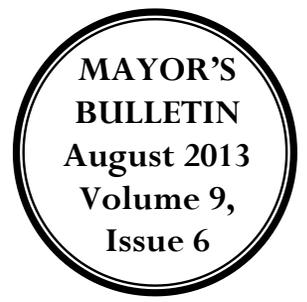




Village of Mariemont

6907 Wooster Pike
Mariemont, Ohio 45227
(513) 271-3246
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ROUNDBOUT AND FOUR-WAY STOP INTERSECTION PROPOSAL REJECTED BY PLANNING COMMISSION

At a meeting of the Village of Mariemont Planning Commission on June 19, 2013, Developer Rick Greiwe asked, once again, for the Village to consider the construction of a roundabout or four-way stop at the intersection of Plainville Road, Madisonville Road, and Murray Avenue. The Planning Commission's main concern was safety! Those safety concerns included:

- Traffic moving continuously rather than coming to a complete stop before entering school zone of three elementary schools (Let it be known the safety of our children will always be first and foremost!)
- Continuously moving traffic impeding the ability for pedestrians to cross, especially those with disabilities
- Confusion for drivers not accustomed to maneuvering through roundabouts of just ONE lane
- Design of a four-way intersection would pour more traffic onto Madisonville Road, creating backups in the elementary school zone. Also backups would create more congestion in and around schools and school zones which would jeopardize safety of our children
- Inability for emergency vehicles to navigate through roundabout as it would be too narrow for fire trucks, especially our new ladder truck
- Design would create a cul-de-sac on Murray Avenue eliminating a direct route to some residences thus causing emergency vehicles to have to "back track" to reach those homes that are in a 90-year-old Historic area where if a fire ever breaks out, we must be able to get to it as quickly as possible

In addition to safety concerns, the Planning Commission also felt the roundabout would:

- Eliminate highly-valued parking spaces adjacent to the roundabout
- Lead to construction of a 115-unit apartment building on the property in Columbia Township just north of Murray Avenue that would possibly be direct competition for the rental property in our Historic District. (In a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the May 2012 issue of the *Town Crier*, Mr. Greiwe stated "The proposed roundabout is a critical element in the financing of the land acquisition for this apartment development.")
- This new traffic pattern would increase the amount of traffic on Oak, Beech, Settle, Homewood, and other streets in areas of our Historic District
- Give Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) control of the project since the funding for this project would be coming from them. The Planning Commission expressed worry that the Village would have little say in the final design and/or construction with ODOT in the driver's seat.

The Planning Commission felt uncomfortable in working with ODOT because:

- ODOT had already shown they had no understanding of the impact a 115-unit apartment development would have on the traffic in the Village when they release a statement saying those extra housing units would only add about 50 extra cars to the morning traffic count in our school zone, which made no sense. (Our estimate was closer to an additional 125 during morning rush hour.)
- Our experience with ODOT regarding the Eastern Corridor has taught us to be very skeptical of any preliminary plan and be wary of giving them the reins on any major project. At this juncture, it would be irresponsible to do so.

After discussing the proposal, the Planning Commission agreed that the Village would stand to lose much more than it would gain by approving the roundabout or a four-way intersection and voted against it. The roundabout and four-way intersection are now no longer a consideration.

VILLAGE NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING JEDZ WITH COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP TERMINATE

A recent article in the *Eastern Hills Journal* and postings on various blogs and websites may have residents confused about the Village's position on entering into an agreement with Columbia Township to form a Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ). One correct fact presented is that townships are prohibited from leveraging earnings taxes. In order to collect earnings taxes from township employees, townships must enter into a JEDZ agreement with a municipality or other entity where earnings taxes are allowed.

About three or four months ago, a Columbia Township Trustee and a gentleman who wanted to act as an intermediary in any negotiations called my office to discuss a JEDZ between Columbia Township and the Village of Mariemont. Columbia Township made it clear in those initial discussions that they would require certain promises from the Village should an agreement be reached. Those conditions included:

- The Village's approval of the construction of a roundabout at Murray Avenue and Plainville Road (We would not compromise safety for a small increase in revenue, especially the safety of the children in the school zone)
- The Village's support of Greiwe Development's plan to build a 115-unit apartment structure on our border with Columbia Township, something we strongly opposed
- Signing an agreement that the Village would never enter into any annexation agreements with any adjacent property owners and/or communities (We could not allow the township to dictate what the Village might need to do in the near future to improve our economic viability)
- Columbia Township requesting its residents be eligible for membership at the Mariemont Community Swimming Pool
- Lately we found that Columbia Township was only willing to give the Village 10%, while the township would take 90% of all taxes collected through the JEDZ

A JEDZ would provide a new source of revenue to both Columbia Township and Mariemont. However, it is almost impossible to project the amount of taxes that might be collected before forming a JEDZ. Hard data from each of the affected businesses in the JEDZ simply is not available to allow a reliable projection of potential tax receipts. Columbia Township begrudgingly shared a JEDZ tax projection model that was prepared by an individual we were told had no previous experience estimating potential tax revenues from a JEDZ. This model appeared to be very optimistic and the level of tax revenues to be shared with Mariemont, especially at lower percentages, would not have offset the risks that our Village was being asked to accept. Mariemont would have assumed the actual burden of collecting the tax revenues from the new JEDZ. There have been numerous statements that all incremental tax collection costs would have been

automatically reimbursed by the JEDZ. It would have been extremely difficult to project Mariemont's actual incremental tax collection costs before entering into this agreement or if Columbia Township would have agreed to reimburse the Village for all of its actual incremental costs. Therefore, there was a very real possibility that Mariemont would not be reimbursed for its incremental costs in connection with this agreement. Mariemont was being asked to enter into a relatively new arrangement with no long term history helping townships engage in a process that was recently questioned by Ohio Representative Kirk Schurling who plans to find ways to stop the misuse of the arrangement. We live in a very litigious world and participants to these agreements might face expensive litigation in the near future. With the conditions Columbia Township was demanding and the uncertainty of the benefit to the Village, I was not very hopeful a JEDZ with the Village and Columbia Township would work, but I decided to remain open to further investigation of the possibility. I asked Joe Stelzer to gather information on how a JEDZ had worked for our communities and he did a great job! I then wrote a letter to Columbia Township, asking them to present a proposal to the Village outlining how they would want the JEDZ to be structured. They responded by saying they were already considering agreements with other municipalities and would not cooperate with our request for such a proposal. The letters exchanged between the Village and Columbia Township are shown below:

 <p>Village of Mariemont 6907 WOOSTER PIKE MARIEMONT, OHIO 45227-4428 (513) 271-3246 VILLAGE OFFICE (513) 271-4089 POLICE / FIRE FAX (513) 271-1655</p> <p>June 11, 2013</p> <p>The Honorable Stephen Langenkamp President - Columbia Township Board 5686 Kenwood Road Cincinnati, OH 45227</p> <p>Dear Stephen:</p> <p>In an effort to move the process forward for the JEDD agreement between Columbia Township and the Village of Mariemont, it seems the next most practical step is for you to prepare a proposal laying out the way in which Columbia Township would like to see the JEDD structured.</p> <p>As you know, the JEDD agreement between Madeira and Sycamore Township started with the township making the proposal as to how the agreement would work. That agreement has been very successful for both entities. It only makes sense that we follow their lead.</p> <p>I look forward to seeing your proposal and continuing to work with you to make the program a successful reality.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Dan Policastro Mayor</p>	 <p>June 17, 2013</p> <p>The Honorable Dan Policastro Mayor, Village of Mariemont 6907 Wooster Pike Cincinnati, OH 45227</p> <p>Dear Mayor:</p> <p>Thank you for your letter of June 11, stating your interest in a potential JEDZ agreement between Mariemont and Columbia Township. Regarding the proposal you requested, Trustee David Kubicki clearly stated in several conversations with Village officials, since the joint meeting of Mariemont and Columbia Township officials in May, that Columbia Township was as of June 11 considering potential agreements with other communities and could not, in fairness to those other communities under consideration, make the type of proposal you are requesting.</p> <p>Subsequent to the initial conversations of February 21 between Mariemont officials and Township officials regarding a potential JEDZ agreement, Trustee Kubicki outlined what the Township was seeking in a JEDZ partnership and has been awaiting a proposal from Mariemont. Throughout this process, Trustee Kubicki has kept the Board well-informed on the progress of discussions and on his continued efforts to potentially reach an agreement with Mariemont.</p> <p>Columbia Township is now discussing a potential JEDZ with other communities, but we are willing to consider a Mariemont proposal, if you wish to make one.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Stephen Langenkamp Board of Trustees President</p> <p>5686 Kenwood Road Cincinnati, Ohio 45227 Tel: 513.561.6046 Fax: 513.561.6981 www.columbiatwp.org</p>
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In early July, Columbia Township entered into an agreement with the Village of Fairfax, putting an end to any possible negotiations or agreement with Mariemont.

CLERK'S PROJECTIONS FOR 2013 THROUGH 2017 GENERAL FUND BUDGET SHOWS VILLAGE IS ON SOUND FINANCIAL FOOTING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WITH A \$1,000,000 SURPLUS THROUGH 2016

Clerk Tony Borgerding has finished preparing the budget for this year and has presented his five-year analysis to Council. As you can see from the chart below, we are in much better shape than we had anticipated a few years ago. We are continuing the trend we started several years ago to curb expenses and help keep our budget healthy. In 2012, an article appeared in the *Eastern Hills Journal* stated that the Village's annual budget would be operating at a deficit at the end of 2013, and according to Clerk Tony Borgerding's report from last year, that deficit would have left us with an ending bank balance in the General Fund of \$234,000. When it is said that a budget has a deficit, it means that anticipated costs will exceed projected revenues for that year. However, due to our proactive approach to reducing expenses, Clerk Borgerding now anticipates the ending balance of the General Fund in 2013 will be \$1,451,000. Not only did we end 2012 with a surplus of over \$1,000,000 again, but will be in good shape through the year 2017 (See circled figures in the chart on the next page). This is the result of looking ahead and cutting expenses *before* we found ourselves in the same predicament as other communities. At a time when many local governments are cutting services to the 'bare bone', eliminate jobs, and/or raise taxes, the Village of Mariemont continues to thrive. We have been very creative in finding ways to save your tax dollars. While we have made reductions in personnel, going from 24 full-time employees to 20, we have not had to do away with any services. We saved money by having the Village Solicitor and Engineer attend just one Council meeting each month, using trees from the Mayor's Tree Farm instead of buying new ones, using postage stamps instead of leased postage meters in the Tax and Administration offices, and raised traffic fines to be the same as Hamilton County. We have assigned many maintenance tasks at the Municipal Building to our Fire Department, including maintaining police vehicles and mowing the grass there. We are no longer paying overtime for the Police Clerk to attend Mayor's Court or for the Administrative Assistant to attend Council meetings, allowing them equal time off instead. Our Police, Fire, and Service Departments continue to apply for and receive grant money. We contracted with Duke Energy Retail for a 15% reduction in our electricity rate. The trash recycling program has led to an ever-increasing amount of recycling being collected resulting in \$17,000 received from the Hamilton County Residential Recycling Incentive Program. (Placing recycling cans in all our parks helped us to become the #1 recycling community in the county.) We continue to pay for the fireworks display through donations. Collectively, these measures have added up to big savings that have resulted in a huge improvement in our financial outlook. The many volunteers in the Village have done a great deal to help us keep costs down and we will continue to look to them for the invaluable help they provide.

We added more positions to our Swim Commission and Parks Advisory Board to expand the number of volunteers in these groups. Furthermore, we continue to look for ways to help our local businesses grow and increase our tax base and we have seen an increase in payroll taxes. An example is the Waldorf School that is coming in with 40 new jobs. Also, the new condos on Madisonville and Thorndike Roads are selling quickly, bringing in new taxpayers and real estate taxes. We are working hard to be good stewards of your hard-earned tax dollars. As you can see, we are doing everything possible to avoid having to ask for any additional tax dollars. No doubt we have taken quite a few blows from the State in the past three years. But through hard work, we are very fortunate to have a projected overall surplus balance of over \$1,000,000 at the end of 2013 and for the end of 2014, 2015, and 2016, and a close to \$1,000,000 at the end of 2017. The chart below shows the actual budgets for 2010 through 2012, the estimated budget for 2013, and budget set for 2014, and the projected budget for 2015 through 2017.

CLERK'S PROJECTED BUDGET FOR 2013

Amounts Shown In	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimated	Budget	Long-Range Forecast		
Thousands of Dollars	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Beginning Balance	\$1,010	\$1,027	\$1,104	\$1,316	\$1,451	\$1,326	\$1,199	\$622
Receipts:								
Earnings Tax	1,681	1,857	2,025	2,075	2,115	2,157	2,200	2,244
Real Estate Tax	283	286	322	320	320	320	320	320
Personal Property Tax	27	24	2	-	-	-	-	-
Inheritance Tax	379	147	161	246	-	-	-	-
Local Government Funds	145	157	76	60	55	55	55	55
Trash Fees	166	201	201	205	205	205	205	205
Mayor's Court	121	115	125	140	130	130	130	130
Swimming Pool	101	102	102	102	102	102	102	102
Other	316	304	254	177	188	180	180	180
Total Receipts	3,118	3,091	3,123	3,325	3,115	3,149	3,192	3,236
Expenditures:								
Salaries	1,610	1,695	1,698	1,747	1,779	1,797	1,815	1,833
Benefits	608	504	570	604	618	624	630	637
Other Operations	610	557	590	549	553	565	580	600
Trash	273	257	275	290	290	290	290	290
Total Expenditures	3,101	3,013	3,133	3,190	3,240	3,276	3,315	3,360
Increase (Decrease)	17	77	-10	-161	-125	-127	-123	-123
Ending Balance	<u>\$1,027</u>	<u>\$1,104</u>	<u>\$1,316</u>	<u>\$1,451</u>	<u>\$1,326</u>	<u>\$1,199</u>	<u>\$1,077</u>	<u>\$953</u>

The chart below shows the ending balances for 2012 through 2016, as projected by the Clerk at last year's budget hearing. The bottom row shows how much those estimates have improved since last year as a result of our cost-saving measures.

Clerk's Budget Report from 2012	Current	Budget	Long-Range Plan		
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Projected Ending Balances (from Clerk's 2012 report)	\$ 1095	\$ 934	\$ 767	\$ 622	\$ 500
How much the anticipated ending balance improved since last year's projections (per Clerk's 2013 report)	Increase of \$ 221	Increase of \$ 517	Increase of \$ 339	Increase of \$ 577	Increase of \$ 577

CONGRATULATIONS TO FIRE DEPARTMENT

As mentioned above, one of the ways we are cutting costs is through the application and award of grant money. The Fire Department recently received a \$3000 grant for Emergency Medical Services. With the funds, they were able to purchase a new computer, as well as a stair chair that will help in any situation where a patient has to be moved from the second floor of a home or other building. The cost for both of these items was covered completely by the grant money they received.



UPCOMING EVENTS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FRIDAY AFTERNOONS – All Summer

The Farmers Market, which is held every Friday from 4PM to 7PM at the elementary school parking lot, now has lots of fresh produce! Stop by to see the wide variety of vendors and fresh food alternatives.

AUGUST – Grand Opening for Eyecare on the Square – Welcome Dr. Ehryn Cartwright and this important new business to the Village

AUGUST 13 – Safety Services Night Out – 6 pm to 9 pm – Bell Tower Park – Displays, Refreshments, Live Music...Great family fun!

OCTOBER 12 – Warrior Run 5K Run/1 Mile Walk – See www.cincywarriorrun.org for details or to register

Sincerely,

Dan Policastro

Dan Policastro, Mayor