

THE BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 2022

The Park Board: Time for a Refresh?

Thursday, February 24, at 7 pm

via Zoom ~ [Register Here](#)

OUR MISSION

Woman's City Club is committed to building a strong Greater Cincinnati community through educating, empowering, and engaging all citizens to participate in promoting the common good.

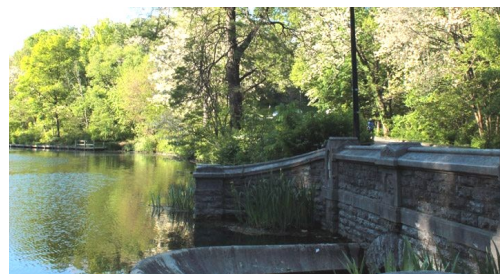
OUR VISION

We envision a just and sustainable community where all citizens are engaged as informed stakeholders in the shaping of our shared future.

OUR VALUES

Collaboration ■ Citizen Empowerment
■ Lead Constructive Lives ■
A Thriving City of the Future

Cincinnati parks are much beloved. Operated under an independent board for 115 years, our park system is consistently rated as one of the best in the country.



Several concerns, however, have arisen in the last few years about the Park Board and how it functions. It suffers from staff turnover. Removal of 50-year old London Plane trees in Lytle Park reflected the competing wishes of a corporate donor and those of residents. Proposals to build in Burnet Woods revealed tension between the preservation of green space and development in parks.

These issues and others raise questions about the structure, function and priorities of the five-member Park Board: Who should appoint the board? How much authority should lay board members have over professional parks employees? What accountability should the Park Board have to the public it serves? Finally, what would be the ideal administrative system for the management of Cincinnati parks?

To answer these questions, Preserve Burnet Woods, a non-profit organization founded in 2018 to protect and promote Burnet Woods, commissioned a report entitled "Cincinnati's Park Board: A History" with funding from the Stephen H. Wilder Foundation. Written by Dr. Alyssa McClanahan, a historian and historic preservation consultant, the report is the basis for WCC's program.

Dr. David Stradling, Zane L. Miller Professor of History, University of Cincinnati, will serve as moderator. **Dr. McClanahan** will discuss a brief history of the Park Board and pros and cons of its structure. **Frank Russell**, Director of the UC Community Design Center and a former Park Board commissioner, and **Steve Schuckman**, retired Superintendent and Manager of the Division of Planning and Design for the Cincinnati Park Board, will serve as respondents. Q & A will follow.

~ Beth Sullebarger
President

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Woman's City Club welcomes new members. Visit our website, www.womanscityclub.org, to learn more about us and how to join.

**THE PROGRAM IS FREE BUT YOU MUST REGISTER
IN ORDER TO GET THE LINK.**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/262747413587>



SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER SUPPORTS GOOD GOVERNMENT!

President's Message

Woman's City Club's mission to educate the public about civic issues depends on having accurate news coverage of local affairs through newspapers, public radio, and other media.

The **Cincinnati Enquirer's** recent announcement that it would stop printing and delivering the paper on Saturdays beginning March 5 reminds us not to take local news coverage for granted.

Executive Editor Beryl Love emphasized that this action was not unique to Cincinnati; more than 130 Gannett markets are shifting to six-day print delivery, and the Saturday paper will continue to be available online in its print layout. This is consistent with the trend away from print to digital media. While many readers still like to hold a printed newspaper or a hard-cover book in their hands, at least we can take comfort that our one remaining daily newspaper will continue in some form.

The **Enquirer**, our only remaining daily paper, is distinguished for producing the nation's oldest continuously published Sunday paper since 1848. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Cincinnati has had dozens of newspapers, some short-lived (**Cincinnati Daily Atlas**, 1847-1852) and some published in German (**Cincinnati Freie Presse**, 1880-1896). Now we're down to one, supplemented by a handful of weeklies—**The Business Courier**, **Cincinnati Herald**, and **City Beat**.

What would our city be without a newspaper? Granted you can read it online through various digital platforms, but it's time to ask yourself what the

newspaper means to our community. A 2018 study by UNC's School of Media and Journalism found that when a local newspaper closes, municipal borrowing costs—and residents' taxes—go up. Why? A local newspaper plays a critical role as a watchdog. Losing a paper, the study said, creates a "local information vacuum." Lenders depend on local reporting to assess the value of government projects—and the officials who run them. Without that information, lenders tend to charge higher rates.

Communities without newspapers are also more likely to be victims of corruption, local incidents the national media will never uncover. We've seen corruption among Cincinnati City Council Members and state legislature just recently. Thank our local press for covering it. The **Enquirer** has been doing a noticeably better job covering the business of local and state government since Love took over. Losing a local newspaper, another study found, can also lead to more political polarization—something no community needs now.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to stop Cincinnati from devolving into another "news desert" and to strengthen good local government. Subscribe to a local newspaper and support Woman's City Club. Both shine a light on our community!



~ Beth Sullebarger



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Dear White Friend

The Realities of Race,
the Power of Relationships and
Our Path to Equity

By Melvin J. Gravely II

Saturday, February 19, at 10 am
via Zoom



For February, WCC's book club has gone local and selected *Dear White Friend* by local businessman and civic leader Mel Gravely. It is receiving a lot of buzz and, we hope, will provide additional, closer to home, insight to the issue of racism we have been exploring for many months.

Gravely presents a collegial conversation via chapters in the form of letters, each with a combination of personal reflection and hard facts presented in layman's terms. The book presents an invitation to understand three questions at the heart of the issue: What is really going on with race in our country? Why must we care? And what can we do about it together? In the end, Gravely calls on us to ask ourselves, "What is my role in all of this?"

The book is available at local booksellers and online. The Public Library has multiple copies, but there is brisk competition for the book.

The book club, which continues to meet via Zoom, invites all members to participate as they wish – all the time or occasionally. Friends may join in, depending on space availability. To RSVP, receive the Zoom link, or ask questions, email: SarahGideonse@womanscityclub.org.



Mel Gravely is CEO of TriVersity Construction Company, one of the Cincinnati region's largest commercial construction companies. Gravely pursued a majority interest in TriVersity expressly to build a diverse company with the size and sophistication required to compete for large-scale projects. He has built the company from one client, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, to a best-in-class enterprise, building for bellwether clients like Procter & Gamble and partnering with Cincinnati's corporate leadership to revitalize the city's historic Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. *Dear White Friend* is not a Cincinnati story, but Gravely's personal contributions to the region's civic and economic leadership over the past two decades inform the narrative.

- *The Voice of Black Cincinnati.com*



28TH NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM & FUNDRAISER

Wednesday, April 6, 7:30 pm

Memorial Hall, Cincinnati

Featuring as speaker

DR. MARY FRANCES BERRY

**Race, Protest & Politics:
Where Do We Go from Here?**

Dr. Mary Frances Berry is a distinguished historian and one of the most respected activists in the cause of civil rights, gender equality, and social justice over the past four decades.



Dr. Mary Frances Berry: Did you know?

Dr. Mary Frances Berry has had a celebrated career in public service and academia and is the author of many historical works.

A deeper dive into this courageous and brilliant woman's contributions in the public arena finds her accepting President Carter's invitation to serve as the assistant secretary for Education (1977-1980). Then in 1980 President Carter appointed Berry to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, a bipartisan agency that monitors the enforcement of civil rights laws. A commissioned affirmative action study during her tenure supported setting goals and timetables for correcting historic discrimination of blacks and women, particularly in the workplace.

When Reagan, who opposed affirmative action, became president, tried to fire Berry and two Democratic commissioners, they fought back, determined that the commission would not be a lapdog of the president. A federal court reinstated them. In 1993, President Clinton appointed Berry chair of the Commission on Civil Rights Commission, where she served until 2004.

As an activist, Dr. Berry co-founded the Free South Africa Movement, which worked to end apartheid. She was arrested outside the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C., for attempting to engage in a sit-in protest against the apartheid government's violent and discriminatory treatment of blacks. The media coverage of the protest sparked a full-fledged movement against the South African government as well as the corporations tied to it inside the United States. Within a year, the protests spread to 40 cities and led to more than 4,500 people arrested nationwide in acts of civil disobedience.



Dr. Berry believes that each generation has the responsibility to make a dent in the wall of injustice. She continues to speak boldly for those who can't speak for themselves and motivates all of us to take action.

TICKETS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE.

Please order them directly from Memorial Hall. They will be held for you at the box office the night of the event.

TO ORDER ONLINE:

<https://www.memorialhallotr.com/cincinnati-shows/womans-city-club/> or call 513-977-8838

TICKET PRICES:

Lecture only: \$50 / Lecture and reception: \$150 / VIP: \$300+

More information on the event and tickets can be found on the WCC website:

<https://womanscityclub.org/programs/national-speaker-forum/>



JANUARY FORUM

A NEW DAY AT CITY HALL:

REBOOTING THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Good-government experts expressed qualified optimism for the future of Cincinnati city government in their January 18 presentation of a National Civic League study commissioned by the Murray & Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation. They claimed that new leadership has the opportunity to reboot troubled city government by redefining the roles of mayor, city manager, and council.

Jerry Newfarmer, President and CEO of Management Partners and former Cincinnati City Manager, provided a brief history of the Council-Manager form of government, which Cincinnati adopted in the 1920s. In response to recent corruption scandals, he said, the Seasongood Foundation commissioned independent advice on reforming Cincinnati city government from the National Civic League, an advocate of good local government for more than 100 years.

The current National Civic League President, Doug Linkhart, praised Cincinnati's history of good government and civic involvement, and he noted that while much of the American public distrusts federal government, and to a lesser extent state governments, 72% trust in local government. Cities with the Council-Manager form of government are operating effectively around the country and are proven to be more effective and less corrupt, he said.

Linkhart co-authored the National Civic League report with Kimberly H. Nelson, Professor of Public Administration and Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Nelson described the study's mixed-methods design, which included an analysis of seven comparable cities, document analysis, literature review, and interviews with community stakeholders and national experts.

Nelson noted that while Council-Manager is the most common form of government, changes to the Cincinnati Charter enhanced the power of the mayor and reduced the influence of the council and city manager. The resulting imbalance of power is one of several corruption risk factors that Nelson described, including lack of clarity regarding roles.

Major recommendations from the study include restoring the legislative authority and independence of city council; making council and mayor jointly responsible for the hiring and oversight of the city manager; strengthening the role of city-manager as the city's chief executive; and scaling back the mayor's legislative and administrative powers to reposition the mayor as the city's political leader, rather than as overseer of the manager and council.

A substantive question-and-answer period elicited several other recommendations from the experts. Linkhart said ranked choice voting is a more democratic process and he recommended a return to four-year, staggered council terms, which allow for members to focus on learning their jobs and legislating without the distraction of constant campaigning. Nelson expounded on the importance of training new legislators in the workings of city government and on ethics.



Newfarmer said the mayor and council should be able to meet with professional staff in executive session, a best practice in city government. Linkhart described his experience on Denver City Council vetting blind development proposals during executive session, which prevented undue influence from developers. Nelson said that research shows no basis for the argument that a stronger mayor brings more economic development; in fact, there is counter evidence. Clear lines of authority and processes for development are the best ways to prevent corruption, she said.

Cincinnati government can correct its course, the experts concluded. Newfarmer pointed out that Mayor Aftab Pureval has promised a national search for city manager, which the report recommends. Linkhart said much could be without changes on paper, because some issues are more behavioral than a reflection of Charter rules. Council rules can change, but much depends on the mayor respecting the decisions of the city manager.

This forum was sponsored by Action Tank, Charter Committee of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati Public Library, Cincinnati Association, Greater Cincinnati Voter Collaborative, and the Murray and Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation.

A recording of the forum can be found here:
https://youtu.be/CI82OwIF_WY.

The full National Civic League report can be found here:
<http://www.nationalcivicleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Cincinnati-Report-Final.pdf>

~ Patty Kelly



THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION GROUP

THE POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

The Poor People's Campaign was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s last effort to gain economic justice for poor people in the United States. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Council shifted their focus to these issues after observing that gains in civil rights had not improved the material conditions of life for many. After King's assassination, Ralph Abernathy organized mule trains to DC, presented a set of demands to Congress, and 3,000 people encamped for six weeks on the Mall. A young Jesse Jackson started his career organizing within this group.

The Rev. Drs. William Barber (North Carolina) and Liz Theoharis (Chicago) have picked up the mantle and speak eloquently about stigmatizing the poor in this country. They "challenge the refusal to address the systemic devastation of poverty, low wages, voter suppression, denial of health care, climate change, the war economy, and religious nationalism that plagues 140 million poor and low-wage Americans." Rev. Dr. Barber was awarded the 2022 Beloved Community Award from the MLK, Jr. Center in Atlanta recently.



Photo courtesy of the
New York Public Library

A very clever and effective lobbying campaign, dubbed Moral Monday, was a direct action started in North Carolina that amassed hundreds of people at the statehouse every Monday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnpeOTLgyKs> (Moral Mondays: The Musical)

The SW Ohio Poor People's Campaign has been active in this region campaigning for voting rights and water quality. Ohio River Guardians is working to stop the construction of 25 petrochemical facilities for plastic production. Go to www.concernedohioriverresidents.org for more information on how to get involved.



The link to Ohio PPC's FB page is:
<https://bit.ly/3l61WjQ> (Mary Aguilera and Claire Laporte are local organizers.)

Sources:

[Poor People's Campaign-Wikipedia;](#)
<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>

~ Debbie Davison



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

FOR SAFER STREETS, A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT, AND MORE EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS — BUY AN E-BIKE!

VISION ZERO CINCINNATI is a new program that focuses on improving safety for Cincinnati's most vulnerable street users – pedestrians. The program, sponsored by the Department of Transportation and Engineering (DOTE), works with the Cincinnati Police Department, Cincinnati Public Schools and Cincinnati's community councils.

The DEVOU GOOD FOUNDATION E-bike Incentive Program is supporting this effort by offering a rebate of \$500 on the purchase of an electrically powered bicycle or e-bike. By choosing to purchase an e-bike (and driving your car less often), you will decrease your carbon footprint, improve your physical and emotional health, eliminate wear and tear on our roads, and create a better future for you and our community. This program aligns perfectly with WCC's vision for a Thriving City of the Future.

Funds totaling \$50,000 will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis after Feb 15, one to a family. This family foundation seeks to make e-bikes available especially to families who have no other means of transportation. E-bikes that cost between \$1,199 and \$2,500 can be purchased online or at a local bike shop.

Please complete [the application](#) to qualify for the \$500 rebate, for your e-bike purchase. (This offer is open to the following zip codes in Cincinnati – 45202, 45203, 45204, 45205, 45206, 45219, 45214, 45220, 45223, and 45226 – and to NKY residents of Covington, Newport, Bellevue, Dayton & Ludlow.)



~ Jeanne Nightingale, Chair
Environmental Action Group



10 ZERO WASTE TIPS

1. Purchase an e-bike! (See article above.)
2. Tour Rumpke. Your consumption habits will be forever changed.
3. Choose reusable produce bags instead of using single-use plastic.
4. Purchase cloth diapers and reusable menstrual pads. (Save thousands of dollars!)
5. Use reusable wool dryer balls instead of dryer sheets.
6. Build community with clothing swaps, tools and services exchanges.
7. Waste less food. Shop smarter and create an "eat me first" bin in your fridge.
8. Don't treat "best before" as "expiration" dates.
9. Freeze foods you can't consume right away.
10. Recycle difficult items at the *Cincinnati Recycling & Reuse Hub* in Price Hill (911 Evans St.)



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS BY PROTESTING

Loveland's City Council has proposed building a parking garage the size of the playing area of a football field, within 100 feet from the Little Miami River bike trail.

Since downtown parking is scarce, such a facility would be convenient for tourists frequenting the growing number of restaurants and shops that make this charming old town an even greater tourist attraction. And yet, what is an asset for some is a liability for others. There is a growing concern among Loveland's residents that such a structure would destroy the very scenic park that attracts tourists in the first place.

For months Loveland's residents have been speaking out against this proposal in the historic downtown district. The mayor and council have been asked repeatedly to place the garage on a referendum, but they have refused to give residents the chance to weigh in on the proposed two-story 270-space garage parking garage in the heart of their town and adjacent to the confluence of two natural rivers, the Little Miami River and the O'Bannon Creek.

Woman's City Club was instrumental in having the Little Miami River State Park designated back in the 70s as a National Wild & Scenic River and Wildlife Refuge. The historic City of Loveland is the gateway to the linear park trail that meanders 50 miles along the river valley, a popular destination for cyclists, paddlers and hikers. While WCC encourages job creation and sustainable development, we also support the democratic process of engaging local stakeholders in the decision-making process.

By law, and in accordance with the provisions of chapter 1547 of the Ohio Revised Code the Ohio, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is charged with appointing an Advisory Council representing local interests to assess the ecological viability of building such a structure within proximity of the Little Miami State Wild and Scenic Park. Nevertheless, Loveland has proceeded – with zero community input and zero focus on environmental impact



studies – to apply for millions of dollars in government grants to build the garage behind Loveland's City Hall. In direct violation of this State mandate, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has offered Loveland \$900,000 in state funds to support the construction of this facility which the city claims in its grant application that the proposed project has “no adverse environmental impacts.” The city's EDA's main interest is to “create new, well-paying jobs,” “enhance opportunities for redevelopment of vacant or undeveloped properties”, and “create new opportunities for private investment.”

Residents are inviting all who oppose this controversial parking garage to join them in a rally on **February 19, at 1 pm, in front of City Hall, located at 120 W. Loveland Avenue, Loveland 45140**. If you want to show your support for a more reasoned approach to the parking issues in Loveland, sign this petition. Council needs to hear from us that we want more data on the parking issue:

[Petition · Stop the Loveland Garage · Change.org](#)

Please feel free to contact Laure Enda with any questions or concerns. Lauren_enda@hotmail.com

*~ Jeanne Nightingale, Chair
Environmental Action Group*



WCC MEMBER PROFILE

You may not know that Barbara K. Myers, one of our 2021 Feisty Women, was instrumental in the election of Bill Clinton to U.S. President in 1996.

"I was a member of the Electoral College in 1996, getting to cast the official vote for the president in that election," she said recently. "It was a great honor. It also meant I was invited to attend the Inauguration and one of the Inauguration balls."

Myers retired from International Paper Company (IP) after 30 years of service. Most recently she was finance business manager for various business IT groups and for Global Telecommunications. Her primary responsibilities were financial management and consulting for an Information Technology organization of almost 200 individuals, with a budget of \$45 million.

Before moving to Cincinnati in 1985, she held various positions at IP's Stamford, Connecticut, executive headquarters. Prior to IP, she was assistant to the Columbia University Center for Community Health Services director and the New York City-Rand Institute working on issues related to city management.

She has been a member of WCC for at least 15 years, "possibly longer," she said. "I joined, because many of the women with whom I was working on political events, and in other women's groups urged me to join this wonderful organization of civic-minded women, and I did."

She serves on the National Speaker's Committee and is a past WCC board member. The WCC activity she has enjoyed the most is being on the National Speaker committee and participating in the event itself.

One wonders when she has time to sleep when her volunteer activities are considered. Barbara has been actively involved in political campaigns both here and in New York, "always with the aim to get more progressive individuals elected to office." In addition to

membership in the 1996 Electoral College, she has worked in local, state, and national campaigns, often in leadership roles. A precinct executive, she is past 4th ward chair. She is a member of the Hamilton County Democratic Party's executive committee and serves as treasurer of the Cincinnati Democratic Committee.



Her other passion is supporting women and women's issues through various organizations, most with a common theme – to better the status, economic power, and treatment of women. She is the Chair of the Cincinnati Women's Political Caucus and has been active in the Ohio and National Women's Political Caucus, Friends of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Friends of Women's Studies at the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati NOW, League of Women Voters, Cincinnati and National Planned Parenthood, and Cincinnati Association.

An avid art collector of work by women and about women, she has held several Art Salons in her home featuring women curators, art gallery owners, and artists.

Myers has a B.A. in English from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York; an M.A. in English and Comparative Literature from Fairleigh Dickinson University; and an MBA in marketing and finance from Columbia University. She is a widow, "having been happily married to husband Larry for 35 years," and lives in Hyde Park.

~ Jo-Ann Huff Albers

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Jan Seymour (2020-2022)
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Christa Zielke (2021-2024)

CALENDAR

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY PUBLIC FORUM: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, at 7 pm via Zoom
THE PARK BOARD: TIME FOR A REFRESH?

NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, AT MEMORIAL HALL
FEATURING CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER AND HISTORIAN DR. MARY FRANCES BERRY

WCC MEETINGS

All meetings are online, via Zoom, unless otherwise noted.

Book Club: Saturday, February 19, 10 am
Details on page 3.

Communications Committee: Tuesday, February 22, 6 pm
Committee meets monthly on last Tuesday.

Membership Committee: Wednesday, March 2, 5:30 pm
Committee meets monthly on first Wednesday.

National Speaker Committee: Monday, March 7, 4:30 pm
For more information, contact aliceschneider@womanscityclub.org.

Social Justice Action Group: Thursday, March 10, 6:30 pm

Program Committee: Monday, March 14, 6:30 pm
Committee meets monthly on second Monday.



CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS: For an updated list of City Council sessions and committee meetings, go to the City website at cincinnati-oh.gov/council/.

The monthly *Bulletin* keeps us connected with our membership, our network, and our community.
Deadline for submission to the March issue will be announced.