



LIGHTING THE FIRE,  
LEADING THE WAY,  
SINCE 1915

#### OUR MISSION

Our mission is to educate, empower, and engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati to act together to promote the common good.

#### OUR VISION

Our vision is a just, inclusive, thriving, and sustainable community where all are informed and engaged in shaping our shared future.

#### OUR VALUES

Civic Literacy - Citizen Empowerment  
Collaboration - Equity and Justice  
Support for Children and Youth

### IN THIS ISSUE

Council Candidate Forum.....	1
President's Message.....	2
Civic Forum.....	3
WCC Book Club.....	4
Member Event.....	4
CPS Levy Forum.....	5
Farewell to Donna.....	6
Environmental Action Group.....	7
Feist Tea.....	8
Member Profile.....	9
WCC Calendar.....	10

Woman's City Club welcomes new members. Visit our website, [WomansCityClub.org](http://WomansCityClub.org), to learn more about us and how to join.

# THE BULLETIN

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

### PUBLIC FORUM

## CINCINNATI CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES TO PRESENT VIEWS ON LOCAL ISSUES

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30**  
**5:30-6:30 PM**

**Heart of Northside, 4222 Hamilton Avenue**

The League of Women Voters (LWV), Woman's City Club (WCC), National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), and Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC) are co-sponsoring a forum for candidates running in this November's election for nine City Council seats. All are at-large, without specific districts, so the candidates must run against each other. The nine candidates with the most votes win a seat.

The race is nonpartisan; thus, the ballot will not include party affiliations—whether Democrat, Republican, Charterite, or independent. However, the Hamilton County Democratic Party has endorsed a slate of nine candidates, the Charter Committee has endorsed five, and the Republican Party is likely to endorse three. A total of 25 candidates is running, including eight of the Democratic incumbents. That's a lot, but not as many as the record of 35 contenders in 2021.

Due to the number of candidates, the forum will be conducted in a “speed dating” format. The purpose of the forum is to allow voters to hear the ideas and positions of candidates for the upcoming November 4 elections regarding issues affecting all citizens in the Cincinnati area and to provide a better understanding of the beliefs and positions of the candidates regarding these issues.

The forum format will allow candidates to address small groups of participants and answer questions that will be provided in advance. All candidates will have the same questions, but depending on time considerations, live questions from participants may be allowed.

The forum will be held in the “gymatorium” at the Heart of Northside, 4222 Hamilton Avenue, an event venue in the former North Presbyterian Church in Northside. Those interested in attending can rsvp here using the QR code. Space is limited so attendees should reserve the opportunity to participate by September 26.





## A TIME OF TRANSITION

I hope you all had a wonderful summer, and I welcome you all to a new program year. Although kids have gone back to school, summer doesn't officially end until the autumnal equinox. What better way to celebrate the last day of summer than with a potluck in the park at the French Park Pavilion in Amberley? See old friends and make some new ones! Our potlucks are famous for their irresistible array of dishes, so don't miss this one.

Good government and civic engagement continue to be a major focus of our work. On September 4, I testified before Council, applauding their repeal of the rezoning that enabled a development on Hyde Park Square much larger than what the base zoning allows. It is a relief that the neighborhood will not have to campaign for a ballot issue to repeal it, but negotiations continue between the neighborhood and PLK, the developer, who will file a new application.



Our forum on October 21 will focus on how Community Councils can or ought to influence outcomes in planning and development that are compatible with our neighborhoods. With another

election approaching in November, we are pleased to join with the League of Women Voters in presenting a City Council Candidate forum in the form of speed dating on Tuesday, September 30. A program on green space and community gardens cosponsored with the Sierra Club on

October 6 will show some of the ways our community is being made more connected to nature.

With a new program year, we have a re-energized board, with two board members—Deborah Allsop and Laurie Frank—who have stepped up for a second term, and two past board members—Susan Noonan and David Siders—who have returned after going off for a while. This is a testament to how devoted they are to WCC's mission. We are also excited to welcome a new board member—Sarah Muncy—who is jumping right in to chair our Communications Committee. She has already demonstrated her talent for social media and managing meetings.



This is a time of transition in other ways, too. Donna Tukel, our "right arm" in the office for the last five years, is leaving at the end of September. I know I, for one, will miss her immensely because we've worked very closely during my two terms as president and become good friends. The work of WCC will continue, of course, and we are embracing a new approach to our operations by contracting for administrative services with Kim Fantaci of Advanced Management Concepts. She has proven herself invaluable to Cincinnatus, our sister civic organization, and we are optimistic about a smooth transition process as Kim takes the reins. Be sure to welcome her at our fall events.

~ Beth Sullebarger  
President



# CINCINNATI'S COMMUNITY COUNCILS: A CRUCIAL LINK OR AN OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT?

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

First Unitarian Church, 536 Linton Street, Avondale

The City of Cincinnati website states that, "Community councils are a crucial link between the City and its many unique neighborhoods, and each council is as unique as the neighborhood it serves. These organizations ensure that neighborhood development responds to the needs and goals of its citizens." But do they?

This will be the topic of a public forum on October 21, beginning with a reception from 5:30 to 6 pm, followed by a panel discussion from 6 to 7 pm and Q & A from 7 to 7:30 pm. Presented by Woman's City Club, this free event is cosponsored by Invest in Neighborhoods.

The recent experience of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Council and Save Hyde Park Square (SHPS) was to have hundreds of speakers ignored by the City Planning Commission and City Council when they passed a Planned Development (PD) in April providing a work-around to the zoning code to allow a larger development than permitted by base zoning. SHPS responded by obtaining 18,000 signatures on a petition to reverse City Council's PD approval.

Council repealed its passage of the PD on September 4. This is welcome news, but questions remain about why a neighborhood had to go to such lengths to be heard? More than a dozen other community councils actively joined in the SHPS petition drive because they too have concerns about being heard by City Hall.

Are community councils still a "crucial link" in city governance? Are they representative of their neighborhoods? Are they respected and heard? Is there a better way for neighborhoods to communicate with the City?

Should Community Councils be done away with because they're an obstacle to development or should they have a determinative role in the planning and development process? These are some of the questions that will be discussed by our panel (confirmed as of 9/4/25).



**Dave Mann**, former Mayor and Council Member



**Amber Kassem**, President, East Price Hill Improvement Association



**Jacqueline Edmerson**, President, Bond Hill Community Council



**Sue Wilke**, Co-chair, Civic Engagement Action Team

Cheri Rekow, WCC's VP for Civic Engagement, will serve as moderator.

Tell us you're coming at [wcc@womanscityclub.org](mailto:wcc@womanscityclub.org) so we can save you a seat.



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Book Club

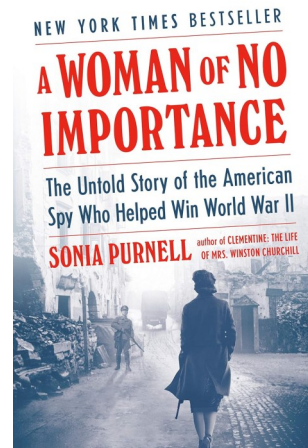
### SEPTEMBER BOOK CLUB SELECTION

#### *A Woman of No Importance*

The Untold Story of the American Spy  
Who Helped Win WWII

**Saturday, September 20**

10 am via Zoom



This is an important book by a woman biographer and journalist about a heroic American woman. It's about Virginia Hall, who, as World War II was starting, talked her way into Britain's spy organization, Special Operations Executive. Deployed to France, she became a linchpin of the Resistance, earning the Gestapo's epithet as "the most dangerous of all Allied Spies." It's a thriller! Heavily researched, *A Woman of No Importance* was listed as a best book of the year by many media outlets.

Members and their friends, or others by invitation, are welcome to join the conversation, but you must RSVP to obtain the link: [sarah.gideonse@fuse.net](mailto:sarah.gideonse@fuse.net).

Sarah Gideonse



## POTLUCK IN THE PARK

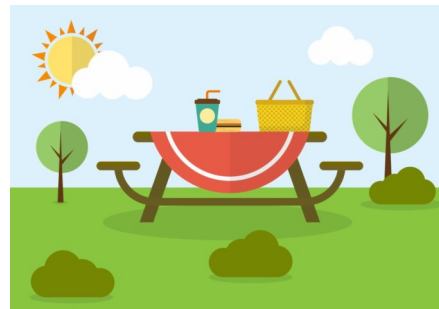
WCC Member Event

**TO WCC MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES,  
& INTERESTED FRIENDS**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21  
12:30 PM to 4:00 PM**

**POTLUCK IN THE PARK**

at the French Park Pavilion,  
3012 Section Road,  
Amberly Village



Enjoy an afternoon celebrating the Woman's City Club by relaxing with friends you know and meeting new fellow club members!

Please bring your favorite potluck dish to share.  
RSVP: 513-751-0100 or [womanscityclub@gmail.com](mailto:womanscityclub@gmail.com)





# CPS SCHOOL FUNDING RENEWAL LEVY

**The August 28 forum at the Clifton Cultural Arts Center was presented at a time of change in how Ohio funds its public schools and with homeowners angry about increases in property taxes. In this environment the Cincinnati Public Schools has put a 10-year renewal levy on the November ballot for Preschool Promise and operating expenses for the K-12 schools.**

The forum's excellent panel included CPS superintendent Shauna Murphy, CEO of Preschool Promise Chara Fisher Jackson, Emily Chesnut, a Milford school board member and representative of Honesty for Ohio Education, and a local state representative, Republican Lou Blessing, who has recently shown an independent streak in regard to this year's budget provisions affecting public schools. The WVXU education reporter, Zack Carreon, served as moderator, posing questions to the panel.



Shauna Murphy

## SCHOOL FUNDING



Rep. Louis Blessing

Representative Blessing reported on the state budget bill passed July 1 and its provisions for public schools. In 2021 a bipartisan group of legislators passed a school funding formula to address the state constitution's requirement for funding schools, based on the actual cost of equitably educating children in each school district and doing so with high quality programs. The formula began implementation in 2021 and was scheduled to be fully funded this biennial starting July 1. Instead, the budget funded public schools at the formula's original 2021 level. The budget also added a funding stream rewarding a school district based on its performance rather than its need.

Blessing added that Ohio is 37<sup>th</sup> in the country on per capita funding of public schools and 48<sup>th</sup> in teacher salaries. He asserted that the state did not even fund CPS fairly under the formula and pointed out that vouchers and charters were taking students and money from

public schools. Low-hanging fruit for funding preschools: increase family income eligibility for preschool from 200% of poverty to 250%.



The budget included items making it harder for local governments and school districts to put property tax levies on the ballot, most of which the Governor vetoed. The legislature has threatened to override the vetoes but hasn't yet. Blessing said many of the legislators want to abolish property taxes altogether, an act which he said would be catastrophic for the community and public schools.

Superintendent Murphy commented that the most challenging part of her job was not knowing if CPS will receive funding and for how much. Also, in part because its Covid money was depleted and uncertainties about state and federal funding, CPS was forced to make tough decisions to close as much as a \$50 million budget gap and balance the budget.

Chara Fisher Jackson said that community preschools and those in CPS have many funding sources but no state funding: Mainly HeadStart, a state program that reimburses tuition for children of low income working parents, and the Preschool Promise levy that provides locally funded scholarships for children from lower income families.



Chara Fischer Jackson

The levy allows her to provide children with a high quality preschool experience, helping community providers gain high quality status by state standards, and to become eligible to enroll state and levy funded children. It all seems to pay off, with more children in CPS and Preschool Promise preschools passing the kindergarten readiness test. Other accomplishments and data can be found in the Preschool Promise annual report.



Emily Chesnut

*Continued on page 6*



## A HEARTFELT FAREWELL TO DONNA

Donna Tukel, our marvelous Communications Manager, is moving on to pursue other areas of interest after five years of supporting the operations and programs of Woman's City Club. Playing an integral role in everything that transpired at WCC, Donna consistently worked above and beyond her responsibilities, demonstrating a strong work ethic and dedication to WCC's mission, vision, and goals as she supported the Board, committees, and members.

Donna's flexibility, ironic humor, and sense of style are legendary. Her creative flair and artistic talent have resulted in a clean, updated image seen in all of WCC's graphic materials, including the website, social media, flyers, and everything else she's touched.

Please join the Board in expressing appreciation to Donna for her "can do" spirit and her support of all "things" WCC. Donna, we wish you well with your pottery and your future pursuits and value your friendship.



## August Public Forum



## CPS SCHOOL FUNDING RENEWAL LEVY CONTINUED

### REASONS FOR PASSING THE CPS RENEWAL LEVY

Ms. Murphy: 35,000 reasons (students)! She asserted that it's our responsibility to ensure Cincinnati has excellent schools, as they are essential to a flourishing community, and necessary to attract families and businesses to the city. She described the restructuring of the CPS schools into districts, offering outstanding programs on both sides geographically and reducing the reliance on buses and their cost. CPS has established separate middle schools that they expect to improve the kids' academic performance and behavior in a smaller setting. CPS is also expanding its workforce options to include fire fighters and police work.

Research demonstrates the value of high quality pre-school education for their social-emotional development and kindergarten readiness, learning to read, and

high school graduation. If the levy doesn't pass, its added value for pre-school children will go away, and many, many low-income children will lose scholarships for a high-quality pre-school experience.



Zack Carreon

**This program was organized by the League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area. Presenting partners were the Cincinnati NAACP, Cincinnati Association, Honesty for Ohio Education, School Board School, Urban Appalachian Community Coalition, Woman's City Club, and Applied Information Resources.**

~ Sarah Gideonse



# BEYOND PLASTICS

Launched in 2019, *Beyond Plastics* pairs the wisdom and experience of environmental policy experts with the energy and creativity of grass-roots advocates to build a vibrant and effective movement to end plastic pollution. *Beyond Plastics* encourages a multi-level approach to reducing single-use plastic waste. Their recommendations go beyond individual consumer changes to include community and political action.

**Sustainable Stores Program:** Beyond Plastics will provide resources and toolkits for supporting businesses in adopting more sustainable, low-plastic practices. While they do not run a formal “sustainable stores program,” they offer guides and materials that empower individuals and local groups to encourage change in their community stores and restaurants.

**What you can do to reduce single-use plastic waste in your lives and in your community:**

**In your daily life:**

- Think green before you shop. Bring your own reusable bag for carrying your purchases, and try to buy items with minimal packaging. Aluminum and glass are infinitely recyclable, unlike most plastics.



- Refuse single-use plastics: Make it a habit to say no to plastic bags, straws, utensils, and containers.
- Use a water bottle or thermos instead of disposable bottles or cartons.
- Buy in bulk: Purchase items like grains, nuts, and cleaners from bulk bins to reduce packaging waste. Many stores allow customers to use their own containers.
- Cook more meals at home: This significantly reduces reliance on plastic-heavy takeout containers and doggy bags.

**In your community:**

- Support restaurants and grocery stores that reduce plastic: Patronize retail stores that have made the switch to sustainable packaging.
- Organize a “supermarket packaging take back.” This type of event sends a clear message to retailers that consumers want less plastic packaging and more bulk and refillable options.
- Advocate against artificial turf: **Beyond Plastics** highlights that artificial turf is a major source of microplastic and PFAS pollution.
- Put pressure on manufacturers: Contact companies that use excessive plastic packaging to let them know you prefer more sustainable options. Support competitors who use less plastic.
- Stay informed: Educate yourself and others about the problems of plastic pollution.
- Beyond Plastics offers webinars and documentaries to help spread the word.
- Join the Environmental Action Group (EAG) of Womans City Club.

~ Jeanne Nightingale





# SAVE THE DATE! THE 16TH ANNUAL FEIST TEA CELEBRATION

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7**  
**1:30 PM - REFRESHMENTS**  
**2 PM - PROGRAM**  
**KENNEDY HEIGHTS ARTS CENTER ANNEX**  
**6620 MONTGOMERY ROAD 45213**

**Hoorah! It's time to place the 16th Annual Feist Tea on your calendars! Please join us as we gather for an elegant tea to honor several exceptionally feisty individuals.**

The goals for this year's annual event are:  
 To celebrate Woman's City Club—  
 its civic engagement and feisty and dedicated members

- To recognize all past presidents and honorees who have served and supported WCC across the many years
- To honor Feisty individuals who embody the mission, vision, and spirit of WCC and have contributed to WCC or the Greater Cincinnati Community

As has been the case for the last few years, WCC members are invited to nominate people to be honored at the Feist Tea, and one of the honorees may be a non-member of WCC whose significant contributions to WCC and/or Greater Cincinnati align with WCC's mission. A selection sub-committee, including Feist Tea Committee and WCC Board members, will meet at the end of October to select this year's Feist Tea honorees. The application form for nominations will be emailed to WCC members on September 15. Members may also email their nomination to Laurie Frank, Feist Tea Chair, at [lkfrank81@gmail.com](mailto:lkfrank81@gmail.com). Should you have any questions, please call Laurie Frank at 513-600-2195 or send an email to: [lkfrank81@gmail.com](mailto:lkfrank81@gmail.com). In keeping with our



2024 Feist Tea with emcee Elisa Yancey

previous annual celebrations, the Woman's City Club hopes ALL past Feist Tea honorees will attend and be recognized.

PLEASE NOTE: Feist Tea is a free event, but we welcome your donation in honor of this year's honorees. A virtual invitation will be emailed to members and posted by mid-November. In addition, health and safety protocols/ requirements for this event will be included with the event invitation.

## **FEIST TEA COMMITTEE**

Laurie Frank, Committee Chair  
 Deborah Allsop  
 Jo-Ann Huff Albers  
 Christy Backley  
 Marge Davis  
 Jeff Dey  
 Sharon McCreary  
 Susan Noonan





## ELIZABETH BUENING

To use a sports term, this profile is a three-peat. First was Janet Buening, former president; second was Anne Buening, daughter, and current WCC board member; and third is daughter, sister, and new member Elizabeth.

Instead of living in New York City and visiting Cincinnati, Buening now lives in St. Bernard and her job at Actors Theatre Workshop in New York is done fully remotely.

Born in Cincinnati, she grew up in Hyde Park and went to DePauw University in Indiana. She was in the Media Fellows Program, Delta Zeta, and managed the DePauw Tigers varsity football team, earning a three-year varsity letter and creating a student management program.

Graduating with a B.A. degree in English Composition, she moved to New York City after having had a full semester internship in NYC. She worked for VH1 and Viacom for 17 years becoming a Senior Creative Director at VH1 before being promoted to Viacom Velocity (now Paramount Brand Studio) where she worked across multiple networks: VH1, Logo, MTV and CMT.

After her position was eliminated during the merger of Paramount and CBS, she started working as director of branding/marketing director of The Actors Theatre Workshop, a nonprofit theatre and education institution in NYC; she also volunteered with New York Cares and organizations on the Upper West Side like the Westside Community Garden.

“After the pandemic closings ended and cost of living increases rose dramatically in New York, I re-evaluated why I was living there. I love so much about the city, but I always missed my family and spent a lot of my vacation time traveling to Cincinnati. I was finally ready to make the move to

Cincinnati and start building my future, so I hired movers instead of signing my lease renewal and moved across the country with the help of my parents, siblings, and friends,” she said.

Living here since April 2024, her goal is to bring her branding, marketing, and production skills to a career with a company in Cincinnati. “If that position involves projects in New York – it would be an amazing way to work in two places I love!” she said.

She joined WCC in March, “wanting to meet interesting people and get involved with the Cincinnati community,” she said. “I’d heard wonderful things about the members and events for years while living in NYC.”

Buening wants to explore the U.S. and travel internationally. Her last international trip was to Thailand and Cambodia. Before that she explored Uganda and Rwanda. “Hiking up into the Virunga Mountains at Volcanoes National Park to see the mountain gorillas in their natural habitat took my breath away,” she said.



*Jo-Ann Albers*

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Beth Sullebarger, <i>President</i>	Anne Buening, <i>VP Programs</i>
Jeff Dey, <i>VP Administration</i>	Christy Backley, <i>Secretary</i>
Cheri Rekow, <i>VP Civic Engagement</i>	Jennifer Funk, <i>Treasurer</i>
Laurie Frank, <i>VP Membership</i>	

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Deborah Mariner Allsop	Susan Noonan
Anne Lathrop	David Siders
Nina Lewis	Marcia Togneri
Sharon McCreary	Sue Wilke
Sarah Muncy	

## CALENDAR

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### WCC BOOK CLUB

Saturday, September 20, 10 am: See page 4 for details.

#### POTLUCK IN THE PARK

Sunday, September 21, 12:30 pm to 4:00 pm

See page 4 for details.

#### CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM

Tuesday, September 30, 5:30 pm

See page 1 for details.

### WCC MEETINGS

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

#### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 18, 5:30 pm  
 Committee meets monthly on the third Thursday.  
 Contact Sarah Muncy: smith2sh@gmail.com

#### NATIONAL SPEAKER FORUM COMMITTEE

Monday, October 13, 4 pm  
 Committee meets monthly on second Monday.  
 Contact Beth Sullebarger: wccpresident2020@gmail.com

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GROUP

Members interested in joining this group may contact  
 Jeanne Nightingale, chair: jnightingale@fuse.net

#### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 8, 7 pm  
 Committee usually meets monthly on second Wednesday  
 Contact Anne Buening: arbuening@yahoo.ie

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday September 17, 7 pm  
 Committee meets monthly on third Wednesday.  
 Contact Jennifer Funk: j.funk12712@gmail.com

#### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 1, 5:30 pm  
 Committee meets monthly on first Wednesday.  
 Contact Laurie Frank: lkfrank81@gmail.com



**For the latest schedule of WCC meetings and events, please check our homepage at [womanscityclub.org](http://womanscityclub.org).**

**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/](http://cincinnati-oh.gov/council/).

The monthly *Bulletin* keeps us connected with our membership, our network, and our community.  
 Please submit all materials as they are ready to Christy Backley at [backleychristy@gmail.com](mailto:backleychristy@gmail.com)

