

COUNCIL OF THE VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

MINUTES OF A MEETING

HELD _____ August 6, 2019 _____ 20 _____

A meeting of the Council of the Village of Brooklyn Heights, Ohio was held on August 6, 2019 at 7:30 P.M. with President Pro Tem Mark Lasky presiding.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited at this time.

Present at roll call:	Councilmen:	Blados, Foote, Lasky, Presot & Walsh
	Mayor:	
	Clerk/Treasurer:	Frank
	Law Director:	Dowling
	Engineer:	Henry
	Police Chief:	Algeri
	Fire Chief:	Stefanko
	Service Director:	Hatgas
	Bldg. Commissioner:	
	Asst. Bldg. Comm.	Sonenstein
	Comm. Service Dir:	Guilfoyle
	Recreation Dir:	Kryznovek

MOTION: Mrs. Presot moved to excuse Mayor Procuk as he is on vacation. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0

MOTION: Mrs. Presot moved to accept the minutes of the July 2, 2019 council meeting as distributed. Second by Mr. Foote Motion carried 5-0

AUDIENCE

- Dennis Derbin, resident on Belmont asked to meet with council in executive session. Mr. Frank and Mr. Lasky told him they would meet at the conclusion of the council meeting.
- Jerry Kadas asked how he can get something on the ballot. Mr. Foote told him to contact the Board of Elections. Mr. Walsh asked what he wants on the ballot and Mr. Kadas said he would like to make a proposal for the village.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Read a letter from the Board of Elections requesting the use of the Community Center for the General Election on November 5th. Also requiring set-up on Nov. 4th from 5-8pm.
- E-mail from Ted Biskind (American Benefits Group) telling council that they are now with Lincoln National Life who is offering a 10% reduction on our current life insurance. Mr. Frank said the savings would be minimal and it would not take effect until July 1, 2022.
- E-mail from John Black complimenting Service Director Ed Hatgas and the Service Department team for their care and maintenance of the park. **Attach**
- Read a thank you from the Parma Heights Assistant Fire Chief Patrick Finneran acknowledging our department's participation in fighting the fire at Camelot Apartments on July 26th. **attach**
- Acknowledged the memo sent to the Brooklyn Heights Police Department which serves as their 30-day notification to meet with the Wage & Salary Committee to begin negotiations.
- Read a letter from Jenn Lasky, Executive Director of Edna House commending Thea Guilfoyle and Ed Hatgas for their concern for this charity. **attach**
- Read a letter from Diane Bickett, Exec. Director of The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District regarding misconceptions of recycling. **attach**
- Summarized a letter from the Family Research Council Action committee regarding action to be taken in the event municipalities are told to remove religious Christmas decorations. **attach**

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POLICE CHIEF

- **MOTION:** Mrs. Presot moved to pay Sundance System \$1,260 for Vehicle Locator System for 1 year, required by the Dispatch Center. Second by Mr. Foote Motion carried 5-0
- **MOTION:** Mr. Walsh moved to pay North Royalton Jail \$1,810 for twenty-three (23) days of housing our prisoners. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0
- **MOTION:** Mr. Foote moved to pay Firehawk Automotive \$2,101.09 to replace the catalytic converter in C-14 2013 Dodge Charger with 128k miles. Second by Mr. Walsh Motion carried 5-0
- **Mrs. Presot moved to pay Firehawk Automotive \$2,241 to replace the catalytic converter on C-85 2012 Dodge Charger with 115k miles. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0**
Discussion: It was asked how both cars had same problem and Chief Algeri said he googled catalytic converters and they last 7-10 years or 100k miles. Chargers have two and they both must be replaced at the same time or the sensors won't work.
- The Field Training of both new patrolmen is moving along without problems. He is happy to have both on board.

FIRE CHIEF

- Repair cost for L-49 was \$717 and the repair was done in house by Mechanic Mike Florjancic. An "outrigger" malfunctioned and the aerial ladder was out of service for one week.

SERVICE DIRECTOR

- Our recycling is down about 2.5% due to more stringent restrictions on recycling. Everything is on the website as to what can and can't be recycled. Mr. Blados asked if we could get new labels for the recycling tote regarding what can be recycled. Mr. Hatgas said he would speak with the Solid Waste District about that. Possibly on our next grant.
- The County Tree Canopy Grant has been submitted. It is for Inventory and Management. If we get the grant it would be for \$12,249 with a cost to the village of \$613.
- **MOTION:** Mrs. Presot moved to pay \$2,725 for street repairs from new hydrant installations at three locations. Work to be done by Sirna Construction and reimbursed by the City of Cleveland. Second by Mr. Lasky Motion carried 5-0
- **MOTION:** Mr. Blados moved to pay Stanley Security Solutions \$2,793.60 for Fire Alarm Monitoring and Maintenance. Second by Mr. Foote Motion carried 5-0
- **MOTION:** Mr. Foote moved to pay Signal Service \$1,161.04 for repairs to the traffic signals at Granger & Lancaster. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0
- **Mr. Blados moved to pay \$2,670 for street repair water main break at 622 E. Schaaf Rd. Work to be done by Sirna Construction and reimbursed by the City of Cleveland. Second by Mrs. Presot Motion carried 5-0**

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Art in the Park is done for the season
- Thank you to Mayor Bacci for allowing Art in the Park to use the pool on Fridays
- Thank you to Mayor Procuk and council for their support
- The application for 2020 Art in the Park has been submitted and the awards will be in late October
- Senior Lawn Cutting is running smoothly
- Tomorrow (8/7) is the Star Spangled Spectacular. You can still sign up
- The new vehicle is due any day. Mr. Dowling will write the ordinance authorizing the payment.
- Project Hope Back to School back packs & supplies are being distributed. There are 22 children receiving these supplies
- Next up for Project Hope will be winter jackets.

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- Mrs. Guilfoyle would like a committee meeting to discuss the possibility of a voucher system for Senior Snow Removal. Mr. Blados called a Community Service Committee Meeting for August 20, 2019 at 6 pm.

ENGINEER

- Mr. Henry will have prices for guard rails at the next meeting
- Catch basins are being repaired and the cost will be reimbursed by NEORSD
- There is cable lines being installed from the Lancaster bridge to Keynote Circle
- NIDEC is progressing nicely
- We received the Master Plan Grant and there will be no cost to the village.

BUILDING

- We've had a record number of Point of Sale Inspections
- NIDEC is moving along
- The National Weather Service will have a meeting to discuss variances.
- Mr. Walsh asked if there have been any complaints from the Marko Lane residents regarding the construction and Mr. Sonenstein said not a one.

LAW DIRECTOR

- Hopes to have legislation at the next meeting regarding the GEIS/NIDEC donating the parcel to the village.
- Thanks to Mike Henry for helping him with this.

RECREATION DIRECTOR

- **MOTION:** Mrs. Presot moved to pay Sam Roe \$1,337 in umpire fees for the summer recreation league. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0
- He complimented Mr. Hatgas on the condition of the park. He said he had many compliments from various outside coaches and rec directors.

CLERK / TREASURER

- Capital Improvement Fund as of July 31, 2019 is \$57,279
- General Fund as of July 31, 2019 is \$966.138
- Mr. Frank recommends that \$10,000 per month be put in the Retirement Fund for the next 10 months.
- Mr. Frank recommends that \$20,000 per month be put in the Economic Development Fund for the next 5 months. Approximately \$125k will be due to be paid out in incentives at the beginning of the year.

MAYOR'S COURT

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| • Income for July | \$ 7,087.90 |
| • State of Ohio | (1,084.00) |
| • Indigent Driver & Alcohol | (39.00) |
| • Reg. Enterprise Data Sharing System | (115.00) |
| • BROOKLYN HEIGHTS | \$ 5,849.90 |

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **WAGE & SALARY:** Met tonight to discuss the employee contract. Will meet on Aug. 20th at 6:30 pm to discuss the Healthcare Broker / Life Insurance and continue discussion on employee contract.

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- **New Ad Hoc Park Committee:** will meet on August 13th at 7 pm in council chambers
- **COMMUNITY SERVICE** Committee meeting to discuss the Senior Snow Plowing Voucher System on August 20th at 6pm
- Mr. Lasky stated that he would like to set times to begin negotiation talks with the departments. This does not have to wait the 30 days like the police.

Mr. Foote asked if a motion is needed to allow the Board of Elections to use the hall. **MOTION: Mr. Blados moved to allow the Board of Elections to use the Community Center on Nov. 4 & 5, 2019. Second by Mr. Foote Motion carried 5-0**

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE 56-2019- AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND/OR VILLAGE CLERK/TREASURER TO PURCHASE TWO (2) IN-CAR VIDEO SYSTEMS FROM WATCH GUARD FOR USE BY THE BROOKLYN HEIGHTS' POLICE DEPARTMENT

Sponsor: Mrs. Presot

Second: Mr. Foote

Yeas: Presot, Foote, Blados, Walsh, Lasky

Nays: None

Ordinance 56-2019 is adopted 5-0

ORDINANCE 57-2019- AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 1446.01, 1446.02, 1446.03, 1446.04, 1446.05, 1446.06, 1446.07, 1446.08 AND 1446.09 OF THE BROOKLYN HEIGHTS CODE OF ORDINANCES

Sponsor: Mr. Walsh

Second: Mrs. Presot

Yeas: Walsh, Presot, Foote, Blados, Lasky

Nay: None

Ordinance 57-2019 is adopted 5-0

ORDINANCE 58-2019- AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE REVERSING THE DECISION OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS GRANTING THE APPLICATION OF ROBERT VALLARELLI OF TITAN REALTY GROUP, REPRESENTING LEFF ELECTRIC, TO HAVE PARKING IN FRONT YARD, REMOVAL OF TREES AND LANDSCAPING AT THE BUILDING LOCATED AT 4700 SPRING ROAD

This ordinance is moot since 59-2019 is adopted

ORDINANCE 59-2019- AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AFFIRMING THE DECISION OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS GRANTING THE APPLICATION OF ROBERT VALLARELLI OF TITAN REALTY GROUP, REPRESENTING LEFF ELECTRIC TO HAVE PARKING IN FRONT YARD; REMOVAL OF TREES AND LANDSCAPING AT THE BUILDING LOCATED AT 4700 SPRING ROAD

Sponsor: Mr. Walsh

Second: Mr. Foote

Yeas: Walsh, Foote, Blados, Presot, Lasky

Nays: None

Ordinance 59-2019 is adopted 5-0

ORDINANCE 60-2019 AUGUST PAY ORDINANCE

Sponsor: Mr. Walsh

Second: Mrs. Presot

Yeas: Walsh, Presot, Foote, Blados, Lasky

Nays: None

Ordinance 60-2019 is adopted 5-0

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ORDINANCE 61-2019 - AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND/OR VILLAGE CLERK/TREASURER TO PURCHASE A 2014 FORD FOCUS AUTOMOBILE FROM GILLINGHAM FORD FOR USE BY THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT OF THE VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

Sponsor: Mr. Blados

Second: Mr. Lasky

MOTION: Mrs. Presot moved to amend Ordinance 61-2019 to \$12,000 to include the extended warranty. Second by Mr. Blados Motion carried 5-0

Yeas: on the amended ordinance: Blados, Lasky, Presot, Foote, Walsh

Nays: None

Ordinance 61-2019 is adopted as amended

ORDINANCE 62-2019- AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND/OR VILLAGE CLERK/TREASURER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH GANLEY OF AURORA FOR THE PURCHASE OF A 2019 PICKUP GM/CHEVY SILVERADO 2500 4WD TRUCK FOR USE BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT OF THE VILLAGE OF BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

Sponsor: Mrs. Presot

Second: Mr. Walsh

Yeas: Presot, Walsh, Foote, Blados, Lasky

Nays: None

Ordinance 62-2019 is adopted 5-0

MOTION: Mrs. Presot moved to go into Executive Session. Second by Mr. Blados

Yeas: Presot, Blados, Walsh, Foote, Lasky

Nays: None

Motion carried 5-0


There being no further business to come before the council, it was moved by Mr. Walsh seconded by Mr. Blados that the meeting be adjourned.

Yeas: All

Meeting adjourned.



Mayor



Clerk/Treasurer

Mike ProcuK

 **Subject:** FW: Thank you for a beautiful Park

From: John Black [<mailto:jblack@steelvalleyfcu.org>]

Sent: Tuesday, July 23, 2019 8:54 AM

To: Ed Hatgas

Subject: Thank you for a beautiful Park

Dear Ed

I just had to write to say how beautiful the park looks.

Diamond two looks as if the Cleveland Indians could play there. So precisely manicured. Just wonderful.

Thank you and Chris, Rob, Blaine, Tom, Scott and Craig for being so diligent in the care and upkeep of the park. And thanks to Donna for her efforts behind the scenes.

Have a great day.

John

John Black

Business and Accounting Manager

 Steel Valley Federal Credit Union

3840 Pearl Road

Cleveland, Ohio 44109

Office: 216-706-0596

Email: jblack@steelvalleyfcu.org

CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE:

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www.avast.com



Parma Heights Fire Department

6184 PEARL ROAD

PARMA HEIGHTS, OHIO 44130

PATRICK G. FINNERAN
ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF

Phone (440) 885-1717
Fax (440) 884-8078

July 30, 2019

City of Brooklyn Heights Fire Department
345 Tuxedo Ave.
Brooklyn Heights, Ohio 44144

Re; Camelot Tower Apartment Fire, 12225 East Huffman Rd.

Chief Stefanko;

On behalf of the Parma Heights Fire Department, I wanted to thank your department for your support, resources and personnel during our recent fire at the Camelot Tower Apartments, located at 12225 East Huffman Rd. on the evening of July 26, 2019.

It took a total of ten fire departments and sixty-five firefighters to conduct fire ground operations on this evening to mitigate the fire through a well-coordinated Command system and hard-working firefighting.

Unfortunately, we had one fatality but due to the immediate actions of responding departments there were no other fatalities or injuries to occupants or fire department personnel.

It is reassuring to know that during our time of need we can rely on our neighboring communities to provide assistance when needed and I can also assure you that we are here to reciprocate that assistance.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mc Patrick G. Finneran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick G. Finneran
Assistant Fire Chief

CC: Mayor Michael P. Byrne

Kari baciak

 **From:** Mike Procuk
Sent: Saturday, August 3, 2019 11:04 AM
To: Kari baciak
Subject: Fwd: Grateful

KSB,

Please print this and add it to the correspondence Mark needs to read into the record tuesday.

Thx,

mm

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Jennifer Lasky <jenn.lasky@ednahouse.org>

Date: 8/1/19 3:12 PM (GMT-05:00)

To: Mike Procuk <mprocuk@brooklynhts.org>

Subject: Grateful

 Dear Mayor Mike,

I just wanted to make you aware of two BH employees that are truly incredible people. Thea Guilfoyle and Ed Hatgas always show concern for our residents and our community. A neighbor is not always someone who resides next door to you and they are a testament to that. When there is surplus food in our community food pantry Thea makes sure there is no waste and calls me to pick it up to share with The Edna House Recovery Community. Ed Hatgas is always focused on providing food and contacts that are helpful as well. They go out of their way to do these things and I so appreciate their kindness and support. Whether there is an BH resident recovering from addiction at The Edna House or not, they always help their neighbor.

I wanted to take the time to let you know this as I know you hear complaints from people, I just wish they took the time to tell you when your staff does the good things.

Thank you for the outstanding job you do as Mayor of our village and I hope you can continue to surround yourself with employees such as Thea, Ed and so many others.

Sincerely,
Jenn

Jenn Lasky
Executive Director- The Edna House
2007 West 65th Cleveland OH 44102
216-281-7751
www.ednahouse.org

Kari baciak

From: Mike Procuk
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2019 4:30 PM
To: Kari baciak
Subject: Fwd: Cleveland Recycling Story

Print for correspondence.

Thx,

mm

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Diane Bickett <Dbickett@cuyahogacounty.us>

Date: 8/5/19 10:34 AM (GMT-05:00)

To: pkoomar@cityofbayvillage.com, mayor@beachwoodohio.com, skoci@bedfordoh.gov, mmallis@bedfordoh.gov, reneec@bedfordheights.gov, lspremulli@villageofbentleyville.com, ckleem@cityofberea.org, Jlicastro@bratenahl.org, mayorhruby@brecksville.oh.us, salai@broadview-heights.org, mayor@cityofbrookpark.com, kagallagher@brooklynohio.gov, Mike Procuk <mprocuk@brooklynhts.org>, mayortomko@chagrin-falls.org, rjamieson@chagrin-falls.org, johnmfinley@gmail.com, tflorkiewicz@roadrunner.com, mwise@mcdonaldhopkins.com, citymanager@clvhts.com, j.bacci@cuyahogaheights.com, mayorking@eastcleveland.org, KHGail@cityofeuclid.com, mayor@fairviewpark.org, vcollova@garfieldhts.org, mayor@gatesmillsvillage.com, mcegelka@glenwillow-oh.gov, cbrunello@highlandhts.com, mbooker@vhhohio.org, mayor@huntingvalley.net, togliattia@independenceohio.org, mayor@lakewoodoh.net, amclaughlin@linndalevillage-oh.gov, wardp@lyndhurst-oh.com, ablackwell@mapleheightsohio.com, anthonydicicco@mayfieldheights.org, bbodnar@mayfieldvillage.com, jstupka@middleburgheights.com, srenda@morelandhills.com, telkins@newburgh-oh.gov, mayorkennedy@north-olmsted.com, smithd@northrandall.org, mayorstefanik@northroyalton.org, dhammett@oakwoodvillageoh.com, jgraven@olmstedfalls.org, labbott@olmstedtownship.org, lzver@olmstedtownship.org, jkress@olmstedtownship.org, bgillette@olmstedtownship.org, mayor@orangevillage.com, mayorsoffice@cityofparma-oh.gov, mayorsoffice@parmaheightsoh.gov, bain@pepperpike.org, mayors.office@richmondheightsohio.org, mayor@rrcity.com, mayor@sevenhillsohio.org, David.Weiss@shakeronline.com, cao@shakeronline.com, mayor@solonohio.org, mayor@seuclid.com, tom.perciak@strongsville.org, mayor@universityheights.com, mayorjerry@valleyview.net, hurstk@waltonhillsohio.gov, mayor@cityofwarrensville.com, dclough@cityofwestlake.org, BHolbert@woodmerevillage.com, jliskovec@cityofbayvillage.com, chris.arrietta@beachwoodohio.com, Clint Bellar <cbellar@bedfordoh.gov>, nickb@bedfordheights.gov, LWNagle@villageofbentleyville.com, panzalone@cityofberea.org, service@bratenahl.org, rweidig@brecksville.oh.us, dschroedel@broadview-heights.org, jverba@brooklynohio.gov, Ed Hatgas <ehatgas@brooklynhts.org>, john@chagrin-falls.org, bethb52@aol.com, d.sammons@cuyahogaheights.com, ammarshall301@yahoo.com, dknecht@cityofeuclid.com, shawn.leininger@fairviewpark.org, tmclaughlin@garfieldhts.org, daveb@gatesmillsvillage.com, sscaffide@glenwillow-oh.gov, tevens@highlandhts.com, sclymer@vhhohio.org, bldg@huntingvalley.net, karasl@independenceohio.org, joe.beno@lakewoodoh.net, fiorittot@lyndhurst-oh.com, tciresi@mapleheightsohio.com, onyfatica@mayfieldheights.org, dmetzung@mayfieldvillage.com, jherron@middleburgheights.com, service@morelandhills.com, jmilano@newburgh-oh.gov, glaunerd@north-olmsted.com, sokolowskid@northrandall.org, servicedir@northroyalton.org, thaba@oakwoodvillageoh.com, service@olmstedfalls.org, ewilliams@olmstedtownship.org, zuganr@orangevillage.com, bhiggins@cityofparma-oh.gov,

patten@parmaheightsoh.gov, jadvent@pepperpike.org, girardi@pepperpike.org,
service.director@richmondheightsohio.org, safetyservice@rrcity.com, jjohnson@sevenhillsohio.org,
patricia.speese@shakeronline.com, tbandiera@solonohio.org, janderson@seuclid.com, joe.walker@strongsville.org,
jpokorny@universityheights.com, servicedepartment@valleyview.net, kalmanr@waltonhillsohio.gov,
tsims@cityofwarrensville.com, pquinn@cityofwestlake.org, fpaparone@woodmerevillage.com
Cc: Jessica Fenos <jfenos@cuyahogacounty.us>
Subject: Cleveland Recycling Story

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Cuyahoga County Mayors and Service Directors:

I wanted to call your attention to a Fox 8 story on Cleveland's recycling program that aired last Friday and revealed that the City has been landfilling its recyclables for over a year. The District was aware that Cleveland's recyclables had contamination levels as high as 65% and that Kimble had been rejecting their loads and even had a person stationed at the Ridge Road transfer station to screen materials before they shipped to their MRF. What we did not know was that Kimble had stopped accepting their recyclables. I was informed of this on Friday by the City. Here is a link to the story. <https://fox8.com/2019/08/02/i-team-reveals-how-long-cleveland-recycling-has-been-going-to-landfills/>

Over the weekend, we have fielded many social media comments from people thinking that their city's recyclables are landfilled too. If you get questions of your own, here is what you should know.

1. The City's problems do not apply to the other communities in Cuyahoga County. While contamination is a problem everywhere, no other city has 65% contamination which is the reason for Kimble to reject their loads. Cleveland's recyclables are too laden with trash to be processed.
2. Cleveland has issued an RFP to hire a consultant to make recommendations on the City's recycling program. That is expected to take three months to complete.
3. The material that Lakewood and Brooklyn delivers to Ridge Road is still shipped to Kimble for processing.
4. Kimble and the other MRF's are processing communities' recyclables in accordance with existing contracts.

Please call me if you would like to discuss.

Best regards,
Diane

Diane Bickett, Executive Director
dbickett@cuyahogacounty.us
Direct: 216.443.3714
Mobile: 216.701.0148

CUYAHOGA COUNTY SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
4750 East 131 Street, Garfield Heights, OH 44105
Main: 216.443.3749
CuyahogaRecycles.org

July 24, 2019

The Honorable Michael Procuk
Mayor of Brooklyn Heights
345 Tuxedo Avenue
Brooklyn Heights OH 44131



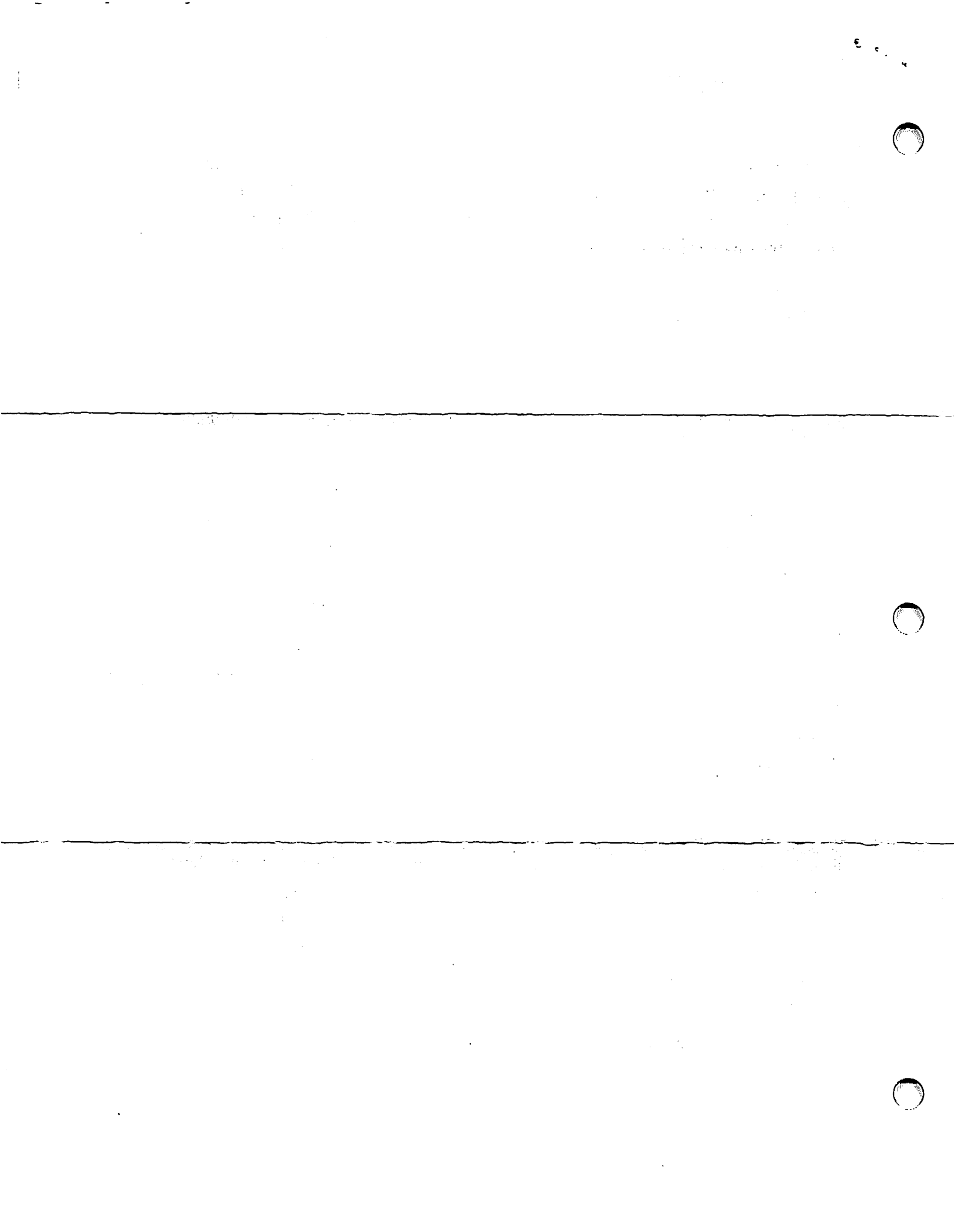
Greetings Mayor Procuk,

We at the Family Research Council trust you and your administration have enjoyed a wonderful start to 2019!

We are writing to you regarding a growing trend of letters that are sent to cities, towns and municipalities across America each January regarding your towns' Christmas displays, especially the inclusion of Nativity Scenes that recognize the religious origins of Christmas. We want to provide you with information to help you respond to claims that you are legally bound to remove a display that most towns in America have had in place for many years.

These letters claim that your town is violating the Constitution by having such a display and that legal action will ensue if you fail to remove the display. Our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom have prepared information that will help you understand the legality of seasonal displays and their legal staff is available to answer your questions.

From Alliance Defending Freedom's "Religious Freedom of Expression" document...
"Each year, the Christmas season seems to begin earlier and earlier, as festive decorations bedeck stores, homes, and churches. Throughout our nation's history, many celebrate Christmas as the birth of Christ in the public and private sector by displaying nativity scenes, singing religious Christmas carols, giving gifts, and sharing with others the story of the first Christmas. In recent years, misconceptions about the legalities of the celebration of Christmas have led government officials to remove Christ from Christmas in public places such as schools, parks, libraries, and government offices. As a result, school calendars, which once announced "Christmas Vacation," now read "Winter Vacation," and religiously themed decorations featuring nativity scenes have been replaced by snowmen and reindeer.



The U.S. Constitution requires none of these things. No court has ever ruled that the Constitution demands that government officials censor Christmas carols, eliminate all references to Christmas, or silence those who celebrate Christmas. These efforts to suppress Christmas celebrations demonstrate that many public officials mistakenly believe that allowing seasonal religious expression would violate the so-called “separation of church and state” – a doctrine often cited in connection with the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. As a result, public officials across our nation have denied citizens their constitutional rights of religious speech and expression under the guise that it is constitutional.

To dispel this notion, it is important to realize that the Constitution does not “require complete separation of church and state.” The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment merely requires the state to be neutral in its relations with religious believers and non-believers; it does not require the state to be their adversary. In fact, the Constitution “affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any.” “State power is no more to be used to handicap religions, than it is to favor them.”

The document closes by saying... “The U.S. Constitution does not require government officials to obliterate religious observances and expression from the public square. It is the hope of Alliance Defending Freedom that this information will help dispel the extremist myths about the Establishment Clause that have prompted tragic and unnecessary acts of government censorship of religious speech. And to all, we wish you a Merry Christmas!”

If your administration receives a letter from any organization that advises you to remove any religious displays, please feel free to reach out to me and I will help you guard your tradition of recognizing the religious roots of the holiday in any way I possibly can.

All the very best to you and your city!

Tim Throckmorton
Midwest Regional Director for Church Ministries
740-935-1406
tthrockmorton@frc.org
Watchmen on the Wall
www.watchmenpastors.org

