

CCR

citizens for civic renewal



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empowering citizens and serving as a catalyst for civic action in greater cincinnati

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CCR Appointed to Cooperation and Efficiency Committee

On November 11th an overflow crowd filled CCR's annual meeting to hear Hamilton County Commissioner Pat DeWine, City Councilmember Chris Bortz and former Forward Quest (now Vision 2015) Chairman Frank Sommerkamp outline the past, present and future of local government cooperation in Greater Cincinnati.

Presentations by these regional leaders were followed by small group discussions on the issue of local government cooperation. Citizens identified services such as schools, building inspections, purchasing, public works, EMS, and health departments as ripe for collaboration.

Perhaps the most exciting news of the meeting was the announcement that Bortz and DeWine were moving forward with a committee to examine shared service opportunities between City and County as well as other jurisdictions. The Government Cooperation and Efficiency Committee held its first organizational meeting on January 23rd. Chaired by former Ohio Senate President Dick Finan and CBC President John Taylor of

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Government Cooperation and Efficiency Committee - Members

Dick Finan, Co-Chair and former President of the Ohio Senate

John Taylor, Co-Chair and President of the Greater Cincinnati Region of PNC Bank

Chris Bortz, City of Cincinnati Councilmember

Pat Dewine, Hamilton County Commissioner
Richard Ellison, Mayor of Elmwood Place representing the Hamilton County Municipal League

Kathy Wagner, Symmes Township Trustee representing the Hamilton County Township Association

Mike Burns, Indian Hill City Manager representing the City Managers Association

Eric Kearney, State Senator

Jim Raussen, State Representative

John Frank, Jr. - CCR representative

Mark Policinski, Director of the OKI Regional Council of Governments

Ron Miller, Director of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission

TBD, AFSCME Representative

Hamilton County Committee Studies Internal Operations

The Hamilton County Competition and Efficiency Committee has been studying efficiencies related to consolidation and management improvements of county functions like fleet and facility maintenance. Although gains are being made in consolidating the departments that directly report to the County Commissioners, larger cost savings could be found if independently elected officials such as the Sheriff and the County Engineer joined the efforts.

CCR is encouraging its membership to contact the Sheriff and County Engineer to encourage their participation in the work of the Competition and Efficiency Committee. The success of these efforts will help streamline government and per-

haps offer greater resources for public safety and transportation improvements or even possibly allow for savings to be passed on to the taxpayers of Hamilton County.

One example of the potential savings associated with the work of the Competition and Efficiency Committee is leveraged purchasing. By combining the purchasing power of multiple county departments and agencies and through the use of technology and process improvements, the county has realized savings on the order of \$7 million annually in the past few years.

To learn more about the Hamilton County Competition and Efficiency Committee go to www.hamilton-co.org/hc/bocc_cec.asp. The Committee's next meeting is February 20th at 8:30 AM in the Commissioner's conference room.

Cooperation and Efficiency Committee

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PNC Bank, the committee looked to develop core principles, interview consultants and commit to success.

The committee is aggressively pursuing its work. On February 8th, the committee heard proposals from two consulting firms, Management Partners and Public Financial Management (PFM). Both consulting firms outlined work programs that would help identify opportunities for the provision of joint services. The committee is meeting on Friday, February 16th to discuss the merits of the proposals and how to proceed. As a member of the committee, CCR is dedicated to bringing the voices of citizens to this process.

HCRPC Builds a “wiki” Community Action Network

Today, the world and our communities change when networks of relationships form among people and organizations who share a common cause and vision of what's possible. The Hamilton County Community Action Network Directory--a new online inventory of organizations and programs improving our community--is being collaboratively written by its users to foster critical connections and networks needed to address key community issues in Hamilton County. The Directory is an initiative of Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (HCRPC) and Leadership Cincinnati USA.

The goal of this directory is to list all organizations and programs focused on improving Hamilton County. Unique features of the Directory include the ability to search by key community issues and twelve community systems. Even more unique is the way it is being built--with collaborative authoring and wikiality (truth by consensus) where the visitors themselves add and edit the content. That is, the data base is being collaboratively written by its users (you and me and everybody else) to foster critical connections and networks needed to address our key community issues.

Citizens for Civic Renewal includes an impressive list of members that lead and participate in dozens of organizations working toward the betterment of our community. HCRPC has asked for CCR's help in expanding the Directory. Just go to www.hamilton-co.org/hcrpc/canDirectory.asp to find more information about the Directory or to enter or revise information about organizations that are a part of your network. The continuously emerging Community Action Network Directory is designed to support and expedite the work of committees and initiatives in organizations such as Citizens for Civic Renewal.

CCR Meets with Center for Local Government

Citizens for Civic Renewal (CCR) representatives recently met with Robert Johnson, Director, the Center for Local Government to discuss the two organizations' efforts to help local governments work together. While CCR has been working with the region's two largest governments, the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, to identify possible savings from shared services and other collaborations, the Center has been helping smaller jurisdictions find savings in areas such as health care and capital financing.

Al Kanters, CCR Board Member and Executive Director of the Lincoln Heights Community Improvement Corporation, summed up the work of CCR and the Center. "Today's fiscal climate leaves most local jurisdictions with the unenviable choice of cutting services or raising taxes to make ends meet. The Center for Local Government and CCR are trying to identify a "third way" to balance the books -- local government cooperation," said Kanters.

Through continued dialogue CCR and the Center hope to share information about the ways governments can work together. One initiative that may identify new places to save tax dollars is the Government Cooperation & Efficiency Program Steering Committee that City of Cincinnati Councilman Chris Bortz and Hamilton County Commissioner Pat DeWine have put together. CCR has a seat on this Committee and will keep the Center updated on its progress.



The Center for Local Government
Serving Ohio's Municipalities and Townships

CCR supports the Center's dedication to the principle of continuous improvement for local jurisdictions. CCR believes that communication with like-minded organizations like the Center can help us stay on the cutting edge of best management practices in local government collaboration. "The Center recognizes that not all collaborations make sense for every local government, but the more options we can present, the greater the opportunities to find something that works for each individual jurisdiction," said Johnson.

For more information on the Center for Local Government go to www.c4lg.org.

JOIN CCR TODAY!

Are the Stars Aligning?

By Steve Johns, CCR Director

Did the simple action of voting the same party in charge of both City and County governments make that much of a difference? Within a month of this “simple” action all signs point to an earth-shattering change in attitudes toward cooperation. Let’s not count our chickens before they hatch but where there was once a twinkle of hope on a relatively modest shared-services task force, now newspaper headlines tout city/county collaboration on items that seemed *verboten* such as a temporary jail and a regional transit system.

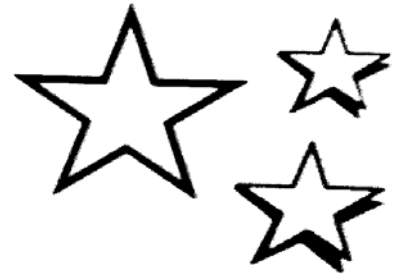


Even something as simple as the three county commissioners hosting a session at the City of Cincinnati’s Neighborhood Summit shows how far this relationship has come so fast. The title of the session, *How the County Works with the City*, belies the new attitude of cooperation.

In all of CCR’s discussions about local government cooperation - from Metro Louisville Vice-Mayor Joan Riehm’s presentation on the formation of the Louisville Metro government to the BEST Task Force’s interviews with the former Metropolitan Growth Alliance (MGA) members, the common theme of taking action when the “stars align” was identified. Having leaders—especially politicians—that are from the same cloth, often the same party—has been key in many of the big shifts of government collaboration that have happened in other places.

So how do we take advantage of this celestial moment? We must push for action and we must help keep the momentum going. CCR is dedicated to taking the lead on promoting any progress in city/county collaboration. We will continue to inform all parties about the collaborative efforts that already exist. We are ready to develop a “community of action” that will help us overcome the hurdles that have kept cooperation happening in the past. If cooperation was easy, it would already have been done. Still looming are the excuses based on race, labor contracts, political patronage systems, and internal reforms at the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

We also need to remind ourselves why CCR took the mantle of local government cooperation in the first place. Our touchstone continues to be the citizens agenda expressed in *Cincinnati*



Metropatterns and *Strategies to Improve our Region*. Without local government cooperation, all the other strategies in the areas like economic development, transportation, housing, education and land use planning are all the more difficult to achieve.

We are confident that local government cooperation will help reduce costs and improve services but more than that it will help Greater Cincinnati’s public sector forge a common vision. We believe that vision includes a robust regional economy that benefits all in our greater community; a regional transit system that compliments our highway system, schools that provide a good education and the freedom to live where you want.

Meet Jenny Laster

Jenny Laster is entering her second year as Vice-Chair of Citizens for Civic Renewal. Jenny’s more than 30-year career has taken her from teaching to human resources, to leadership development and training.



Her career started in St. Louis where she was a teacher in the St. Louis City Schools. She continued to build on these teaching skills by becoming the Director of Human Relations for several transit agencies—notably the American Public Transit Association in Washington D.C. She moved to Cincinnati to serve as the Vice-President of Human Resources for ATE Management and Service Company.

Then her entrepreneurial spirit really got going with the formation of her own human resources consulting firm, Massey Enterprises. Her most recent and perhaps her most public role

was as the President and CEO of the Grassroots Leadership Academy. Jenny currently runs a consulting practice that focuses on leadership development, training and development and event planning/management.

Jenny was the catalyst for African-American participation in this Hamilton County Town Meeting in January of 2002.

In addition to serving on the CCR Board, Jenny is engaged in other civic boards including Leadership Cincinnati Alumni Association. Most recently, she was honored by the Greater Cincinnati Urban League with their coveted “Glorifying the Lions” award which is presented annually to senior African Americans whose leadership in Cincinnati has made a difference.

Jenny is also completing the second year of a two year term as the United Methodist Church Lay Representative to the British Methodist Conference. As a result, she spent two weeks in Edinburgh Scotland in 2006 and will journey to Blackpool England for two weeks in July 2007.



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PARTNER ORGANIZATION'S EVENTS

**NKU Institute for Public Leadership and
Public Affairs & UC DAAP**

**WOMAN'S CITY CLUB'S
2007 NATIONAL SPEAKER'S FORUM**

**BUILDING A FUTURE SUSTAINABLE
URBANISM & GREEN DESIGN**

**FEATURING
Diane Rehm**

**Hillary Brown, AIA, LEED AP
Greening the Streets:
High Performance Right of Way
Monday, April 9, 2007
info at [daap@uc.edu/planning/](mailto:daap@uc.edu)
[bldg_a_futureseries_poster_web.pdf](#)**

**Tuesday, March 27th, 2007
7:30 PM at Plum Street Temple**

**Additional information
at www.womanscityclub.org**

Citizens for Civic Renewal Membership Form

Join CCR Today! Your membership will: Keep you informed—CCR newsletters and forums featuring national experts are just two of the ways in which CCR members enhance their awareness of issues of regional importance. Aggregate your voice—As a member of CCR, you join hundreds of others so that when we get the ear of public officials, your voice is heard. Support our efforts—Your membership dues augment our work and match the support of local foundations and funders.

_____ Individual \$25 _____ Household \$50 _____ Student \$5
Please mail to Citizens for Civic Renewal 3805 Edwards Road #549, Cincinnati, OH 45209

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Interests (circle those that apply)

Education Social Justice
Transportation Economic Development