

**Village of Mariemont
Council Meeting
August 25, 2025**

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present was Mr. Ayer, Mr. Bartlett, Mrs. Brownknight, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Van Stone, and Mr. York.

Minutes:

Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. York, to accept the Council minutes as written from August 11, 2025. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. York asked Fiscal Officer Rankin to send updated budget information for the Permanent Improvement Fund on what has been sent as noted in the minutes from August 11, 2025. Mrs. Rankin said it will be put on the agenda for September 8, 2025.

Communications:

*From Building Official Holloway: July 2025 Monthly Report.

Members from the Mariemont Pre-School Parents Group, Amanda Barnet, Alicia Stock, Maggie Kenner, Anna Strand and Becca Vianello, presented a check to the Village in the amount of \$5,500 for the drinking fountain at the Tot Lot. Over the years, the group has donated over \$25,000. Mr. York thanked Superintendent James and the Service Department for installing and hooking it up.

Permission to Address Council:

Ms. Jennifer Degerberg, 3855, Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. She is a 36-year resident, 15-year business owner and 13-year resident of the Historic Old Village, living right across the street from the church. The Mariemont Chapel, built up on Dale Park Hill, is the first and oldest building in the Village. This crown jewel was designed by Louis E. Jallade to resemble an English Norman Parish Church and to be the focal point of the Village Center, now the Old Town Square in the Mariemont Historic District. The placement of the Chapel was a core element of John Nolen's overall plan for the community which now holds status on the National Register of Historic Places. She recently became aware that the decades-long relationship between the Mariemont Community Church and the Thomas J. Emery Foundation (who owns the Chapel, the Pioneer Graveyard and the land on which they sit) has come to an end. In this relationship, the Church was responsible for the daily operations and care of the Chapel and its grounds. The Church also handled the scheduling/custodial work of weddings and funerals. Any major capital improvements and major maintenance issues, i.e. new roof, cemetery wall repair etc. have been paid for by the Emery Foundation and/or Mariemont Preservation Foundation. It has come to her attention that the Cincinnati Waldorf School located across the municipal parking lot on Chestnut St. has entered into an agreement with the Emery Foundation to manage and use the Chapel. This information is of great concern. In the 12 years since the Cincinnati Waldorf School purchased the Dale Park School on Chestnut Street, they have demonstrated a neglect of their property, a disrespect of the parks and grounds throughout the Village and a negligence towards participatory and contributory management, maintenance and upkeep. Examples: unkept school frontage and surround, overgrown garden in Ann Buntin Becker Park, daily use of municipal parking lot, overuse of Dogwood Park/tot Lot. She cannot feel confident that allowing the Waldorf School to become the custodian of Mariemont's Crown Jewel, the Chapel, without very specific contractual guidelines and checkpoints, is in the best interest of the Chapel, the Village and its residents. Village Council, you are our elected officials. She asked to share the details of this arrangement and assure the residents and taxpayers of the Village that the integrity, historic preservation and proper building and grounds maintenance of this key Mariemont Landmark will be monitored and ensure that oversight of maintenance and care standards will be managed by the Village and our Chapel will not be jeopardized by this agreement.

In the past when the Waldorf School was approached with complaints, the response was lip service. She believes they cleaned up the school for this "job interview". She understands that the position the Village is in, however, she does not believe the Village has done its job in making sure Waldorf is maintain Village property that they are using on a daily basis. They take advantage of the property that is Village owned.

Mrs. Brownknight asked what is the Village's oversight of the Church property? Mayor Brown said it is private property. The arrangement is between two private parties. We can monitor and ensure that the building is held to ARB

standards. We do need to tighten up the nuisance laws Solicitor McTigue said the Village can oversee to make sure they comply with Village laws and ordinances. Compliance complaints can result in enforcement action.

Dr. Lewis said Council is not privy to this private conversation. She said there is a meeting at MPF Thursday which is open to the public which will go through the steps that go us to this point. She believes it would be appropriate for MPF and the Village to set guidelines and expectations for how it should be managed. She encourages a meeting with all parties to come up with a win/win arrangement. Legislation can be reviewed and amended if the unprotected need to be protected. Mayor Brown said we cannot place unreasonable expectations on maintenance on someone that we would not place on any other resident of the Village. It was suggested that Building Official Holloway meet with them to make sure they are aware of the ordinances etc. as to uses for the building.

Ms. Louise Scohmburg, 3885 Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. She agreed with Ms. Degerberg that the upkeep of the building is not being done, nor the grounds. They are destroying areas that they are not supposed to be. She has witnessed unsupervised children playing by the creek culvert and by the cemetery hillside.

Mr. Brad Lockhart, 3875 Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. He has been a resident for 28 years with 9 years living in the Historic District. He questioned why the Village Council could not be the steward for residents for this situation. If you lived in the area, he assured Council they would be concerned as well. Mr. Bartlett responded that the Village could hold them to the ARB rules in the code, but cannot treat them any differently than other properties in the Village.

Mrs. Mary Beth York, 6767 Wooster Pike, was granted permission to address Council. She asked what legal parameters have ever been given to the Waldorf School. She suggested a review of their use of public property for their private school. It's time to look at the legality of their use of Village property. Mr. York said there is a contract for their use of property around the school, but there is no written contract for their use of Ann Buntin Becker Park.

Mr. Ayer addressed Council as resident, not as a member of Council. For 20 years he has been the "official/non-official" caretaker of the Chapel. He agrees with everything that has been said about the importance of the building, Whoever the transition takes place with, those standards that are in place for the building such as turf, bushes, landscaping, exterior/exterior of the building etc., he will continue to volunteer to monitor and report back to Emery Memorial. His expectation is that there will be no change in the look. He guaranteed that he will continue to monitor the building and surrounding landscape.

Mr. Marty Zack, 3890 Oak Street, was granted permission to address Council. He attended Dale Park as a child. The Chapel was the site of many funerals and it is an emotional and sacred place. The Waldorf School needs to keep up those standards.

Building Official Holloway suggested having a strategy in place that the Village wants to have with Waldorf School before engaging in a discussion. He suggested community updates as well.

Council discussed the matter and agreed that Mayor Brown and Building Official Holloway would arrange a meeting with the appropriate representative from the Waldorf School. Solicitor McTigue will reach out to their attorney to identify who the best representative would be. Dr. Lewis asked for those who wanted updates on the matter to give her their contact information. Mayor Brown hopes to have an update on the situation within 30 days.

Ms. Aileen Beatty, 6757 Murray Avenue was granted permission to address Council. Waldorf School has been gently asked to not let their employees park along the street, yet they continue to do so. She also wanted to correct some information and stated that Village Parks are part of the Historic District overlay. She outlined the various overlay districts and landmarks.

Motion to Pay the Bills:

Mr. York said the cost for the fifty aluminum signs in the amount of \$3467.10. This will be referenced in the Public Works Committee report. It was asked if the cost could be paid from the State Highway Fund. Fiscal Officer Rankin said she will look into the matter. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to pay the bills. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Committee Reports:

Health & Recreation

The Health & Recreation Committee met on Tuesday August 19th at 6:00pm in Council Chambers. Present at the meeting were Health & Recreation Committee members Randy York (Chair) and Matthew Ayer (Member). Also in attendance were Mayor Brown, Village Engineer Chris Ertel, Fiscal Officer Kelly Rankin, Jim Goetz, Doug Zemke, and Linda Bartlett and Kim Beach of the Mariemont Racquet Club.

The purpose of the committee meeting was to:

1. Review pickleball expansion updated quote
2. Review tennis court resurfacing quote
3. Review Parks Advisory Board requests

The Committee unanimously agreed to:

1. Accept the bid from JK Meurer for additional work required to execute the pickleball expansion. The additional work includes the removal of a tree stump and the relocation of a drain that was necessitated by the lengthening of the courts. The Mayor will instruct the Maintenance Department to remove the pine tree that is in the construction area before the scheduled beginning of construction on or about August 26th. The updated total quote from JK Meurer is \$8,245.
2. Accept the bid from Tennis Technology for the resurfacing of courts 5, 6, and 7. Court 5 will be 1 tennis court with pickleball lines, court 6 will be 4 pickleball courts, and court 7 will be tennis lines only. This bid includes the addition of crack repair where necessary and the replacement of the post and net system on court 7. Total cost of the bid is \$60,853.

The \$107,106.44 raised by the Pickleball Campaign along with the \$44,000 in Village appropriations will cover the total estimated cost of \$135,856.55 for this project. The Committee further recommends that the necessary legislation be prepared so that these contracts can be accepted and executed at the August 25th Village Council meeting. The Committee did not review requests from the Parks Advisory Board as this request relates to the purchase and installation of landscaping at the Livingood Monument. A purchase order request for \$1,000 was delivered to the mayor at the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20pm.

Fiscal Officer Rankin said the funds will be put into a restricted line for this project. Mrs. Brownknight said she wanted clarification of what “restricted” funds were. She wanted to be sure we were not unnecessarily restricting dollars. Mrs. Rankin said it is for Village purposes that monies in the restricted line item will be for tennis/pickleball purposes only. Any other use would require Council to pass legislation. Mr. York said the money collected can only be used for pickleball. The problem is the money allocated \$44,000 for the tennis court work will not be enough. Ms. Linda Bartlett, 3611 Mound Way, said the Tennis Technology bid includes pickleball nets (\$3048.00). Her opinion is there is a surplus from the pickleball, it can be applied to Tennis Tech bid. Council agreed that any leftover money would be encumbered and go to the unrestricted fund. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownknight to accept the recommendation. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Public Works

The Public Works & Service Committee met on August 19, 2025, at 7:02 PM. In attendance were Committee Chairperson Bob Van Stone, Committee Members Randy York and Rob Bartlett, Mayor Bill Brown, Supervisor Ben James, Village Engineer Chris Ertel, Councilperson Marcy Lewis and 8 residents of Mariemont.

The first agenda item was a discussion of new street signs for the village. Mayor Brown reviewed a presentation prepared by Ted Brown which was initially prepared in March 2022 and revised in both January 2023 and August 2025. The Federal Highway Commission published the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which establishes a national standard for traffic control devices, including signs, for every street open to public travel in the United States. Section 2D.43 requires signs to be reflective to show the same shape and similar color both day and night. There are also

requirements regarding the size and appearance of the lettering. There are some potential exceptions for historic districts. Replacement options include:

1. Aluminum brown signs looking similar to the existing wood signs that meet and exceed MUTCD reflective and night-time visibility requirement and will last 12-15 years and cost about \$65/sign
2. Composite (not a natural wood product) brown signs looking similar to the existing wood signs but does not meet the MUTCD requirements for reflectivity and night-time visibility, will not last as long as the aluminum sign and cost between \$100 and \$200 per sign. Glass beads could be added to the background to meet the MUTCD requirements, but it would reduce the contrast between the background and letters at night.
3. Wood signs. The lettering in the existing wood signs could be made to be reflective, but the reflective glass beads would be degraded with exposure to the weather, and the background does not meet the MUTCD requirements for reflectivity and night-time visibility, will have a short life similar to the existing wood signs. The application of glass bead would probably be slightly more successful on the composite relative to the natural wood. The appearance and sustainability of the beaded composite and wood signs is unknown.

Supervisor James noted that the existing wood signs are deteriorating quickly and were dropping off posts which was accelerated by the large amount of rain and snow this year. As a result, Mr. James took the initiative to order aluminum signs (Option 1) for Wooster Pike, which was missing a large number of signs. He felt this would be helpful to the many Village visitors who travel along Wooster Pike. Mr. James also noted that the Village has roughly 200 to 300 street signs. Mr. York questioned the number of street signs needed citing a street sign survey completed in 2021 that indicated there were approximately 100 street signs in the Village. Mr. James noted that there would be a significant cost and maintenance savings by using the aluminum signs. That sign is also the only option fully compliant with MUTCD requirements. There were multiple comments by residents. The primary issues were (1) a change in the character of the Village, (2) that the entire Village may be exempt from the MUTCD requirements due to its designation as a National Historic Landmark, and (3) the poor visibility of the existing signs particularly at night. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. York moved that the Village obtain a legal opinion about whether the Village must comply with MUTCD requirements due to the National Historic Landmark designation and that the Village place the information of the various sign options on its website in order to get opinions from those not at the meeting. There will need to be an evaluation of the number of signs so an accurate cost can be determined. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. York recommended that there should be “courtesy” guidance from the ARB and historic preservation organizations such as MPF concerning the design of street signs. It was noted by both Mayor Brown and Mr. Van Stone that the ARB does not have jurisdiction over traffic devices including street signs. Mr. Van Stone moved that the Service Department install the already purchased aluminum signs along Wooster Pike and replace wooden posts where necessary with previously purchased wood posts as a test. The motion passed unanimously. To be clear, the Public Works Committee does not recommend or endorse any street sign option at this point in time. Only streets signs that the Village already owns will be installed.

The second agenda item was repaving of the municipal parking lot along Chestnut Street. Mr. Van Stone noted that for the next two years the properties on both ends of the parking lot will be controlled by the Waldorf School and questioned if the appropriated \$65,000 could be spent in a better way. Mr. York pointed out that the Council had approved this expenditure in both 2024 and 2025 and that it had a relatively high ranking on the August 2024 priority list. He moved that the Village Engineer get a cost estimate from the paving contractor approved for repaving selected village streets later this year. The Engineer should also work with the contractor about paint striping. The motion passed unanimously. It was suggested that the Village Engineer should find someone to design the optimal layout for the parking lot depending on the bid and available funding. The paving contractor may not be the best source for striping, particularly if a safe drive through to drop off and pick up students at the Waldorf school is required.

The third item was repair of the municipal sidewalks (those along Village parks and buildings). Mr. Van Stone had inspected and measured all the sidewalks. A total of 304 squares has some sort of deficiency (cracked, tilted, or spalled). 104 squares had tilts smaller than ½ inch which according to the Zoning Officer is allowed by ADA requirements. The following table lists the remaining squares needing maintenance and the total cost based on some estimates from the Zoning Officer.

Grind (tilts between ½” and 1”)	61 squares	\$ 6,100
Hi priority replacement (tilted more than 1” and cracked and tilted more than ½ “)	29 squares	\$11,600
Low priority replacement (spalled)	20 squares	\$ 8,000
Cracked (no tilt)	90 squares	\$36,000
	TOTAL	\$61,700

Mr. Van Stone recommended that the Village attempt to perform all the grinding using the \$5,000 already appropriated in the 2025 Capital Improvement budget for sidewalks and the committee works on a final plan based on the 2026 appropriations. The committee agreed unanimously. Mr. Van Stone will work with the Village Engineer to get estimates from a grinding contractor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Discussion regarding the street signs included obtaining a legal opinion. Mr. York stated he had a problem with the process with how this was done. Signs were put up and then a meeting was held. It was not in any budget or priority list. He does not believe it is good governance. Mayor Brown offered that Superintendent James has wanted to do something about the street signs for some time. It is his understanding that Mr. James and Mr. York discussed the proposed signs. Mayor Brown had the signs ordered based on that conversation. Mr. York felt a public meeting should have been held to get resident input. Mr. Van Stone felt the signs needed to be erected to get a good feeling about how they would look. Mr. Ayer agreed that the process was not perfect. Superintendent James took the initiative to maintain the Village. The signs are up and a survey can still go out. The Village is obtaining a legal opinion if the law regarding the street signs applies to municipalities on the National Historic Register.

Discussion regarding the parking lot: there are three interests – residents, business and operating chapel. A decision has to be made on the design. By not having a designated drop-off area increases the parking capacity, but in turn creates traffic concerns along Chestnut and Oak Street. It was discussed waiting on the parking lot repaving work until a conversation was had with the Waldorf School. Some favored a pause, while others believed the work needed to go forward. The Village has discussed the matter in the past with Waldorf with only the commitment of \$2,000-\$3,000 for the parking lot project. Mr. Bartlett will contact Choice One for cost estimates.

Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. York to accept the recommendations of the Public Works and Service Committee. On roll call; six ayes, no nays.

Miscellaneous:

Village Offices will be closed on Monday September 1, 2025, for Observation of Labor Day.

Mayor Brown said the Taste of Mariemont was fabulous and he thanked Ted Brown for helping with the traffic control. The new location worked out well. He will ask the Service Department to place some dirt in the worn spots in the median.

Resolutions:

“A Resolution Implementing Sections 3735.65 through 3735.70 of the Ohio Revised Code, to Expand the Boundaries of Community Reinvestment Area in the Village of Mariemont, Ohio” had a third reading. Mr. Van Stone moved, seconded by Mr. York. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-45-25 was adopted.

“To Amend Section 51.17 of the Mariemont Code of Ordinances, To Increase Fees Collected for Garbage and Refuse Pickup” had a second reading.

“To Accept Bid of JK Meurer, for to Relocate Basin and Remove Tree Stump as Part of the Pickleball Court Construction Project at Mary Emery Park; To Authorize Contract; and To Declare Emergency” had a first reading. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution had a second and third reading. Mr. Bartlett moved, seconded by Mr. Ayer to adopt the Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to invoke the Emergency Clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-46-25 was adopted.

“To Accept Bid of Tennis Technology Inc., for the Repair, Resurfacing and Painting of Tennis Courts 5, 6, and 7; To Authorize Contract and To Declare Emergency” had a first reading. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Van Stone to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Resolution had a second and third reading. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mrs. Brownknight to adopt the Resolution. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to invoke the Emergency Clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Resolution No. R-47-25 was adopted.

Ordinances:

“To Supplement Ordinance No. O-7-25 Annual Appropriation; and To Declare Emergency” had a first reading. Mr. York moved, seconded by Mr. Bartlett to suspend the rules to allow for the second and third readings. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. The Ordinance had a second reading. Fiscal Officer Rankin said this is to appropriate additional funds for the pool payroll and supplies. The Ordinance had a third reading. Mrs. Brownknight moved, seconded by Mr. York to adopt the Ordinance. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Mr. Ayer moved, seconded by Mr. York to invoke the Emergency Clause. On roll call; six ayes, no nays. Ordinance No. O-10-25 was adopted.

Mr. Holloway updated Council on putting the bid out for the loop trail for Dogwood Park. He is working out another strategy to avoid putting out a public bid. He is working with Engineer Ertel and Fiscal Officer to evaluate if the work can be done with change orders. If not, the bid RFP could be sent out at the end of next week.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

William A. Brown, Mayor

Kelly I. Rankin, Fiscal Officer