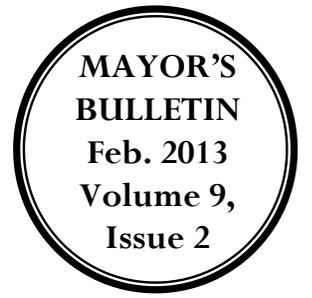


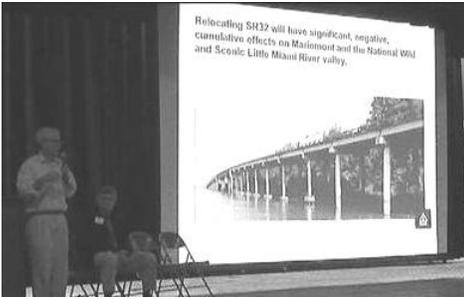


Village of Mariemont

6907 Wooster Pike
Mariemont, Ohio 45227
(513) 271-3246
www.mariemont.org



ODOT MEETING ON EASTERN CORRIDOR BROUGHT MANY FACTS TO LIGHT – CAN ODOT BE TRUSTED?



Kevin Hassey presents ODOT with 1100 signatures on petition. Rendering from Karen Sullivan of raised roadway seen in background clearly shows what the highway would really look like.

Members of the Mariemont Community Planning Council (CPC) are to be congratulated for the wonderful job they did in presenting ODOT with a detailed list of the Village's objections to routing the Eastern Corridor through the South 80 and for being able to factually dispute many of ODOT's statements. CPC member Kevin Hassey presented ODOT representatives with a petition signed by 1100 people, proclaiming their objection to the route that ODOT is considering. Karen Sullivan gave a brilliant presentation that proved



ODOT's Disneyland-like depiction of proposed highway does not represent the elevated roadway that would have to be built to raise the highway in this floodplain and is another example of ODOT's practice of misleading the public.

ODOT's depiction of the proposed highway failed to take into account the fact that the South 80 sits in a flood plain. They showed the highway as being at ground level and minimally invasive. Ms. Sullivan was able to prove that the highway would actually have to be elevated to be above the flood plain and showed a rendering of what such a road would look like. Residents were taken back by how overwhelming the structure would be and how it would totally destroy the landscape of the South 80. Through Ms. Sullivan's presentation, it was obvious that ODOT had neglected to consider many important factors. CPC member Joe Stelzer commented that ODOT should be embarrassed for disseminating misleading and/or inaccurate information in an attempt to gain support for their flawed decisions. The facts that were revealed at the January 22nd meeting showed that there would be no way to mitigate the effects of routing the Eastern Corridor through the South 80. Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune said that the Village had made their position on the issue very clear. We do not want this major highway going through any part of our community. Officials from Hamilton County, including Commissioners Todd Portune, Greg Hartman, and Chris Monzel, and City of Cincinnati Councilwoman Laure Quinliven all support our efforts to block this route. We will continue to work against this horrible plan and will keep you posted with any new information. Again, a huge thank you goes to CPC members Scott Degerberg, Sam Duran, Valerie Garber, Paul Haffner, Kevin Hassey, Ginger Kelly, Don Keyes, Dr. Steve Lewis, Clem Luken, Eric Marsland, Maggie Palazzolo, Millard Rogers, Vice Mayor Joe Stelzer, Karen Sullivan, Charlie Thomas, and Doug Welsh.



Officer Brian Hoffman joins the Mariemont Police Dept.

NEW POLICE OFFICER HIRED

As you may have heard, recently there have been some daytime break-ins in the Village and our community was also mentioned as one being targeted by an intruder posing as a utility worker. Information about these crimes can be found on a community messaging system called NIXLE by going to <http://local.nixle.com/mariemont-police-department>. I would encourage all residents to sign up for this free service, which will automatically send alerts to NIXLE members. Police Chief, Rick Hines, does not recommend that we disseminate this kind of news through Nextdoor Mariemont, as he wants to be sure that residents are receiving accurate information rather than taking the risk that facts will become skewed as they are passed along from person to person. The more facts residents have, the less likely they are to become victims of these sorts of crimes. For instance, you should know that

the utility companies will not send a service person to your home without calling first and scheduling an appointment. Therefore, if someone comes to your door saying they need to check your phone, electric, gas, or cable service, and you have **not** made an appointment for them to be there, DO NOT let them in. Call 911 immediately and report the incident. Due to this increase in crime, we have taken the proactive step of replacing our one part-time police officer with another full-time officer to bring our force back up to the level it was when Officer John Feldmann retired. At that time, Council asked that I not hire a tenth officer, and I agreed as long as I could allow Officer Feldmann to return on a part-time basis so we would have that tenth officer when there was a need. Unfortunately, now Officer Feldmann cannot always be available to fill in whenever we need him, leaving us short on officers and making it difficult to cover all three shifts each day. At the first Council meeting in January, Police Chief Rick Hines and Safety Committee Chairman Dennis Wolter proposed that the time had come to once again go back to having ten full-time officers. Due to three recent break-ins in the last month, intruders posing as utility workers, drug problems on the rise, and school shootings across the nation, I have been approached by many citizens and I agree with them that the tenth officer should be full-time rather than part-time. There is no doubt that some of the areas adjacent to the Village have a much higher crime rate, and we must guard against those crimes crossing over our borders. I conferred with the Police Chief and the Safety Committee Chairman and we wasted no time and hired the new officer. Officer Brian Hoffman was selected for the position. He is a veteran of the war in Afghanistan and has served with the Felicity Police Department since graduating from the police academy. **Safety Reminder:** Please lock your doors and your car doors and if you see something suspicious, call 911 immediately.

CITIZENS NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COMMITTEE TO BE FORMED TO KEEP THE VILLAGE SAFER



Tim Jordan
Neighborhood
Watch Program

I am also taking the step of reinstating a Citizens' Neighborhood Watch program that will be co-chaired by citizens Tim Jordan and Maggie Palazzolo. Mr. Jordan has already begun putting information together to get the program off the ground. Mrs. Palazzolo has a Masters Degree in Criminal Justice, which makes her the perfect fit for this citizens committee. There will be a member of the Police Department assigned to work with the Citizens' Neighborhood Watch group. We had a Neighborhood Watch group in the past, but very few residents chose to participate, due, in part, to our low crime rate and residents did not feel the need for such a program. With the recent break-ins, it is my hope that citizens will see the importance of having this program. I think it is important



Maggie Palazzolo
Neighborhood
Watch Program

to have this program run by citizens rather than elected officials and will help get more citizens involved. A good example is the work done by the Community Planning Committee for the Eastern Corridor, as mentioned in the first paragraph. Working together is the best way we can keep the Village of Mariemont the safe community it has always been. If you would like to join the group, please contact Mr. Jordan at 205-8121 or contact me at 561-2619.

MARIEMONT POLICE OFFICER RECEIVES AWARD

At its January 17th meeting, the Hamilton County Police Association presented Mariemont Police Officer Ryan Lay with the Officer of the Year award for his participation in the association's Honor Guard. Officer Lay has been with the Village since 2005 and a member of the Honor Guard since 2006. As an Honor Guard member, Officer Lay represents the Village at many events, such as parades, including our own Memorial Day Parade, the funerals of police officers throughout Hamilton County, including that of our former Police Chief Don Shanks, and the Village's annual Police/Fire Safety Night Out. The Honor Guard also travels to Washington, D.C. for Police Memorial Week, where they perform at the Capital Building, and they presented the colors at the opening ceremony of the World Choir Games. Officer Lay was selected for this award because of his dedication to the unit and his willingness to go above and beyond to assist the team in any way possible.



NEW TREES ON WOOSTER PIKE

Last year, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources advised us to remove the Ash trees in the island on Wooster Pike due to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation in our area. The first phase of replacing those trees was done last year, thanks in big part to a very generous donation from Spinnenweber Builders. Those trees were planted across from the Inn. The second phase of the project is now complete, with Pioneer Elm trees having been planted across from Starbucks. This species of tree is much heartier than the old Ash trees and should provide a beautiful canopy along the pike for many, many years to come.

VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP BEECH GROVE

You may notice the Beech Grove in Jordan Park looks a little better and much cleaner. That is because a hard-working group of Village citizens volunteered their time to remove the honeysuckle and kudzu plants that were choking out the young Beech trees in the Grove. We also removed a large bag of litter from the site. The young Beech trees can now get sunlight and they will no longer have to compete with these invasive species of plants for water and soil nutrients. This should help the young trees to grow and thrive so they can take the place of the older trees as those die off. We have been told that our Beech Grove is one of the last significant stands of Beech trees in the state and we want to do whatever we can to ensure the trees there remain healthy for future generations to enjoy. The inside of the Beech Grove will always be left wild and unmanicured, as it was originally intended to be.



Photo shows all the young Beech trees that keep their leaves late into the winter

SIDEWALK REPAIRS CONTINUE

We recently submitted the list of sidewalk trip hazards that need to be repaired in Phase II of the sidewalk project. If you have reported a sidewalk trip hazard that has not yet been repaired, please be patient. This work, of course, has to be completed as the weather permits. If you know of a sidewalk that is raised or buckled because of the roots from a Village-owned tree, and you have not notified us of its location, please call the Village office at 271-3246 and report it. We need the help of residents to make sure we address every trip hazard caused by Village trees.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL SEASON TO BEGIN APRIL 3RD



The Mariemont Recreation Association (MRA) Volleyball season for 3rd - 6th grade girls who reside in the Mariemont school district will be held on Wednesday evenings from April 3 through May 22. Practices and matches will be held at the MHS Auxiliary Gym. This fun and educational league will include teaching, drills, and match play. No previous experience is necessary or expected, and playing time will be equal for all the girls. Players involved in other spring sports are encouraged to sign up and attend as many sessions as they can. The cost is \$45 per player, and online registration at www.mariemontvolleyball.org will begin on March 1. For questions or more information, please contact Wes Iredale at wiredale@cinci.com or 513-272-1551 or Sandra Taylor at sftaylor@att.net or 513-965-0714.

ROOSTERS MEN'S GROOMING CENTER NOW OPEN

The newest business in the Village held their Grand Opening on February 1st. Mariemont is now home to the second location of this upscale men's barber shop. The first shop is located in Mason. Shop owner, Dub Nelson, said he is thrilled to be able to offer the services of Roosters to the men and boys of the Village. Roosters was welcomed to the Village with a letter of appreciation for choosing Mariemont for their new location and for the generous donation they made to the Mariemont Civic Association (MCA) as a gesture of their commitment to our community. At the Grand Opening, owner Dub Nelson presented the Mayor with a check for \$250 for MCA's preschool scholarship fund, which provides tuition assistance to youngsters in our area whose families need help with Mariemont Preschool costs. Information about Roosters can be found on their website at www.roostersmgc.com. If any Village citizen needs financial help to register their child for the Champion Preschool Program at our elementary school, please call me at 561-2619 or contact Mariemont Civic Association President, Dave Gunn, at 561-3687.



See you at Town Meeting on Sunday, March 3rd at 1:00 PM!

Sincerely,

Dan Policastro

Dan Policastro, Mayor

February 22, 2013

Mr. Andy Fleugemann
District Deputy Director
Ohio Dept. of Transportation - District 8
505 S. State Route 741
Lebanon, Ohio 45036

Dear Mr. Fleugemann:

I am writing to you about the proposed roundabout and the 115-unit apartment complex on our border with Madison Place. As you know, I have previously focused on your other proposed project that, in many ways, will negatively impact our Village. That project is, of course, your terrible plan to take the lower South 80 Park away from Mariemont and build a four-lane highway on stilts and pillars right down the middle of this beautiful wildlife and scenic river area.

At a meeting on January 22, 2013, the citizens of our Village and several Native American tribes made it very clear to ODOT that they did not want your four-lane highway in the Village. Commissioner Todd Portune also made it very clear that you need to stop this assault on the Village of Mariemont, but still you continue to waste tax dollars on studies that make our park one of your preferred routes for the Eastern Corridor.

Now you come to us to build a roundabout at Plainville and Murray to support a 115-unit apartment complex, using two million tax dollars. With all due respect, please tell me how can we trust ODOT, let alone work with an organization that is trying to destroy a large part of our one-square-mile Village? I have to say the answer is that ODOT is making it almost impossible.

Nevertheless, as I advised in my first letter to you, I have additional questions for your response to some very specific concerns about the proposed roundabout. Those concerns are:

- At a recent meeting I had with the representative from KZF Design, who conducted the traffic study for the roundabout, I was told there were only TWO alternatives for us to consider. One was to build the roundabout and the other was to install traffic signals. However, an article published in the *Eastern Hills Journal* on December 19, 2012, cites FOUR possible designs for the intersection: a roundabout, a four-way stop, a two-way stop, or no change at all. I am curious why I was given just two options, while the study obviously offers four options, including making no change of any kind. Is there a specific reason that information is being withheld from the decision-makers of the Village of Mariemont and its residents? I think one can see why I am having a hard time trusting any type of ODOT project.
- In the May 2012 *Mariemont Town Crier* paper, Mr. Greiwe states in a letter to the editor, "The proposed roundabout is a critical element in the financing of the land acquisition for this apartment development. I would ask why that is. If Mr. Greiwe wants to build 115 apartments on the Village's border with Columbia Township on Plainville Road in Madison Place, then he should be responsible to buy the land, not the taxpayers! Why does ODOT demand that a roundabout be built? Also the good citizens of Mariemont are hearing that, if a roundabout is built, the developer (Mr. Greiwe) will get \$2,000,000 of our tax dollars, plus \$12,000,000 in Tax Incentive Funding to purchase the land to build his apartments. Is this true? If so, please explain the whole process and disclose if the developer gets to keep those tax dollars?"
- Also, according to Mr. Greiwe's statement, the 115 apartment units he will build in Madison Place along Plainville Road will house young professionals just out of college who are not ready to buy a house. How will the estimated 125+ vehicles affect the morning traffic in this already crowded school zone, which includes three elementary schools? If you check with any auto insurance company's underwriting guidelines, young people 25 years or less pay high auto rates because they have most of the accidents. New high-risk drivers + a very small compact roundabout + an adjacent school zone with three elementary schools = high risk for our children and citizens! Please tell me if you are building this one lane off-center roundabout so that a developer can get tax dollars to build a giant, mega-apartment-complex along our border that, over time, could become run down and offset surrounding property values?
- It goes without saying that Wooster Pike provides the most direct route from Mariemont to downtown and other destinations. If the developer builds a giant, mega-complex on the border of Mariemont in Madison Place, it won't take long for the residents of those apartments to determine that the 'path of least resistance' between the apartments and Wooster Pike can be found on the residential side streets south of Murray Avenue. Most of them will drive the 125+ cars west on Murray and then turn left on Beech Street or Oak Street, taking them over the narrow streets of our Historic District. If they don't like those narrow streets, they will travel farther down Murray and turn left on Homewood or Settle Roads, taking them right over residential streets that are home to a large number of small children. The opposite, of course, would be true as they make their way home. We know this because the Village has spent a great deal of time studying the traffic patterns in this area and developing a traffic-calming plan for these problem streets as a way to minimize vehicular traffic and improve safety. A priority in that traffic-calming plan was to remove the image of these streets as a convenient 'cut-through' to and from Wooster Pike. Adding 125+ cars each day

to the traffic count on these streets would undo all we have accomplished. An independent study by a disinterested engineering firm will need to be conducted to determine the impact of all this extra traffic. Please do not forget to include the new traffic that will be added to the mix with the opening of the Waldorf School.

- Where are all those new 125+ cars going to park? We were told there would be no underground garages because of the environmental problems.
- We hear from the developer that the existing intersection is not safe. If one checks with the Village of Mariemont Police Department, they would find that there was not one accident in this intersection in all of 2012. For the last six years, there has been an average of one accident a year, and all of those were fender-benders in which no one was ever hurt. The reason the accident rate at this intersection is so low is simple. People stop at the stop sign and go into the intersection very slowly and proceed with caution. Our Police Department wants to see the proof that shows this is an unsafe intersection.
- Another big problem that has not been addressed is the roundabout's size. The latest design shows a very small odd-shaped roundabout approximately 100 feet across. Per our Assistant Fire Chief, it will be almost impossible to get our new 40-foot ladder truck through this roundabout intersection. It should be known that this is a direct route from our fire station to the Historic and northwest side of our Village. We hear that ODOT suggested that the landscaped circular area have rolled curbs so our fire trucks can run straight over the circle landscaped island. This is unacceptable! To run a 70,000-pound, \$800,000, 40-foot long vehicle at high speed off the road in the circle area makes no sense! It is important that this direct route be open and clear to our Historic District where there are 90-year-old, two-story townhouses of balloon construction with no firewalls. If we have a fire in this area, we must get to these two-story townhouses with the ladder truck as quickly as possible. Statistics show that a fire doubles in size every minute, so every second of response time matters.
- We now hear that this mega apartment complex and roundabout will not cost the Village a cent. I really have to question that statement. If 115 apartment units are built across our border in Madison Place/Columbia Township, there is no doubt that these new apartments will compete with our historic rental-housing units. Columbia Township can do whatever they want to do on their property, but I will not help them take potential renters away from the landlords of our Historic District. If the vacancy rate in our historic rental-housing units start to go up (and it will), how will we make up those lost income tax dollars for the Village and how will the Village landlords obtain the money to continue to improve our important Historic District? Also, no one has yet considered the cost of the wear and tear on narrow Village streets and curbs caused by the additional cut through traffic
- Also, it appears we will need to hire a fifth school crossing guard at that intersection. Who will pay that salary? Who will pay to maintain all the landscaped areas? Our four-man Maintenance Department and Park Board are stretched to the limit. Also who will pay to install new catch basins and underground rain water run-off pipes all up and down Murray Avenue to catch all the rain water when it rolls off all this cement and blacktop they will be putting down in the area. This is the lowest point in the Village and in the last few years, I have put in two catch basins to stop flooding on Murray Avenue after a one-in-fifty-year rain that we now seem to get every year.
- We have heard nothing from you about the pollution problems the excavation of this area could cause. Therefore, I am still investigating some environmental issues that are of serious concern. I know that four gas stations, a dry cleaner, and an auto repair shop were/are currently once located in the area to be excavated for the apartment development. These businesses existed long before agencies like the EPA developed guidelines for the safe disposal of harmful chemicals, so there is no doubt in my mind the ground was contaminated. Excavating these sites will surely bring those contaminants to the surface and this is simply not acceptable, especially with two elementary schools, as well as a playground and tennis courts, located right across the street and another elementary school located just down the street. The most concerning chemical is a dry cleaning chemical called PERC, which is known to cause cancer.

The residents of the Village of Mariemont deserve full disclosure of all steps involved as the roundabout undergoes ODOT's further consideration, something that was lacking in the decision to move the preferred relocation of State Route 32 right through our South 80. Mariemont residents felt 'ambushed' by that decision and strongly oppose it. As the elected representative of these good citizens, I must demand full and accurate disclosure at every step of this proposed project. ODOT seems to be coming at us from all sides, with a proposed roundabout adjacent to the Historic District on our northern border and a proposed four-lane highway in our South 80 Park. The Historic District is the heart of our Village and the South 80 Park/Madisonville Site is the soul. These two projects could destroy the essence of this community.

Sincerely,

Dan Policastro
Mayor

CC: Hamilton County Commissioners
Dr. Ken Tankersley, University of Cincinnati
Village of Mariemont Council
Village of Mariemont Community Planning Council Members
Residents of the Village of Mariemont