

The Mariemont.com Chronicle

Some Recent Issues of Importance, June 2014

A. Mariemont Falls in the Community Rankings published in Cincy Magazine

Each year Cincy Magazine ranks the top 50 Cincinnati area communities. Mariemont's ranking seems to be in a free-fall according to the rankings during the past eight years.

2006 – #3, 2007- #8, 2008 – #3, 2009 – #19, 2010 – #12, 2011 – #14, 2013 – #20, 2014 – #28

We are outraged by this misleading ranking of Mariemont, but **perception** is one factor in maintaining real-estate values and the magnetism of a community. Therefore, Village officials need to understand how Cincy Magazine ranks communities and take positive steps to reverse this trend.

B. “Tax Breaks woo Keebler/Kellogg.” (Cincinnati Business Courier April 25, 2014)

“The Keebler Company’s project proposals for tax incentives to the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority was approved to receive \$2 million in tax incentives from KEDFA to purchase new equipment and add manufacturing lines at its Florence facility.” The snack food manufacturer plans to invest about \$19.2 million in the project as part of its corporate four-year global growth and efficiency program. This article suggests that the Mariemont Kellogg facility may be faced with further layoffs and even closure in the next few years. This would be a major blow to the Village’s earnings tax receipts. This is not just a rumor as is alleged by the Mayor.

C. ICRC videotapes all Mariemont Council meetings

ICRC (the Intercommunity Cable Regulatory Commission of Southwest Ohio) is a non-profit consortium that videotapes the various activities in 24 communities in the Greater Cincinnati area including Council Meetings and sporting events. Mariemont Council meeting and sporting activities in Mariemont can be viewed on their Website icrctv.com. The videos of Mariemont Council are usually posted within 24 hours after the meetings. The video clips are easily accessed by clicking on Our Communities in the navigation bar onicrctv.com and then on Mariemont and then Mariemont Videos. In addition to the icrctv.com Website, the Council Meetings are shown on 6 channels on the Time Warner Cable system. Three of these channels, (4, 8, 15) are programmed full time and the other three, (17, 18, 24) are programmed part time on a shared basis with either WCET-TV48 or other area cable access centers.

A typical Mariemont Council meeting run less than forty-five minutes and is good watching to get a general view of current Village issues, get to know your council representatives and the way Village Government operates.

D. The Talley on Curbside Recycling

Based upon the large number of responses to the survey in the Mayor’s Bulletin in June plus comments on Next-door Mariemont and Mariemont.com, two things become crystal clear.

- First, the majority of Mariemont residents prefer covered containers with lids to open containers for recyclables.
- Second, the majority of residents prefer the continuation of recycling pickup in the back even if it incurs some additional expense. Indeed, the \$17,000 cost in the Rumpke contract for behind the house pickup spread over 1400+ households in Mariemont a year equates to only \$12 per household.

Closed containers have a number of advantages including pest control, better sanitation, prevention of papers from blowing in the wind and recyclables that remain dry for ease of handling and pickup.

Pickup from the back has the advantages of convenience, neighborhood ambiance, safety issues with elderly residents and a talking point to support premium real-estate prices in the Village of Mariemont.

There was little or no public discussion about this reduction in services and, as the Mayor intimated at the annual Town Meeting, curbside collection of waste is just around the corner.

E. Voting Rights Lost: A New Ordinance eliminates two elected Mariemont Officials.

The Mayor unilaterally and with no publicity introduced and passed an Ordinance that eliminates two elected officials; the Village Clerk and the Village Treasurer. These positions are now bundled into a 'fiscal officer' appointed by the Mayor. This would eliminate a very important check and balance in Village Governance.

The Mayor quietly pushed this Ordinance through under the radar of public scrutiny. The Mayor made no mention of the new Ordinance in his December and January Mayor's Bulletins, did not hold a Civic Association meeting to discuss the change, did not air the Ordinance in the Community Press, did not assign it to a Council Committee for consideration and, if you listen to the ICRC videos of Council Meetings, you will note that the Ordinance is only mentioned in passing. Yet three new council members, unfamiliar with the detailed roles of the positions of background were asked to vote to eliminate the roles in their very first council meeting after taking office. This was the most important piece of legislation about governance to come before Council in many years.

F. The Mariemont Preservation (MPF) 2021 Vision Plan

In November 2008, MPF undertook crafting a bold plan called **Vision 2021** to act as a guide for steering Mariemont into the next decade. MPF methodically collected input from hundreds of interested parties representing the entire spectrum of opinion. This included businesses, social organizations, boards and commissions, school officials, elected officials, Village employees and students

The MPF Vision 2021 Committee was composed of respected leaders including Richard Adams, Don Keyes, Frank Raean, Millard Rogers, Jr. and David Zack. Working as a team, they compiled a 50 page document containing their findings. In January 2011, the Vision Plan 2021 was referred by the Mayor to the Economic Development and Planning Committee for a report and recommendation. After no report was made by the committee for months, in September 2011 MPF's leadership attended a council meeting and recommended that the Village's elected officials appoint a broad based Vision Commission. Specifically, the Mayor was encouraged to spearhead the effort to assemble a Vision Committee comprised of 15 respected volunteers.

Council reviewed elements of the plan. However, neither the Mayor nor Council moved forward on the Vision 2021 Plan proposal, nor did they modify it or develop an alternative plan. After many additional months with no report or action taken by the Economic Development and Planning Committee or the Mayor, the topic was unceremoniously dropped from the Council Agenda after April 2012.

On the Mariemont.com Website, Mike Lemon and Richard Wendel have posted a four part series that spells out the range of possibilities if this exhaustive and exciting plan were adopted by Mariemont.