



WARD 3 NEWSLETTER
Fall 2021
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I hope everyone enjoyed their summer and that the school year is off to a good start. Solon has the third highest COVID-19 vaccination rate in Cuyahoga County, but there is still room to improve. In the last couple of months, there has been an increase in positive cases with the Delta variant. I would like to encourage everyone to get vaccinated if you haven't already. It is the best way to prevent serious illness and will go a long way to ensure our children can continue to be at school in-person.

Charter Review Commission

Every five years the City convenes a Charter Review Commission, which is comprised of a representative of each Ward as well as two members who are nominated by the Mayor. The Charter Review Commission is a recommending body to City Council for updates to the City's Charter, which are the rules for how the City operates. All Charter updates must be placed on the ballot for resident approval prior to being enacted. This year, the Council unanimously approved three of the recommendations from the Charter Review Commission to be placed on the November 2nd ballot.

November 2nd Election Issues

I wanted to provide a brief summary of ballot items that are specific to the City of Solon. I encourage all residents to do their own research for all election related items, but below is a quick summary of the issues for reference.

ISSUE 56 – Proposed Tax Levy – This is a renewal of a tax for the purpose of acquiring vehicles and equipment for the Service and Safety Departments. This is not a new tax, but will renew the tax that is used to help the City fund the purchase of safety and service vehicles.

ISSUE 57 - Amendment to Article VI, Section 2 of the City's Charter, pertaining to Director of Law – This recommendation adds qualifications to clarify the educational and experience level of the City's Law Director. The addition that the City's Law Director must be licensed to practice law in the State of Ohio and have at least five years of experience in municipal or governmental law.

ISSUE 58 - Amendment to Article VI, Section 10.A Update of the City of Solon Master Plan/Master Plan Citizen's Committee and Section 10.B Appointment, Composition, and Terms of the Master Plan

Citizen's Committee – This ballot item approves the ability to add members to the City's Master Plan Committee. The current Master Plan Committee contains a representative from each Ward as well as two nominees from the Mayor.

The proposed amendment would include a representative from each ward and up to 15 members appointed by the Mayor. This would include business members and other representatives to provide their input on the City's Master Plan.

ISSUE 59 - Amendment to Article XIV, Section 4 pertaining to Zoning Changes to the Central Retail District – This amendment provides the Planning Commission and City Council the ability to make updates to the Zoning Code within the City's Central Retail District without the need for ballot approval.

This amendment keeps the ward veto in effect for zoning changes within the residential and most industrial districts in the City, where residents would need to approve zoning changes, including passage in the home ward.

ISSUE 60 – Proposed Zoning Amendment – This is to change the zoning classification of three parcels on Aurora Road from Single Family Residential zoning to General Office zoning. This plot of land is next door to an existing office building and across the street from the Carrington Court housing development.

School Board Openings

This year there are two openings on the School Board up for election. Each of these School Board openings is for four-year terms. I reached out to each of the three

candidates for the School Board to provide a brief biography to help residents better understand who the candidates are. Here are the three candidates in alphabetical order by last name:

Michele Barksdale – Mrs. Barksdale is a Ward 3 resident and has lived in Solon for 14 years. She is a graduate of Northwestern University with a degree in business.

Mrs. Barksdale has been married to her husband Ed for nearly 30 years and together they have raised 4 children who have all graduated from the Solon School District. She is the former Solon High School PTA President and has served the school on numerous other committees and service positions.

Mrs. Barksdale is an active member of the community who has served on several boards, particularly focusing on strengthening the wellbeing of children and their family.

John Heckman – Mr. Heckman has been a resident of Solon for nearly 17 years. He has a degree from Gannon University with a B.S. in Accounting.

Mr. Heckman has been married to his wife, Lisa for 34 years and they have two children, who have both graduated from Solon High School. He has been a member of the Solon Music Parents, Solon Athletic Boosters, Drama Club and Music-In-Motion.

Mr. Heckman and his wife have volunteered on numerous committees within Solon Schools from elementary through the high school and continue to do so even though their children have graduated.

Mr. Heckman has been on the Solon School

Board for 9.5 years, and served as the President for two of those years. He is currently a member of the following committees: Finance and Audit Committee, Enterprise Zone Committee, Administrative Committee, Negotiations Committee and is the Ohio School Board Association Delegate.

Caryne Urbank – Ms. Urbank did not respond to my inquiry to provide biographical information.

COMMUNITY LIFE UPDATE

Solon Center for the Arts

Fall programs started on September 8th at Solon Center for the Arts, and have a lot to offer. The fall classes include: art, dance, music and theater. This fall, SCA is bringing back the first youth musical since spring 2020. We are very excited to offer a number of shows that will be open to the public in December. Fall classes are filling up quickly and you are encouraged to register soon if you're interested in joining. As always, follow them on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on programs, special events, pop-ups and workshops!

This year, we had a successful series of Farmers Markets which helped show support to the local farmers and small businesses. The vendors have connected with the Solon residents and really enjoyed coming to our market. Other upcoming Community Events include the Fall Festival at the Solon Community Park on October 16th and the new Hometown Holiday Market at the Solon Community Center on December 11th.

Solon Senior Center

The City of Solon works in collaboration

with other communities on the CARE program which is designed to improve the safety and independence of homeowners age 60 and over. CARE provides non-complicated home project assistance in the categories of yard care, home exterior projects, interior general housekeeping, home organizing, tech assistance and handy person projects through the use of supervised volunteers. Membership in the CARE program provides a limited number of services per year. Sliding scale memberships are available. For more information on how to become a member, visit careneo.org or call 216-970-0599 or the Senior Center.

Construction recently began on a new pavilion, which is located outside the Senior Center and will be available for rental for community members. The pavilion, funded by Coronavirus Relief Funds, will be located adjacent to the Senior Center and Community Center Banquet Facilities. The pavilion provides another option for congregating safely outdoors during the pandemic, which is desired by many.

Fire Department

The Solon Fire-Rescue Open House will be held October 6, 2021 from 6:00 PM until 8:30 PM at Solon Fire Station 2, 6320 SOM Center Road.

Come meet your firefighters and paramedics for fun and refreshments and a Bounce House for the kids! See the fire trucks and rescue squads and learn fire safety tips for the whole family.

Don't forget that Sunday, November 7, 2021 is the end of Daylight Savings Time and a great time to change your smoke detector batteries! This year when you "fall

back" please consider it as a great time to change the batteries in all of your smoke detectors. It is recommended to change smoke detector batteries annually to make sure they are working properly if you should need them.

Police Department

The Police Department successfully held their annual National Night Out event on August 3, 2021.

There are currently four new patrol hires in the Field Training and Evaluation Program and there are two new part-time correction officers for the jail facility. In addition, the men's and women's locker room is currently being renovated.

The fall session of the Citizen's Police Academy will start in the coming weeks and is at its capacity. If you are interested in participating in this program, please keep an eye out for the program in the spring.

The whole community would like to congratulate DARE Officer Joann Felton on her upcoming retirement in December. We appreciate all that Officer Felton has done for the community, our children and the school district. Officer DiGiovanni will be taking over as her replacement and has been a visible member of the Police Department in the schools over the last several years.

Public Works

Leaf Pick-up is scheduled to start Monday, October 18th. As usual, to take advantage of this program please place your leaves on your tree lawn for pick-up. Do not place your leaves in the street as it causes safety

issues as well as potential issues with water drainage as they can block the street drains.

The Service Department no longer picks up Household Hazardous Waste curbside. To dispose of these items in the future, residents must drop off hazardous waste at the Service Department during business hours.

Simple Recycling pick-ups have to be scheduled. Go to simplerecycling.com to schedule a pick-up.

Creekside Drainage Study: The Engineering Department presented a design proposal to the Public Works Committee in September, which was approved by the Council.

Thank you for taking time to read my newsletter. If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please reach out to me directly via phone at 440-476-3739 or via email at JZelwin@solonohio.org.

Thank you,

