

60 YEARS

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

The History of Kennedy Heights Community Council: Part 3

by John Bange

As Cincinnati's African American population expanded northward from the inner city to the hilltop neighborhoods, racial tensions and white flight ensued. West End residents were relocating to the Walnut Hills, Evanston and Avondale neighborhoods. The city encouraged the development of community councils in neighborhoods experiencing racial transition. Sadly, white flight was accelerated by the real estate practice of blockbusting. When an African American family moved into an all-white area, unscrupulous realtors pressed neighboring white homeowners to sell their properties at below market prices, playing upon their fears that property values would decline.

Beginning in 1961, an attempt was made to draft an anti-blockbusting ordinance. It would have limited realtors' solicitations to mailings and prohibited them from door-to-door and telephone contacts, but it failed to win city council approval. Within a short time, the blockbusting practices were expanded to different parts of the city. In April 1963, Dorothy (D. D.) Starr, a white resident of Kennedy Heights, decided to contact the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee (MFRC) established to help resolve conflicts. MFRC staff and members worked with residents to jump start the creation of a community council in the neighborhood.

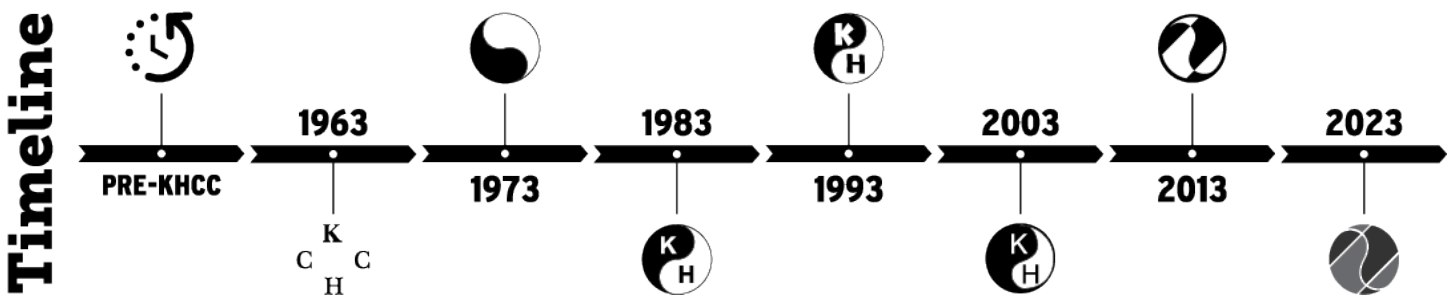
The activists from Kennedy Heights organized around the concept of community building through

interracial cooperation. The newly organized Kennedy Heights Community Council (KHCC) placed the race question center stage, determined to break out of the prevailing segregated housing patterns and to build a new kind of community which celebrated diversity. With housing as the catalyst, the new organization immediately established a real estate and housing committee but it also created additional committees which reflected community concerns. Within a few months they had an active and extensive committee structure in place. Since the avenues for upward mobility opened for them as homeowners, the Kennedy Heights activists in the black community were determined to protect and to enhance their new environment. The white activists were also committed to something more than their property interests. D. D. Starr, who came to Cincinnati from Birmingham, Alabama and was a social worker by profession, and Cecil Wesley, who worked at General Electric, were instrumental in this process.

At their initial meeting at the Kennedy Heights Presbyterian Church, eight individuals discussed "panic" selling of homes, zoning, real estate practices, schools, recreation programs, and other concerns. Thirty-five people attended a follow-up ice cream social hosted by D. D. and Robert Starr. They found that the problem was not 'black' or 'white' but that these were ideas of people interested in the place where they live.

Much dialogue continued in the years after. Community activists listened to the concerns of residents. The MFRC and a representative from the Urban League who lived in the neighborhood developed

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The KHCC *Neighbor to Neighbor* newsletter is published with funds from Friends of Kennedy Heights and City of Cincinnati Neighborhood Support Program

KHCC History (cont'd)

a training program which brought blacks and whites together in role playing situations. They focused on leadership development and searched for new ways to look at the situation. They divided the neighborhood into sections and polled people in each section to determine overall sentiment and to find potential leaders. They convened living room meetings, led by black and white leaders, in every part of the neighborhood stressing the message of the value of raising their children in an integrated neighborhood.

The panic selling stopped. The newly formed and energized community council confronted the real estate industry. The Ohio real estate licensing law had a mechanism for revoking the license of realtors who engaged in unethical practices. The housing committee published a brochure, "Looking for a Place to Live in Cincinnati," promoting housing opportunities in the neighborhood and solicited help from businesses and churches to get it distributed. One Kennedy Heights activist, Roger Engstrand, a personnel recruiter at Procter and Gamble, steered new employees to housing opportunities in the neighborhood.

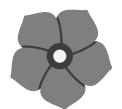
The council placed periodic advertisements in the New Republic and Saturday Review magazines urging people moving to Cincinnati to consider buying a home in the neighborhood. The housing committee sent brochures and showed houses to interested parties. During the summer of 1965 the council organized a dinner meeting with realtors to explain community goals and to ask for help in breaking down segregated housing patterns. For 1965 the housing committee reported that it had helped eight new families purchase homes and had shown more than thirty additional homes to potential buyers.

Within a year after organizing the KHCC, they established a publicity committee and began publishing a monthly newsletter to squelch rumors, to inform residents about emerging developments and about community activities, and to promote the mission of the council. The housing brochure portrayed the neighborhood in its best light. The council worked with the print media, TV and radio to get positive stories about the Kennedy Heights experiment.

Part 4 will tell the story of how the activists in Kennedy Heights worked together to bring new aspects to the community which still benefit us to this day.



Summer Break



**NO COUNCIL MEETING IN JULY OR AUGUST
(SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER!)**



Changes to Ohio Voting Laws and an August Special Election

by Amber Ziegler

Changes to the voting laws in Ohio were passed by the Ohio legislature in December 2022, were signed into law by Governor Mike DeWine in January of this year, and took effect on April 7. These changes affect voter ID requirements, early voting hours and the absentee ballot request process, so it's important to understand the new laws in order to make your voice heard.

The biggest change is that for the first time ever, Ohio now requires voters to have a valid (i.e. not expired) photo ID. Acceptable photo ID options include an Ohio driver's license, a state ID card issued by the BMV, a US passport, US military ID, Ohio National Guard ID, or US Department of Veterans Affairs ID. No other forms of ID will be accepted.

A smaller change is that early voting hours have been restricted. Early voting on the Monday before election day has been eliminated.

Additional changes include changes to the absentee ballot request process. Previously, voters could request an absentee ballot up until three days before the election. Under the new law, an absentee ballot must be requested no later than seven days before the election. Additionally, the new law allows only one absentee ballot drop-off location per county, meaning that some voters will need to travel greater distances to drop off their ballots.

One other change in the new law that is causing tumult is the banning of August special elections in Ohio. Supporters in the state legislature say they cost too much money and have low turnout. However, the state legislature has since scheduled a special election for August 8 to vote on a constitutional amendment to require 60% of the votes to pass (current law requires a simple majority, so 50% + 1).

Some groups are suing to have Ohio's August special election canceled, citing the new law, but as of this writing, the election is still scheduled.

Voting in August 8, 2023 Special Election

LAST DAY TO REGISTER OR UPDATE NAME/ADDRESS:

July 10	Board of Elections	8am-9pm
July 10	BMV	normal hours
July 10	Public Library	normal hours
July 10	Online reg/address change	until 11:59pm

VOTE EARLY IN PERSON AT BOE - 4700 SMITH RD 45212

July	11-14	T-F	8am-5pm
July	17-21	M-F	8am-5pm
July	24-28	M-F	8am-5pm
July	31	M	7:30am-7:30pm
August	1	T	7:30am-8:30pm
August	2-4	W-F	7:30am-7:30pm
August	5	Sat	8am-4pm
August	6	Sun	1pm-5pm

Fill out & submit an absentee application to get your ballot in the mail—Applications accepted **NOW** until 8:30 p.m. on August 1.
We start mailing absentee ballots on July 11, 2023.

ELECTION DAY August 8 Tuesday Polls Open 6:30 a.m.– 7:30 p.m.

Hamilton County Ohio Board of Elections, 4700 Smith Road, Cincinnati, OH 45212 515-652-7000
VoteHamiltonCountyOhio.gov Twitter: VoteHamCoBOE Facebook: HamiltonCountyBoardOfElections
Instagram: HamiltonCountyBOE

Rev. 5/23/2023

New Ohio Voter ID Requirements

Acceptable Voter ID

- An UNEXPIRED Ohio driver's license or state ID card
 - This CAN have your previous address
 - The license CAN be suspended
- U.S. passport or passport card
- U.S. military ID card/Ohio National Guard ID card
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ID card

Unacceptable Voter ID

- Utility bills
- Bank statements
- Government checks / other govt. documents
- Paycheck / paycheck stub
- Copies (print or digital) of Veteran ID cards
- Driver's license or state ID from another state
- Social Security card

Celebrating Juneteenth: Neighborhood Recap

by Christina Miller

The 36th Annual Juneteenth Festival in Cincinnati kicked-off with the Parade of the Flags of the Diaspora at Seasongood Pavilion in Eden Park, Saturday, June 17. Approximately 75 flags were carried by children and adults and placed on the stage. The Juneteenth Flag, that took its place in the center of the lineup, was a collaborative creation lead by Ben Haith, founder of the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation in 1997. The central bursting star of the flag is representative of “new freedom” that was founded upon the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln that released Africans from various regions of Africa of the cruel practice of slavery in the United States.

Juneteenth is just in its second year as a national holiday but has been celebrated in Cincinnati for much longer. The public event began in Daniel Drake Park in Kennedy Heights under the hand of Lydia Morgan. She still heads the committee of twelve in creating the celebration that took place this year. And just to answer the question many ask themselves, “is this event for



Parade flags lined the Pavilion stage.



Ms. Jaz and Jamset

me?” The answer is, “absolutely, yes!” This event is for everyone. Juneteenth is a recognition and celebration of American history.

If you did not attend the event this year, or have never been, I hope you make this the last year you miss. The event at Eden Park was fun and educational. For both Saturday and Sunday, the Pavilion stage featured many of Cincinnati’s favorites making music for the crowds. On Saturday, Phil Brown & Agape kicked things off and were followed by acts such as Jazz Renaissance and Ms. Jaz. Sunday, along with many others, Neva Ford Nation and the James McCray Choral Ensemble ignited the crowd. Down at Mirror Lake there were the Drummers and Steppers, the Ijo Ugo dancers and the Voices of Freedom Poets just to name a few.

Tents lined the waters of Mirror Lake filled with such things as history storytellers on topics like the Buffalo Soldier and the 5th

US Colored Troop Company G. There was a game tent for card players and board game players, there were tents focused on your health, your finances, and your children’s education. (BTW-Fidelity is hiring and by the excited faces and responses of those manning the tent, they are one of the best places to work with lots of great perks.) And there was a special children’s area with horses and ponies, face painting, books, games and crafts. And just to make sure you kept your energy up, there were tents for food and food trucks.

Lydia Morgan, Kennedy Heights resident, we applaud you and your team for such an outstanding event. And, we look forward to another 36 years of celebration!



Many things for kids to do.

(more photos on page 5)



Sitting in the shade listening to the sounds of music.



Huenited Collective.

JUNETEENTH

KENNEDY HEIGHTS ▾ 2023



Civil War Reenactment

Green Up Day Thank You from Kate Kern

Thanks to everyone who came out on May 20th to make our annual Green Up Day in Kennedy Heights Park a success. Volunteers worked with Cincinnati Parks staff to spread mulch on the playground and tree circles and to weed and plant the park's entrance beds. Much appreciation to support from: Kennedy Heights Community Council's Abby and Eric Burton for awesome publicity and event organization; Kennedy Heights Art Center for fun seed bomb activity; Kennedy Heights Church of Christ for sending an awesome group of members; local businesses: Proud Hound, Redwood Market and Holtmans (Oakley) for donating refreshments; and to Lisa Pickering and Dave Loebker for preparing flower bed before our event. This commitment to our park and our community is invaluable! Get involved with projects in the parks of Kennedy Heights: contact Kate Kern, KHCC Parks Committee chairperson: kkern@kennedyheights.org.

cincinnati Hamilton County
public library

6233 Montgomery Rd.

Library Hours:

Mon & Tue, 10am - 8pm

Wed - Sat, 10am - 6pm

www.chpl.org

Storytime

Every Tue @ 10:30 (toddler) and 11:15 (preschool). Craftivity @ 11 (all ages)

Dance Discovery with the Cincinnati Ballet

7/8. 2PM. Youth. Families

Teens Create

7/11 (Kawaii Pinatas) , 8/8. 2PM

Adult Book Club

7/13 (Braving the Wilderness by Brene Brown) , 8/10 (Dutch House by Ann Patchett). 2PM.

Imagine Lab

Float or Sink. 7/19 3:30PM. Youth. Families

Lego Builders Club

7/24, 8/28. 3PM. Youth

Genealogy for Beginners

7/25, 8/22. 6:30PM. Adults

Paint Café

8/26. 10:15AM. Adults/Teens

For branch offerings and questions call at 513-369-4488, or email Erik Brueggemann, Library Customer Adviser, Pleasant Ridge Branch at erik.brueggemann@chpl.org



The old Spotlight property at 6543 Montgomery Rd. will be the future home to affordable senior housing.

New Development Coming to Montgomery Road

by Amber Ziegler

By now, many Kennedy Heights residents have seen the sign at 6543 Montgomery, the former Spotlight site, announcing something new coming to the space.

Since 2019, Kennedy Heights Development Corporation (KHDC) has been working to acquire the properties along Montgomery Road between Family Dollar and Kennedy Avenue. In 2019, the site of the former Beverage Cave, 6549 Montgomery, became available, so KHDC purchased it. The Beverage Cave had closed years before, and the building had been empty ever since. This building is currently occupied by a month-to-month tenant, BA Stevenson Wood, a custom cabinetmaker.

In 2021, KHDC purchased 6543 Montgomery Road from the owner of Deer Park Auto, who had been using the property to store used car overflow. This property was previously the site of Spotlight/Balletech/Mr. Kelly's. The building still stands, but it is in increasingly poor condition and needs to be demolished.

In 2022, the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development

Authority purchased 6545 Montgomery Road, currently the site of NuVue Products, and this property is landbanked for KHDC.

The purchases of 6543 and 6545 Montgomery were both supported by the City of Cincinnati through the Cincinnati Neighborhood Business Districts United (CNBDU) Neighborhood Business District Improvement Program (NBDIP) grant program.

The plan now is to transfer ownership of 6543 and 6549 Montgomery to the Port, and the Port will handle the demolition of the buildings on these three properties, likely in early 2024. Meanwhile, KHDC will be working with Model Group and Episcopal Retirement Services to develop an \$8-10 million, 3-4 story, 50-unit affordable senior housing facility with supportive services on the first floor.

KHCC and KHDC started an Aging in Community task force in 2014 to determine how to support seniors aging safely in their homes in Kennedy Heights, but focus groups showed that many seniors would prefer a communal living situation with supportive services, rather than maintaining their own homes. Now, nearly 10 years later, the fruits of this process are being realized.

PLEASANT RIDGE RECREATION CENTER



Visit the Rec Center on a Saturday! From 9am - 2pm enjoy the weight room, shoot hoops in the gym, or play pickleball. The CRC also has rooms that can be reserved for Neighborhood Watch meetings or other community uses. Call (513) 731-7894.



6546 Montgomery Rd.

Gallery Hours:

Tue & Fri, 10am - 5pm

Sat, 11am - 4pm

www.kennedyarts.org

Summer of Jazz at Kennedy Heights Arts Center

Hey, jazz fans! Kennedy Heights Arts Center is presenting a series of concerts this summer featuring some of the best jazz musicians in Cincinnati, as well as some amazing special guests.

All performances will take place at the KHAC Annex, 6620 Montgomery Road. Tickets are \$10-40 online at kennedyarts.org, by phone at 513-631-4278 or at the door (while they last).

While you're there, check out *All That Jazz*, an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia from the Cincinnati Jazz Hall of Fame, in the Annex Gallery.

All-Star Jazz Quintet

Saturday, July 1 at 7:30 PM

Join us for a special one-time performance by an All-Star Quintet featuring Cincinnati Jazz Hall of Fame inductee members: Mike Sharfe on bass, Wayne Yeager on piano, Art Gore on drums, Rick VanMatre on sax, and Marc Fields on trombone.

Phil DeGreg Quartet featuring Walfredo Reyes Jr.

Saturday, July 15 at 7:30 PM

Cuban American drummer Walfredo Reyes, Jr., who played for many years with Santana and was the drummer for the band Chicago, joins pianist Phil DeGreg and his quartet for a special one-time performance of Latin and Afro-Cuban jazz.

The Steve Schmidt Trio: Promontory Edition

Saturday, August 5 at 7:30 PM

For many years, this trio played at the Promontory in Mount Adams. They are back together again to share the music that made them so popular. Joining pianist Steve Schmidt are Michael Sharfe on bass and Marc Wolfley on drums.

Basketball Clinics

Wednesday, July 19, 4 to 6 PM

Sign up for a free one-hour clinic with Ohio Ballstars. For children K-6th grade.

Enchanted Tea Time

Friday, July 21, 11 AM to 12 PM

Tea, treats, & whimsy for adults & children.

Community
HAPPENS HERE

6233 Montgomery Rd.

Sidewalk Hospitality:

Tue & Sat, 11am - 1pm

communityhappenshere.org



KENNEDY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY COUNCIL
 P.O. BOX 36318
 CINCINNATI, OH 45236

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YOUR KENNEDY HEIGHTS COUNCIL



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Sharifah Tafari
 President



Samara Ramudit
 VP of Admin



Caitlin
 Siegel-Hartzler
 VP of Planning

Members-at-Large



Steve Grieser



Brandon Nixon



Amber Ziegler

COUNCIL MEETINGS

In person at Kennedy Heights Presbyterian Church, 6312 Kennedy Avenue 45213
 Join by computer at: meet.google.com/amo-fjbm-bgq
 Join by phone: Call +1 574-241-1036 and then follow the prompts. PIN: 453 185 950#

**Find us at kennedyheights.org or check us out
 on the Kennedy Heights Community Council Facebook page.**