



November 1, 2015

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope you had a spooky and fun Halloween. This week's Ward letter discusses sidewalk claims, regulating fallen leaves and an upcoming forum presented by the Providence Preservation Society.

At a recent Claims Committee meeting, the Solicitor's Office presented a [Report](#) concerning claims made by residents who are injured on defective sidewalks over the past five years. The data revealed that, in an average year, the City receives 50 claims, is sued in 14 lawsuits, settles seven of those lawsuits, and pays out an average of more than \$141,000. (In meetings the Claims Committee has held since January, it appears the City is well on its way to meeting or exceeding these average figures in the current year.) The City currently has a backlog of more than 2,500 unrepaired sidewalks; however, the Public Works Department estimates that voter approval of a sidewalk bond would allow the City to address the great majority of this backlog. Were that to happen, the cost of paying and settling claims could drop dramatically. While I am advocating with the City Council and the Mayor's office to offer the voters the opportunity to approve such a bond (among others) on next year's general election ballot for quality of life reasons, the financial savings that would result from having safe sidewalks are worth noting.

With the arrival of fall have come issue regarding the disposal of leaves. Two of my constituents shared good ideas with me concerning two problems to regulate, namely the disposal of leaves in the street and the operation of leaf blowers. Finding good examples from the ordinances in Grand Rapids and Cambridge, I have prepared a [Proposed Amendment](#) to the City's leaf ordinance that would prohibit sweeping leaves into the street and prevent the use of leaf blowers to sweep leaves onto a neighbor's property. (The ordinance also limits leaf blower noise and emissions, and prohibits the use of more than one leaf blower at a time within a 10,000 square foot area.) I am grateful to all my constituents for the good ideas you send me every week – please keep those emails coming, so I can do a better job.

Last year, the Providence Preservation Society sponsored a symposium on the subject of revitalizing downtown, including an informative discussion in the Superman Building led by the former Mayor of Cincinnati. This year, the Preservation Society's "Beyond Buildings" symposium will be dedicated to "Preserving the Livable Neighborhood." It will take place during November 5-7 at King's Cathedral at 1860 Westminister Street in Olneyville. The keynote speaker will be Donovan Rypkema, who will discuss "The Case for Preservation in Rightsizing Efforts," whose talk will be followed by a gala reception on Thursday night, November 5 at Wes's Rib House. Most of the events are free and open to the public, but the Providence Preservation Society provided me with four tickets to the reception to distribute to interested constituents. I will provide them to the first four Ward 2 residents who contact me at [my email address](#). You can read more about the symposium at www.providencesymposium.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samuel D. Zurier'.