

May 21, 2008 -- Rules of Recall

Since January, when the Trash Petition Effort started, I've met and talked with a lot of fellow residents. Fielding phone calls and walking door-to-door with the petition, I've hear many cries for "recall" of members of City Council, and I've had to explain to each of these persons what the rules of recall are.

The newly-passed Tremont Road Rezoning is **awakening a whole new group of residents** to the inappropriate way in which City Council has been conducting its business. As we've said all along, the **"trash issue"** has not been about trash, nor has it been about privatization. It **has been about the manner in which Council passed the ordinance** and how, in the process, we lost our right to vote. Basing its decisions on incorrect, unsupported, conflicting (or even nonexistent) data, going against the voice of the people, using the "emergency" clause to push things through, and now, with Tremont Rezoning, violating its own ordinance (the U.D.O.), City Council has been bidding by a set of assumptions and guidelines that don't make sense.

I do believe that the "Tremont Road folks," having experienced first-hand the impact of Council's questionable action, are starting to understand just what the "Trash folks" have been saying.

Kudos to Mr. Ciotola and Mr. Steen, who appear to have said, "enough" when they voted against the rezoning on May 12.

Anyways, just so everyone is clear, **here are the rules of recall**. (Click **here** for the original text in the City Charter and **here** for provisions for recall in the Ohio Revised Code.)

Recall of City Council members is done by petition. The petition must contain valid signatures of 15% of the voters in the last gubernatorial election, or in UA's case, about 2100.

Only those members who have served at least one year in their currently-elected term are eligible. In our case, this means that Mr. Leach, Mrs. Mauger, Mr. Ciotola, and Mr. Steen can be recalled right now. Since we just voted in Mr. Seidel, Mrs. Krauss, and Mr. Yassenoff last year, they can not be recalled until January 4 of 2009.

If the required signatures (as verified by both the City and the Franklin County Board of Elections) are garnered, a special election is held. If the vote for recall succeeds, the remaining Council members appoint a replacement, and this person serves until the expiration of the recalled member's term, in the current case, January of 2011. (If the special election for recall had taken place before June, then the person would only have served until November, when an election would have been held to fill this spot. Right now, however, this is a moot point.)

The easiest way to ensure that responsive and responsible persons are elected to Council is to wait until next year, when four spots will be up for grabs. In the interim, monitor very closely the positions that current Council members take on major issues, and listen carefully to those residents who are coming out of the woodwork to take the lead in voicing their opinions at City Council meetings and in forums such as the UA News.

Lesson learned from all of this? **Know for whom and for what you are casting your vote, because once they've been put in place, it takes a superhuman effort to overturn them.**