Hilliard voters overwhelmingly approved charter-change Issue 9 on the March 15 ballot. As passed, it amends the Hilliard city charter to prohibit rezonings by emergency measure and prohibits the future use of tax-increment financing for residential development projects.

Tax-increment financing is a public financing method by which future property tax revenue increases are diverted from their usual purposes (such as schools, fire service, township general fund, etc.) and used instead for purposes supporting new development.

Hilliard schools officials and the boards of trustees of Brown and Norwich townships supported Issue 9. Hilliard city officials opposed it. Issue 9 was approved by about a 3 to 1 margin.

A resolution supporting Issue 9 approved by the Brown Township Board of Trustees read, in part, “It is in the best interests of the residents of Brown Township to protect property tax revenue for Hilliard City Schools, Norwich Township Fire Department, and Brown Township, itself.”

Property that becomes part of the City of Hilliard using the expedited Type 2 annexation process remains subject to Brown Township property taxes that support the schools, the fire department, and the township. Heritage Preserve and Tarlton Meadows are just two recent expedited Type 2 annexations. Expedited Type 2 annexations, authorized under Ohio Revised Code 709.023, require signatures of all property owners in the territory to be annexed. If the annexation petition meets all required conditions, the Board of County Commissioners is required to approve it. The final step is acceptance by the municipality.

On March 8, the Franklin County Commissioners approved the annexation of 127.5 acres of property in Brown Township into the City of Hilliard.

Owned by Hill Distributing Company, the property consists of three parcels south of Scioto-Darby Creek Road, addressed at 7207 Scioto Darby Creek Road. The property will become part of the City of Hilliard upon acceptance by its City Council. For property tax purposes, the territory will remain in Brown Township as well as within the City of Hilliard.

Any future development of the property would fall under the zoning and development regulations of the City of Hilliard.

A second petition for annexation into the City of Hilliard was filed with Franklin County on April 7. This petition represents about 387 acres of land owned by Hill Distributing Company and the Robert Bright Trust, located east of Langton Road, north of Scioto Darby Creek Road, addressed at 7380 Scioto Darby Creek Road and 4427 Elliott Road. The Franklin County Commissioners were scheduled to act on this petition on May 10. Acceptance by the City of Hilliard would follow. (This petition was withdrawn on May 2, due to the lack of a service ordinance from the City of Hilliard. It is expected to be refiled.)

Questions about either may be directed to the property owners’ attorney, Thomas L. Hart, at 614-340-7415 or thart@isaacwiles.com.
Former Norwich Township Fire Chief Keith J. McDowell died on April 2.

Chief McDowell was a member of the Norwich Township Fire Department for 41 years, rising through the ranks from volunteer to chief. He retired on April 2, 2004.

He was born on February 25, 1942 to Joseph and Leah McDowell, the youngest of six children. He is survived by sister and brother-in-law Judy and Larry Johnson. He married Diana Robertson (deceased) in 1960 and had three children: Shelly (Dave) Hudson, Brian (Bobbie Blake) McDowell, and Lisa (Michael) Franks. Keith married Elly Spencer in 1979 combining their families with Ken M. Spencer, Jr. (deceased) and Martin J. Spencer. His 16 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren were a highlight of his life. Nieces, nephews, and cousins held a special place in his heart as well.

His Fire Department family and friends were a great part of his life. He never met a stranger and touched lives with his kindness and willingness to help. Keith and Elly enjoyed camping with family, traveling, and activities at church.

Keith loved golf, shooting pool at the senior center, and helping with the Bread of Life Disciples food pantry at Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church.

He graduated from Hilliard High School in 1960. In 2000, he was named to the Hilliard High School Hall of Fame. In 2010, he was grand marshal of the July 4th parade. He was active with the food pantry, the Hilliard Senior Center, Avery Lodge #493, Ohio Fire Chiefs’ Association, and International Association of Fire Fighters AFL-CIO-CLC.

Norwich Township Fire Chief Jeff Warren, who spoke at the funeral, said, “Chief McDowell not only invested his time and effort in the community, he spent countless hours investing in the career development of the fire department members.”

Long-time friend Brown Township Trustee Gary Dever recalls Chief McDowell’s humor, strength, and straightforward integrity, saying, “If you wanted the truth, you would always get it from Keith.”

Donations in Chief McDowell’s memory may be made to Resurrection Evangelical Lutheran Church Bread of Life Disciples Food Pantry, 3500 Main Street, Hilliard or Firefighters Local #1723 Scholarship Fund, 5181 Northwest Parkway, Hilliard.

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The Franklin County Sheriff’s Office Community Relations Unit offers free programs to residents of Franklin County. One of these is the Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) class — a 12-hour comprehensive course offered to females only.

The course focuses on risk awareness, risk reduction, risk recognition, and risk avoidance. Being aware of risks to personal safety is 90 percent of self-defense. Participants will learn physical defense skills valuable in the event of an attack.

The Sheriff’s office receives many requests to present the program. With its increasing popularity, more instructors were needed.

Recently, six Franklin County deputies joined ten law enforcement officers from other agencies for a thirty-hour RAD Instructors Training Class.

The six new instructors bring to 19 the number of certified RAD instructors available to provide this valuable training to women of our county.

To join a RAD class or schedule one for a group of 20 or more women, contact Deputy Alena Griffin at 614-525-4507 or amgriffi@franklincountyohio.gov or go to http://sheriff.franklincountyohio.gov/programs/rape-aggression-defense-system.cfm

Information provided by Franklin County Sheriff Zach Scott
Sheriff’s Office Offers Self-Defense Classes

The Norwich Township Fire Department has added new equipment to better serve our communities. With success in receiving the Bureau of Workers Compensation Safety Intervention Grant, Norwich Township secured $39,360 to purchase five stair chair lifts and three CPR chest compression systems.

The CPR equipment can be set up to deliver high-quality chest compressions, allowing our EMS personnel to focus on other life-saving tasks when caring for cardiac arrest patients. In addition to the three awarded through the grant, a fourth is carried in our fire SUV that is assigned to the EMS Supervisor.

The stair chair lifts provide our responders on each emergency squad with the latest equipment for lifting and carrying patients up and down stairs. The chairs are outfitted with tracks similar to a bulldozer to allow a safer transition for the patient. It can be very unnerving to be the patient on our standard cot as you are being carried on stairways.

In addition to the items purchased with grant funding, two new items were also purchased with budgeted funds. The Intubrite lighted laryngoscope and several personal escape thermal image cameras were purchased in early 2016.

The Intubrite lighted laryngoscope allows for the paramedic that is securing an airway tube in the trachea of a seriously ill or injured patient to visualize landmarks. In certain situations, it can be very difficult to view the throat and mouth of a patient. The scope helps to overcome the obstacles that may lead to poor patient outcomes, even those complicated by the presence of blood, emesis, and secretions.

Prior to the purchase of the personal escape thermal image cameras, each fire truck carried one camera that was typically carried by the person in charge of the vehicle. With the transition to personal escape cameras, each member on the fire truck is afforded the same ability to see in the zero-visibility environment.

If you would like a demonstration of any of the equipment in this article, feel free to call me at 614-876-7694. I am proud to be your fire chief and I firmly believe your understanding of our operations strengthens our community.

Contributed by Jeffrey W. Warren, Chief
Norwich Township Fire Department

Tarlton Meadows Recommended for Approval

On April 14, the Hilliard Planning and Zoning Commission recommended, without comment, approval of the Tarlton Meadows development proposal by a 4-1 vote. Commission Chair Chris Lewie cast the lone “no” vote. The vote was accompanied by eight conditions, one of which is the establishment of a permanent conservation easement on 46.7 acres of land west of Elliott Road, property which is not in the City of Hilliard but which was, nevertheless, included in the density calculations for this proposal.

Despite testimony from several residents and Brown Township officials, Commission members had no discussion on the merits of the case or the merits of the testimony. Tarlton Meadows is to be a 248-unit Pulte Homes development on 143 acres east of Elliott Road.

Brown Township’s testimony focused on the proposal’s lack of compliance with the Big Darby Accord and on the inappropriateness of including land outside the City of Hilliard as part of the rezoning package for the purposes of achieving higher density.

Hilliard City Council has the final say. The proposal has not yet been scheduled on the Council agenda.
Recently, Trustee Joe Martin received an email message transmitting the following letter to the editor from a long-ago issue of the Columbus Dispatch. Residents are asked to contact the Trustees with any information on this property.

Sir:

A monument to the builder, a very large and strongly built barn, stands on a large and very productive farm in Brown Township, Franklin County, Ohio. A smooth surface limestone laid in the stone wall has letters and figures cut in it, ‘H.A. Riggs, 1855.’ That was the owner of the farm and builder of the barn. It was then level land and a heavily timbered and swampy section of the county; now, since ditches are dug to drain the water away and fine roads built, the most valuable and desirable section of the county. H.A. Riggs was said to have been a retired sea captain and had invested his money in this western land. This barn has a limestone foundation on three sides, 90 feet on one side, 60 feet on each of the ends and 10 feet high; 18 inches thick. Then 15-inch oak sills were placed on this wall of stone. The sill on the side where there was no wall, supported by 15-inch oak posts standing on stone, heavy oak posts 18 feet by 16 inches supports the large beams, plates and hewn rafters. All of the timbers are hewn as smooth as if sawn and planed. There is a 24-foot extension shed across one end of the barn supported by heavy oak posts setting on stone. This shed, with the basement of the barn, makes room to shelter and care for 70 head of horses and cattle. The driveway and once threshing floor is 60 feet in length and 18 feet wide, wherein once the wheat, rye, barley and oats were threshed by placing the bundles on the floor, then driving horses over it, around and around; sometimes a boy riding one of the horses. Some of the elderly men of the farm remember how it was done. Then when the grain was tramped out, the straw was raked off. The grain was winnowed from the chaff by putting it through the fanning mill. The fans were kept going, and the shaker also, by hand power.

There is an oldtime fan mill in the side workshop of this barn. The floor of this barn is two inch plank. There is an immense roomage in the upper barn for hay and grain. It was surely a great task to haul the stone five miles at a time when there were no improved roads. The great trees to make the heavy timbers from are standing very near. This farm barn is now owned by W. Harry Jones, the attorney-at-law, of Columbus. He spends the happiest hours of his life on that farm. He is a good partner in the raising of crops and feeding cattle and hogs.

H. Warren Phelps