

Code	517013
Subject:	Charles Germana
Date:	Jun 19, 2008
Interviewer:	Michael Kula
Special Notes:	Amy Sumen was the Tech.

Minutes:

0 Chuck Germana born east side Cleveland 1946
1 full name Charles M. Germana, currently president Parma City Council
moved to Seven Hills in second grade, grew up there, went to college, and then joined
2 Army
various elementary and as St. Columkille parish organized, attended Parma High,
graduated Ohio University with bachelor in economics, after Army became insurance
3 worker
active in jc and community events, then local politics, returned to Seven Hills/Parma
4 area after service
Parma as stable community, but problems with too much retail. Discussion of CSU
study reporting the overdevelopment of Parma shopping centers, reflects larger issue in
5 many communities.

Study shows more per capita retail in Parma than any other community in county. Many
6 large shopping centers, such as Snowville, plus numerous small strips.
One reason for glut of retail in Parma, dense population. Randall Park Mall as example
of "survival of fittest" due to overbuilding of retail, once largest mall in Ohio, now almost
7 vacant due to overbuilding.
Hard to stop overdevelopment, even though study was done to show its dangers and the
need to change directions. But, it is cheaper to buy virgin land than to redevelop currently
8 used land.

Grubb and Ellis for sale sign in West Creek area sparked interest and concern, sign
9 showed 72 acres in Parma with frontage on Broadview Road and Ridgewood Drive.
10 WKYC owned three parcels of the land for sale at West Creek
grassroots movement to preserve land against development, not just WKYC land but all
11 of West Creek, south of three parcels
West Creek preserve is a valley, original Parma building code mandated certain
amount of acreage designated "recreation", excess acreage left after building
12 Broadview Road, hard to develop
city owned land, not used as park, just sitting there, considered for Emerald Necklace,
13 but idea discarded
lot of Emerald Necklace in other areas river and creek valley land. Parma ballot issue
14 to prevent sale of West Creek by channel 3.
Golf course plan being considered for property. Challenge of development since it once
15 had been Parma dump.
Developer proposed professional golf course and presented plans for it. Opposition
from those who wanted park land. Chuck at first favored golf course, since it would pay
for itself in time. Even though one exists, there would have been demand for second
16 due to numbers of people.

17 Parma land was designated recreational, but not good for ballparks or soccer fields
As a golfer Chuck thought course would be good, green, use of land. Beauty of
Ridgewood golf course in midst of city. Chuck did not want more houses or apartments,
18 Parma has enough already

synergy between groups involved in West Creek, those who wanted to stop WKYC
19 from building and opposed a new golf course.

At same time new courthouse and jail being proposed, since old facilities were outdated
20 and inadequate

study done of available parcels for jail and justice center, site under consideration also
green and treed, groups protested that this land should be park, which left question of

21 where to put justice center

justice center campaign took precedence over golf course, had to fight "stop the jail"

22 protests

during justice center campaign, Chuck became "converted" and began to support the

23 park idea

Parma court system supports several communities, Seven Hills, Parma, Parma
Heights, Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, monetary costs heavy on host city, in this case

24 Parma

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Citizens can be proud of Parma Justice Center, after all the political upheaval, Chuck
convinced spot was best possible for Justice Center, but had to overcome resistance

26 and fear of loss of trees

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Mayor Bolt's concerns about Dave Vaserelli, leader of West Creek group as "outside
influence", even though he grew up in West Creek Area. Chuck Germana convinced

28 Mayor Bolt to form Parma Park Advisory Committee

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Mayor asked Germana to serve on committee, which he did for a couple of "intense"

30 years of work

Advisory committee sparked cooperation between city and West Creek people Senator
31 Bob Spada and State Rep. Dean Deperro acquired state money for West Creek project

Dean Deperro as mayor influential in Metro-Park involvement in West Creek. Metro

32 Parks well run and do things right which helped West Creek development

Community input meetings helped gather support for West Creek to save green space

33 and create park, plus expertise of MetroParks created "a class act"

Synergy between groups involved in West Creek, cooperation of people. "Decade of

34 Green" included Erie Canal Corridor project

Canal Corridor meetings all along the canal area included West Creek group, West
Creek area included in canal corridor due to quarrying of stone done for canal in Parma

35 area

people were surprised at inclusion in Canal Corridor, but Chuck's involvement as
council president of seventh largest Ohio city, who was also a "tree hugger" had an

36 impact.

Henniger House, on Broadview, original quarry rock, historical landmark, slated to be
demolished for development. NOACA approached for transportation grant to save

37 Henniger house. Chuck ended up doing presentation, grant obtained and house saved,

West Creek preservation, the MetroParks, the Ohio Erie canal, all involved in synergy

38 that saved Henniger House

Henniger House will be a trailhead for West Creek. A trailhead is place for trailmaps,
car park, get information, West Creek park will be connected south of Parma trail will

39 go through Seven Hills to Cuyahoga Valley National Park

north of Parma connection will be through Brooklyn Heights, Independence, and the
convergence where canal meets Cuyahoga River, old retail store demolished at

40 convergence

eventually a loop will connect downtown Cleveland through area to Cuyahoga Valley, probably take a decade to complete, but progress is being done, people don't necessarily want parks in their back yards

homeowner concerns, wooded land has been considered "private" park is asset to community, everyone can use and enjoy the beauty, MetroPark regulations help to protect area from undesirable usage due to rangers and road and trail developments

Catholic Church owned some land, concern for elementary school children, "strangers" in woods, but church was cooperative in West Creek development.

No anti West Creek at council meetings

Property taxes in Cuyahoga County and Parma help to fund metro parks, Big Creek Parkway north of Parma heavily used, West Creek gives advantage of second park for use

CEI electric line corridor owns or has easement on land that will be part of connection. Reluctance of people concerned with visitors to park, types of visitors Chuck sees as using park

People will realize how great it is to have park in "backyard" and will use it themselves. Chuck grew up swimming in quarries near John Glenn Elementary, there were woods there and they built forts, in "his woods", had opportunity to enjoy woods both alone and as Boy Scout

being "green" part of his growing up, park green vs grass green, (for instance, golf course)

Park Advisory had to consist solely of Parma residents, as way of keeping outside people dictate what Parma could do with own land, but some "outsiders" used to live in area

But anyone who wants to get involved is welcome to help, MetroParks advisors do not live in Parma, but have been very helpful

Outside environmentalists often rally around wetland development in other communities, but West Creek area and Parma in general concerned with preserving wetlands

Parma has good attitude towards environmentalists

Parks as possible development tool, visitor use of local businesses

rights of people to use metroparks throughout area regardless of residence

concern in West Creek area due to houses which are near the park

Chuck has a creek in his own backyard, which is private but flows into Big Creek. But will use West Creek to take walks in park, and would like to see supervised overnights for scouts in the park.

West Creek members have a bond and fondness for each other and appreciate the work done for West Creek, which was on the cutting edge of green space buzz now taking place.

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