Project Plan: City Council Newsletter

Title: Gahanna City Council Newsletter
Frequency: Monthly
Distribution: Digital (Email and City Website)

Goals

- Empower Civic Engagement: Foster resident understanding of the legislative process, governance, and procedures by providing clear, accessible information. Highlight opportunities for public participation with boards and commissions, demonstrate Council's values through actions, and equip residents with the tools to effectively access information and engage with their local government.
- Foster Community Connections: Highlight Councilmember initiatives and relevant professional achievements in service to Gahanna and spotlight the contributions of board and commission members to inspire civic engagement and promote volunteer opportunities.
- Preserve and Educate: Share insights from municipal archives to educate the community about the City's history, the Council Office's role in preserving it, and the importance of understanding Gahanna's heritage.

Audience

- Residents of Gahanna
- Business community stakeholders
- Visitors interested in local government
- Historical and civic enthusiasts

Content Parameters

Each edition of the newsletter will consist of six core sections to ensure consistency and relevance:

1. Legislative Highlights

- **Content Type:** Summaries of recent City Council meetings, passed legislation, and upcoming agendas.
- **Tone:** Professional, clear, and accessible.
- **Example Headline:** "Highlights from November & December Council Meetings: Progress on Local Infrastructure Projects."

2. Member Spotlights

- **Content Type:**
  - Focus on Councilmember activities, professional development (e.g., conference participation).
  - Profiles of board and commission members.
- **Tone:** Engaging and humanizing.
- **Example Headline:** "Meet [*Name*]: Driving Community Development on MORPC"

3. From the Archives

- **Content Type:**
  - Historical anecdotes, photos, or records from the City archives.
  - Information on how the Council Office preserves Gahanna's history.
- **Tone:** Educational and nostalgic.
- **Example Headline:** "From the Archives: The Evolution of Friendship Park."

4. Community Highlights

- **Content Type:** Stories of civic engagement, volunteer recognition, and partnerships between the Council and local organizations.
- **Tone:** Uplifting and community-centered.
- **Example Headline:** "Thank You to Volunteers Supporting Gahanna's Tree Planting Initiative!"

5. "In the Know" Section

- **Content Type:**
  - Quick facts about City governance, meeting dates, and reminders (e.g., open positions on boards).
  - Links to additional resources or Council-related events.
- **Tone:** Informative and action oriented.
- **Example Headline:** "Get Involved: Apply for a Position on the Parks & Recreation Board."

6. Contact Information / Resources links

- **Content Type:**
  - List of Council Office/staff contact information.
  - Links to City website/resources.
- **Tone:** Informative
- **Example Headline:** " Meet the Council Office."

Timeline

Bi-Monthly/ Quarterly Workflow:

1. **Week 1:**
   - Collect content from Council Office staff and collaborators (e.g., meeting summaries, spotlights, historical materials).
   - Draft initial articles.
2. **Week 2:**
   - Conduct internal review of content (Council Office Staff).
   - Finalize text and obtain the President's approval.
3. **Week 3:**
   - Design newsletter layout using user-friendly software (CivicPlus).
   - Incorporate photos, graphics, and archival visuals.
4. **Week 4:**
   - Test digital formatting and ensure accessibility standards (e.g., alt text for images, mobile-friendly design).
   - Distribute via email and upload to City website.

Tools & Resources

- **Newsletter Design:** City CivicPlus website/newsletter templates.
- **Content Management:** Microsoft Word, Google Docs, SharePoint for collaboration.
- **Distribution Platform:** CivicPlus marketing software integrated with the City website.
- **Archival Access:** Municipal records and historic documents curated by the Clerk's office.

Content Style Guide

- **Language:** Clear, concise, and at an 8th-grade reading level for accessibility.
- **Tone:** Warm, professional, and community-focused.
- **Visuals:**
  - Photos of Council members, historic images, and infographics.
  - City branding (logos, colors) for consistency.
- **Format:** Bulleted lists, short paragraphs, and section headers for easy readability
- **Accessibility:**
  - Plain language for inclusivity.
  - Alt text for images.
  - PDF version optimized for screen readers.

Building and Sustaining an Audience

To effectively grow and maintain engagement with our Council newsletter, members of the Council Office will implement the following strategies:

- **Leverage Social Media**: Share visually appealing infographics and promotional content through Council Office members' social media accounts to increase visibility.
- **Public Announcements**: Highlight the newsletter as a valuable communication tool during Council Meetings to encourage public interest and participation.
- **Website Promotion**: Feature the newsletter prominently on the City Council pages of the City of Gahanna website, ensuring easy access and visibility.
- **QR Code Integration**:
  - Include a QR code linking directly to the newsletter sign-up page on Council Office flyers, available at events.
  - Display the QR code at Council Meetings to provide attendees with a quick and convenient way to subscribe.

These initiatives aim to foster greater awareness, streamline access, and sustain long-term audience engagement with the Council's updates.