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3 CITY OF CUYAHOGA FALLS, OHIO

4  
5 RESOLUTION NO. 18 - 2013

6  
7 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING DON L. ROBART FOR  
8 HIS SERVICE TO THE CITY OF CUYAHOGA FALLS AS  
9 MAYOR FROM 1986 THROUGH 2013, AND DECLARING  
10 AN EMERGENCY.

11  
12 WHEREAS, Don L. Robart has been a resident of Cuyahoga Falls from the age of  
13 7 and is a 1963 graduate of Cuyahoga Falls High School; and

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15 WHEREAS, Don L. Robart is a United States Marine, serving his country from  
16 1965 through 1971; and

17  
18 WHEREAS, in the midst of a successful career at Firestone Tire and Rubber, Don  
19 L. Robart was elected to and served on Cuyahoga Falls City Council from 1984 to  
20 1985, where he was a leading proponent of the eventual 1986 merger of the City of  
21 Cuyahoga Falls and Northampton Township, the first successful merger of a city and  
22 a township in the history of Ohio; and

23  
24 WHEREAS, Don L. Robart was elected Mayor in 1985, became the first Mayor of  
25 the merged community which had tripled in geographic size, and was chiefly  
26 responsible for the successful integration of the City and Township governments;  
27 and

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29 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart worked diligently to achieve the full benefits of the  
30 merger by expanding water, sewer, and municipal electric utilities to residents and  
31 businesses in the former township areas, thus opening the former township areas to  
32 economic development opportunities; and

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34 WHEREAS, in 1996, under Mayor Robart's leadership, the City purchased the  
35 Summit County water distribution system in the former township areas, permitting  
36 further expansion of the water system to underserved areas; and

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38 WHEREAS, in 2004, Mayor Robart successfully led the effort to close the City of  
39 Akron's Hardy Road Landfill and struck a landmark agreement with the City of  
40 Akron under which residents and businesses affected by contamination of well water  
41 from the landfill would have a right of access to municipal water service; and

42  
43 WHEREAS, due to successful extension of municipal utilities in the former  
44 township, Cuyahoga Falls became a prime location for new residential development,  
45 leading to the construction of over 1,108 new homes in such developments as Silver  
46 Maples, Cedar Woods, Prescott Green, Woodhaven, Regent Park, The Dales, Bath  
47 Heights, Adam's Run, Crown Pointe and Timber Creek; and

49 WHEREAS, in 2004 Mayor Robart pursued the Tamsin Park annexation,  
50 resulting in an agreed-upon annexation with Boston Township which added over  
51 100 acres to the City and made possible the unique Hidden Lakes and Boulder  
52 Estates residential subdivisions; and

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54 WHEREAS, in 2005, under Mayor Robart's leadership, the City adopted the  
55 hurricane-stricken town of D'Iberville, Mississippi in order to assist this town in its  
56 recovery from Hurricane Katrina, a relief effort that included dozens of volunteer  
57 employees, equipment and materials; and

58  
59 WHEREAS, Don L. Robart was an early advocate for recycling and initiated the  
60 City's first efforts in curbside recycling; and

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62 WHEREAS, under the leadership Mayor Robart, the City was awarded the USEPA  
63 National Recycling Award "Buy-Recycled" Campaign (June 1995) and the Award of  
64 Excellence in Recycling sponsored by Keep Ohio Beautiful (1990); and

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66 WHEREAS, as a result of Mayor Robart's leadership in recycling, the City of  
67 Cuyahoga Falls won the Keep America Beautiful President's Circle Award in 2012 for  
68 comprehensive recycling, litter prevention, and municipal solid waste reduction  
69 programming; and

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71 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart recognized throughout his tenure that the key to a  
72 community controlling its own destiny is its municipal utility services, and worked  
73 diligently to preserve the City's independence as a full-service water utility, and to  
74 position Cuyahoga Falls as a leader among public power communities; and

75  
76 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart has consistently worked to maintain and preserve the  
77 City's ability to offer high quality, low cost water, sewer, electric and sanitation  
78 services to the community; and

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80 WHEREAS, in 1999 Mayor Robart initiated the first natural gas customer  
81 aggregation plan in Ohio, permitting Cuyahoga Falls natural gas customers to have  
82 access to the best natural gas utility rates on the market; and

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84 WHEREAS, in 1996 Mayor Robart initiated legislation that guarantees that 29%  
85 of all municipal income tax receipts are dedicated to capital improvement projects  
86 that protect the long-term sustainability of the community's infrastructure; and

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88 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart's tenure has been characterized by keen attention to  
89 financial management and fiscal responsibility, under which the City currently  
90 enjoys a 23% year-end General Fund balance; and

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92 WHEREAS, under the leadership of Mayor Robart, the City, in 2001, earned its  
93 first improved bond rating in 25 years when the City's bond rating was upgraded  
94 from "A1" to "Aa3;" and

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96 WHEREAS, the City's bond rating was upgraded again in 2011 by Moody's  
97 Investor Service to "Aa2;" and

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99 WHEREAS, under Mayor Robart's leadership the City consistently deployed  
100 innovative, cost-saving ideas in the delivery of basic City services, including one-  
101 operator automated sanitation packer trucks, rolling bins for refuse, recycling, and  
102 yard waste, automatic water and electric meter reading, and highly efficient "e-poke"  
103 salt spreaders; and

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105 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart worked to raise public awareness of energy efficiency  
106 issues by initiating free and low cost distribution of energy efficient lighting,  
107 appliance rebates, and industrial energy retrofit projects through the Efficiency  
108 Smart program; and

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110 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart served on the Board of Directors of the Ohio Municipal  
111 Electric Association, receiving its Distinguished Service Award (1999) for his work  
112 with electric generation joint ventures with other municipal electric agencies; and

113  
114 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart guided the City through the replacement of the former  
115 Natatorium with the new \$26 million Natatorium and Wellness Center, a state-of-  
116 the-art fitness and health facility open to all residents; and

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118 WHEREAS, in order to improve the vitality of the City's historic core, Mayor  
119 Robart initiated construction of the \$5 million Falls River Square District, a public  
120 festival and special event site consisting of the riverside Pavilion and Amphitheatre,  
121 now host to numerous private events, several annual festivals and the well-known  
122 summer music series "Rockin' on the River;" and

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124 WHEREAS, under Mayor Robart's leadership the City purchased a failing 9-hole  
125 golf course in 1992 and developed the 18-hole Brookledge Golf Club, one of the most  
126 successful municipal golf courses in Ohio; and

127  
128 WHEREAS, in 1987, Mayor Robart initiated the redevelopment of the City's  
129 historic core by issuing a Request for Proposals for the construction and operation of  
130 a first-class hotel on urban renewal property formerly occupied by the Vaughn  
131 Machinery Company, thereby resulting in the Sheraton Suites Hotel, which created  
132 200 new jobs and established the cornerstone for new downtown development; and

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134 WHEREAS, upon the closure of the former Fallsview Psychiatric Hospital in 1997,  
135 Mayor Robart forged a partnership with the State of Ohio to take charge of the  
136 process for redevelopment; thereby resulting in the transformation of the facility into  
137 the new Falls Village consisting of 74 assisted living suites and 70 private nursing  
138 home rooms; and

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140 WHEREAS, over 28 years Mayor Robart pursued the development of new  
141 industrial parks to increase the growth of the manufacturing tax base, which efforts  
142 have come to fruition in the creation of Falls Commerce Park, including Alro Steel  
143 and Katherine's Collection, and Cuyahoga Falls Industrial Park, including Decker

144 Fasteners, A&C Welding, Eagle Elastomer, Ansco Machine, Pilot Plastics and  
145 Roadrunner Dawes; and

146

147 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart used the development tools at the City's disposal to  
148 encourage projects such as the creation of a global headquarters and research and  
149 development facility for Americhem in the central business district as well as the  
150 construction of its production plant on Steels Corners Road, GOJO's \$22 million  
151 expansion, which retained over 800 Cuyahoga Falls jobs, the re-build of Technicote's  
152 facility after it was devastated by fire, and SGS Tool Company on Marc Drive; and

153

154 WHEREAS, over a period of almost three decades, Mayor Robart marshaled the  
155 tools of the City's Development Department to forge public-private development  
156 partnerships that produced over \$1 billion in significant new industrial, commercial  
157 and residential real estate development in the City, including major downtown  
158 projects such as the Sheraton Suites, Towne Centre building, Fountain Pointe and  
159 the Powerhouse at Water's Edge; and

160

161 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart fully understood the existential threat to the City posed  
162 by urban blight manifest in the dilapidated State Road Shopping Center, and  
163 responding to a public that recognized the same threat, initiated a targeted  
164 appropriation action in 2007 to purchase the site, stop the blight, and redevelop the  
165 site into a first-class retail center; and

166

167 WHEREAS, despite the financial panic of 2008 and the ensuing Great Recession,  
168 Mayor Robart steadfastly pursued redevelopment of the State Road Shopping  
169 Center, and ultimately concluded a multi-faceted agreement with Stark Enterprises  
170 under which the State Road Shopping Center will be reborn as Portage Crossing in  
171 2014; and

172

173 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart presided over the City's sesquicentennial (1987) and  
174 bicentennial (2012) celebrations; and

175

176 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart pursued and obtained EPA grant funding to remove  
177 two dams on the Cuyahoga River, thus improving water quality on the river and  
178 opening a large portion of the river to Class IV and V whitewater rafting and other  
179 recreational opportunities; and

180

181 WHEREAS, recognizing that further development and redevelopment of  
182 Cuyahoga Falls business and industry was being impeded by contaminated  
183 "brownfields" remaining from 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial practices, Mayor  
184 Robart aggressively sought grant funding for the clean-up of various former  
185 industrial sites in the City's historic core, resulting in redevelopment and re-use of  
186 former industrial sites including the former Prospect Mold & Die building – now the  
187 New High Bridge Glens Park; the former H&M building – now The Watermark mixed-  
188 use development, and the demolition of the former Morgoch Lincoln Mercury  
189 Building; and

190

191 WHEREAS, Mayor Robart's use of over \$8 million in Clean Ohio Revitalization  
192 Fund grants for decontamination of former industrial sites was so successful that  
193 the Ohio Department of Development uses its Cuyahoga Falls decontamination sites  
194 as showcases of the program's success; and  
195

196 WHEREAS, Don L. Robart's tenure as Mayor is not measured simply by his terms  
197 in office, but rather by the positive legacy he created that will touch every part of this  
198 community for generations to come,  
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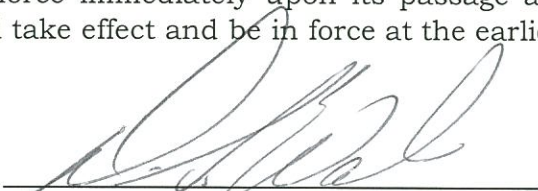
200 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Cuyahoga  
201 Falls, County of Summit and State of Ohio, that:  
202

203 Section 1. This Council commends Don L. Robart for his 28 years in service to  
204 the people of Cuyahoga Falls as their Mayor, and for his leadership and dedication to  
205 the City and its people, and wishes him well in his new endeavors.  
206

207 Section 2. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council  
208 concerning and relating to the passage of this resolution were adopted in an open  
209 meeting of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal  
210 actions were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements  
211 including Chapter 107 of the Codified Ordinances.  
212

213 Section 3. This resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure  
214 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, safety, convenience and  
215 welfare of the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the inhabitants thereof, and provided it  
216 receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members elected or appointed to  
217 Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its passage and  
218 approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force at the earliest  
219 period allowed by law.  
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222 Passed: 12/23/13  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
President of Council

  
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Clerk of Council

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230 Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

231  
232 12/9/13  
233 O:\2013ords\Commendatory Reso