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Mayor Bill Cervenik News Story

Bill Cervenik has been Euclid city mayor since December 2003. There has been much turmoil during these first two years.

He said that when he first took office, the city was almost bankrupt. "We had less than \$500 thousand in the bank." Euclid's annual operating budget is approximately \$35-\$40 million.

"We began 2004 facing a \$4 million deficit, a number more than double what was expected," said Mayor Cervenik in his "State of the City" address on February 7, 2005.

After this year, however, there should be a budget surplus of approximately \$4 million. The mayor believes that over \$2 million will come from continued tax collection of delinquent accounts.

Having an educational and employment background in accounting, Mayor Cervenik said that it seemed the Central Collection Agency (CCA) was not doing a very good job collecting delinquent taxes.

The city of Euclid approved ordinances to operate a tax collection agency. Euclid has been able to collect \$2.2 million in delinquent taxes from residents and business owners so far.

Mayor Cervenik says that the city of Euclid has a declining economy. Without an economy, the city does not have the funds to operate appropriately.

He talked of the old PMX industrial facility. The final demolition of the final 200-foot tower occurred this past week. The city hopes for economic development to occur over the next five to seven years, bringing 1000-1500 new jobs. New jobs equal more tax revenue for the city.

The mayor also said additional areas for economic improvement included housing and technology. The city wants to help existing business with wireless access to the internet and other forms of technology.

Other economic improvement includes the old K-Mart facility across from Euclid Square Mall on Babbitt Road. Mayor Cervenik said Royal Appliance purchased the property for its returns department. Royal Appliance is also looking to sub-divide the property, whereby Euclid would benefit from more tax revenue, according to the mayor.

In 2004, an opportunity for economic growth turned into a recall for the mayor.

Providence Baptist Church purchased 68 acres of undeveloped land around East 127<sup>th</sup> Street and Kinsman to build a church and approximately 100 homes. This project is known as the Hillendale project.

According to the Web site [ClevelandFreeTimes.com](http://ClevelandFreeTimes.com), “The land had been reserved for a commercial business or office park, which would bring needed tax dollars into this struggling inner-ring suburb.”

At the time, the land in question was not zoned residential for the church group’s intended purposes, but was zoned industrial. Initially, the rezoning was approved, but was overturned by a group of residents. Euclid had a zoning code stating a church group could not relocate into undeveloped land in the city without approval first. They could, however, purchase an existing church.

The mayor, with the law director’s approval, settled a lawsuit by the church that would allow them to build their church and housing development. Because the mayor didn’t ask city residents or city council to vote on the lawsuit, enough residents gathered enough signatures to hold a recall.

Mayor Cervenik believes the recall was racially motivated based on the fact that the new development will be predominantly black. The group who gathered the signatures was the Euclid Awareness Committee.

“A good portion of this group that’s leading this recall effort, Euclid Awareness Committee, did not support my candidacy in my election as mayor in 2003,” said Mayor Cervenik, according to Web site FoxNews.com.

A special election was held in July 2005 to determine the fate. Bill Cervenik won by 767 votes to remain mayor, according to Web site WKYC.com.

Currently, the group will be finalizing their plans over the next three to four months for land development. The mayor stated that it doesn’t matter who develops that property, as long as tax revenue is generated.

“From here on in, we’re all working together,” said Mayor Cervenik a few days after the recall vote was held.

And, they are all working together now. “It’s not about me; it’s not about you; it’s about the community in full.”

Mayor Cervenik doesn’t see himself running for any other office, except mayor of Euclid. He will run again in 2007.