

Ludlow Express



Issue No. 16

ELECTION EDITION

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Local Government 101

by Ruth Bamberger and Ari Knight
In the upcoming mid-term elections, Ludlow voters may cast a ballot in several key races.

At the federal level, we'll vote in a new US Senator to fill the seat currently held by Mitch McConnell, as well as a new US Representative – currently held by Thomas Massie. Also on our ballots will be the candidate for State Representative District 63, who is running uncontested.

Equally as important and impactful to our day to day lives, Ludlow residents will be voting in a new local government. On the ballot this year is the office of Mayor and all six City Council seats. Local government can take many forms, and Ludlow is set up with a Mayor-Council form of government. The Mayor is the

Chief Executive officer, and City Council is the policy-making body. The Mayor is elected for a four year term, and the City Council, comprised of six members, are elected every two years. Both Mayor and City Council positions are non-partisan, meaning the candidates are not affiliated with a political party on the ballot or during their term.

Working alongside the Mayor and City Council are the city staff, including a City Administrator, City Clerk, Code Enforcement officer, and directors of Public Safety and Public Works. City staff are appointed by the Mayor with approval by City Council. These are paid positions that are included in the city's operational budget. Lastly there are a number

Upcoming LHS Events

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Mon, Oct 26 • 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Ludlow High School Auditorium

The Ludlow Historic Society and the League of Women Voters of KY, along with Ludlow Superintendent Dr. Steffen, are hosting a Meet the Candidate evening. Held in the Ludlow High School Auditorium and moderated by Kerry Neff, this is a chance to hear directly from the candidates and learn what they envision for our town's future. **FREE ADMISSION**

of City Boards that help to shape policy and tackle projects, including Code Enforcement, Urban Design Review Board, Park Board, and Ethics. These boards include citizen volunteers who deal with these policy areas in an advisory capacity. ■

Candidate Profiles

The Ludlow Historic Society reached out to all candidates for the office of Mayor and City Council and invited them to submit responses to the below questions. Their answers appear on the following pages in the order in which they will appear on the ballot.

1. A brief statement about your life (including time lived in Ludlow), career, political experience if any, and why you are running for this office;
2. The mission of the Ludlow Historic Society is to sustain the uniqueness of this historic community and preserve its architectural character; while at the same time advocating for effective economic development addressing the needs of the community. In light of the above, what two issues do you consider most important to address in your campaign for this office?

Mark your calendars for our Meet the Candidate event on Monday, October 26th from 6:30 to 8:30 PM in the Ludlow High School Auditorium for a chance to hear directly from the candidates. Make a plan to vote on Tuesday, November 3rd!

Paul Hallinan Miller

I am **Paul Hallinan Miller**. I moved to town to run for Mayor. I practice and believe in accountability, transparency, and choice. I am committing to a Full Financial Audit of the past ten years to establish where taxpayer dollars have gone and where we can improve. **Present Real Options for the Future:** In 2027, Ludlow will decide using ranked-choice voting, ensuring every vote counts and the outcome reflects a true community consensus. Four clear paths: Partner with high-performing neighboring cities; Evaluate integration with Kenton County services; Remain independent with full transparency; Or choose structural change based on cost and performance. **Record of Showing Up:** For 17 years, we've built in Ludlow: Restoring historic spaces; Launching small businesses; Bringing people into the community. From 2010 - 2020, Ludlow was the hottest residential real estate market in Kentucky, according to insurance group Insurify. The circus/brewery as a tourism destination led this growth.

Julie Terry Navarre

I have lived in Ludlow for most of my life. I retired in 2021 after a 47 year career in Information Services, many of those leading teams. I have been an engaged member of Ludlow City Council for the last 8 years. I chose to run for Mayor because of the direction I saw the city heading. I would like to help steer Ludlow towards stronger communication, greater transparency, improved access to information and more collaborative leadership with department heads and the community. Furthermore, I have concerns regarding expenditure trends and the need to ensure greater fiscal responsibility. I continue to support the efforts of the Historic Society as a current board member. I believe in the importance of the preservation of our historic architecture through responsible restoration. I believe education of our community regarding the importance of historic preservation of our buildings is crucial to the success of our city.

Sarah Thompson

Sarah Thompson has called Ludlow home since she was two years old. She grew up on Ash Street, graduated from Ludlow High School in 1999, and later earned her bachelor's degree while raising her two sons. After serving on Ludlow City Council, Sarah became Mayor of Ludlow in September 2025, becoming the first woman to serve as mayor in the city's history. As Mayor, Sarah has focused on accessibility, city facility improvements, beautification, community events, public safety, and support for Ludlow's business district. She has advocated for improvements at the City Building, Community Center, and Memorial Park, while also supporting groups such as Ludlow in Bloom and events including the Rail Sessions. Sarah also works to ensure City departments have the resources they need and regularly communicates with residents about budgets, ordinances, taxes, infrastructure, and how local government works. She believes in listening, explaining the process, following through, and keeping Ludlow moving forward. ■

Paula Hughes Graszus

My name is Paula (Hughes) Graszus and I am a candidate for Ludlow City Council. I am currently serving in my first term as a member of council. I was born and raised in Ludlow and am a proud graduate of Ludlow High School, Class of 1979. My husband, John, was also raised in Ludlow. I served 36 years with the Ludlow Youth Football organization resigning in 2025 and John and I are in our 37th year leading the Ludlow Athletic Buffalo Club which offers baseball and softball to our area children ages 4-12. I also serve on the committee that organizes our Memorial Day Parades and in 2019 along with the committee, I enjoyed seeing my vision of our lighted Christmas Parade come to fruition and become an annual event. During my time on council I brought forth our Snow Angels program which partners community members with our elderly and other residents who have trouble maintaining their sidewalks during snow events. I love Ludlow and it is my hope to be elected so that I can help continue to move our city forward.

Meagan Guthrie

My husband, Gil, and I chose Ludlow as our home in 2019 because of its small-town character, strong neighborhoods, and close-knit community. After a career in local government and public administration focused on coalition building, grants, and budget management, I was appointed to Ludlow City Council in 2025. I'm running to bring steady leadership, professional accountability, and a solutions-focused approach to City Hall, and to give back to the community that supported our family when we needed it most. Two priorities are critical: fiscal responsibility and sustainable economic development. Ludlow taxpayers deserve transparent budgeting, strong financial oversight, and measurable results from every dollar spent. At the same time, we must attract investment without losing the historic character that makes Ludlow unique. I would pursue regional partnerships, streamline processes for small businesses, and support thoughtful investments in public safety, infrastructure, and our business district. By making smart decisions today, we can build a stronger Ludlow for generations to come. Learn more about Meagan, her vision for Ludlow, and ways to get involved at: votemeagan.com

Brian J. Bumgarner

As a three-year resident of Ludlow and current City Council member, I am committed to the well-being, historic charm and future progress of our city. With over 20 years of finance and analytics experience and an MBA from Xavier University, I bring practical, strategic thinking to local governance. Throughout my career at institutions like Sallie Mae and Fifth Third Bank, I've specialized in evaluating complex data, managing large budgets and identifying operational risks. To support Ludlow's future, I'm focused on two priorities. First, I'll bring my financial background to bear on prudent fiscal management: cutting unnecessary spending and making sure taxpayers get the most value for every dollar. Second, I'll push for smart, balanced economic development. Working alongside council members and city staff, I want to attract vibrant new businesses while carefully preserving the historical character that makes our community unique.

Jennifer Veon; Joel Walters

With the deadline to register approaching, I noticed there weren't many candidates on the ballot. My wife (Jennifer Veon) and I decided as young retirees we had time and energy to commit to our town by serving on council. I hope voters see us as an alternative to other candidates who may have a specific agenda or political motivation. For nearly a year now my wife and I have been helping our town in a small way by picking up litter on our daily walks. Many residents have probably seen us as we walk with our buckets and grabbers. We have talked to more people and have had more positive interactions in this past year than in our previous two decades of residence. On our walks we see many people are struggling financially and otherwise. I think as council members we can do even more to help lift everyone up in our community.

I consider one of the most important issues facing our city in the coming years to be our budget. Ludlow property tax rates are nearly the highest in Northern Kentucky. I would like to see if we could reduce costs and possibly find alternative sources of revenue so that this is no longer true while maintaining our public services at the level we are accustomed to. Increasing homeownership by supporting affordable housing initiatives and home rehabilitation projects could also help support our tax base. Another important issue that many communities in the country are facing is the risk associated with data centers. While I understand they can have a positive impact on a community's financial health, I don't believe the benefits outweigh the potential negative impacts associated with power usage and noise pollution. I would work to prevent any proposed development.

Chad Finni

I moved to Ludlow in March 2017 and love living in a walkable town where I can get out and meet folks. I'm heavily involved in the community garden and orchard. For the past 13 years, I've worked in IT management with a Cincinnati based insurance company. I have no prior political experience, but I've attended city council meetings consistently for the last several years. I like to keep up with what is going on, raise concerns, or ask questions to prompt dialogue.

Should I be elected to council, I'd work with the other members, the mayor, code enforcement, and any applicable boards or groups to understand and fill the long-standing vacancies in our business district. We need to attract businesses to our existing spaces while we work to retain our current business within Ludlow, before we consider any further new development.

Secondly, I'd work to establish a strategic vision for the business district, but also for the community as a whole, to grow organically and attract visitors to our town. I'd like to revisit a previous discussion on building a comprehensive strategic 1,3, and 5-year plan for Ludlow. There are a lot of great things happening in Ludlow, and I want nothing more than to see them continue and grow.

David Ziegler

I am a lifelong resident of the city of Ludlow. I will continue to serve ALL of the residents of Ludlow and not one or two specific groups. I will do so with honesty, integrity and transparency.

Ken Wynn

I'm running for Ludlow City Council because I care deeply about the community I've called home my entire life. I graduated from Ludlow High School in 1983 and earned my bachelor's degree in Business from Northern Kentucky University. I have also had the privilege of serving six years on City Council

and eight years as Mayor. One of my primary concerns is fiscal responsibility. According to Ludlow's last two audits, the city went over budget by a combined \$2.268 million. Our taxpayers deserve responsible stewardship of their money. I believe the city should operate within a balanced budget and make thoughtful decisions about every dollar we spend. My priorities include strong fire and police protection, maintaining our parks, addressing blighted properties, developing our business district, and — most importantly — listening to and addressing the concerns of Ludlow citizens. I know Ludlow. I love living here. And I'm ready to put my experience to work for our community. ■

From the Desk of the Ludlow Historic Society President

Our Board recently completed our Strategic Planning and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis for 2027–2032, giving us an opportunity to reflect on where we are, where we hope to go, and how we can continue preserving Ludlow's history while finding new ways to keep it alive for generations to come. One of our biggest goals over the next five years is to strengthen our relationship with Ludlow Independent Schools, creating more opportunities for our youth to better understand the history that exists right in their own backyard. We hope to do this through walking tours, Ludlow History Days, scholarships, volunteer opportunities, and other hands-on ways for students to connect with the people and

stories that came before them. We are also refocusing on growing our membership and just, if not more importantly, continuing to create opportunities for our members to be involved. Our monthly meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, and we would love to see more of you there. These meetings are a place to hear what we are working on, share your own ideas, and find ways to lend a hand. We may be a Board of eight, but preserving and sharing the history of an entire community takes far more than eight people. There are so many ideas we would love to bring to life, and sometimes what we need most are a few more hands, and a few more folks who care about Ludlow as much as we do. Finally, thank you to everyone who joined us for our recent First

Families of Ludlow tour at Spring Grove Cemetery. We hope you walked away with a better understanding of where our little river town began, the people who helped shape it, and a deeper connection to their stories after standing in the places where they were laid to rest. There is something inspiring about realizing that the names we have read in history books belonged to real people who lived, worked, dreamed, raised families, and helped build the community that we call home. If you hoped to join us but couldn't make it this year, we plan to bring the tour back again next year and hope to see you there. There is much ahead for the Ludlow Historic Society, and I am excited to see what we can build together.

—Destiny Meyer, LHS President

Ludlow Seeking Certified Local Government Recognition

by Andy Corn

Ludlow has had a Historic District since 2019. The Urban Design Review Board (UDRB) is the city Board that reviews new construction and exterior remodeling within that Historic District. The UDRB is currently looking into new ways to increase its positive effect on the community.

The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is the perfect program for the UDRB. The CLG program goal is to help communities in their historic preservation efforts. The CLG program is active in all states and is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office in each state. The Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) is the department that administers the CLG program in KY.

The UDRB has contacted the KHC and they have been assisting Ludlow and the UDRB to meet the requirements to apply to become a CLG. Becoming a CLG helps the UDRB tap into resources for technical preservation advice, connecting to a diverse network of partnerships, upgraded education standards for the Board, training to assist with historic tax credits, and most importantly, possible funding in the form of grants. All of which are critical to support historic preservation efforts in Ludlow.

There are only 24 CLG cities in Kentucky, including our neighbors Covington, Newport, and Bellevue. Ludlow is actively working to become the next CLG in Kentucky. Ludlow has met all requirements except for one last step that would require City Council to approve small adjustments to the Zoning Code that describe the responsibilities of the UDRB. We hope to become a CLG by the end of the year. ■



Community Calendar

LUDLOW HISTORIC SOCIETY

4th Wednesdays • 6:30 PM

Ludlow Historic Society meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of every month in the lower level of the City building and are open to the public!

CITY COUNCIL

2nd & 4th Thursdays • 7:00 PM

City Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursday of every month in the City building. Open to the public.

URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

3rd Thursdays • 7:00 PM

UDRB meetings are held on the third Thursday of every month in the City building and are open to the public.

WALK AND TALK AND TRASH

Wed, Oct 21 • 5 - 6 PM

Meet up on the corner near Second Sight, bring a friend, and your walking shoes and help keep our community clean!



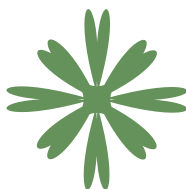
GENERAL ELECTION

Tue, Nov 3 • 400 Linden Street

Ludlow residents have a new polling location for this year's Elections. Cast your ballots for various federal, state, and local races at Ludlow First Baptist Church.

Have an event you'd like included in the Ludlow Express Community Calendar? Email ludlowhistoricsociety@gmail.com.

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RUTH BAMBERGER
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