

# OHIO CITY

INCORPORATED

1836

## OHIO CITY INCORPORATED BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPLICATION

Alex Frondort, Board President

Virginia Benjamin, Governance Committee Chair

Jane Platten, Interim Executive Director

September 06, 2024

OCI is currently seeking candidates to fill five Board of Trustee seats which are up for election on Tuesday October 22nd, 2024. Qualified candidates must submit their applications electronically or via mail on or before September 14th, 2024. Applications can be submitted to Jane Platten@jplattenohtcity.org or Helen Smith, hksmith42@hotmail.com .

We lead the development of Ohio City by collaborating to address the needs of a diverse community of engaged people, driving new investments in and preserving the quality of a historic place, and promoting an inviting urban neighborhood for all.

The Ohio City Incorporated Board of Trustees consists of 12 resident-elected seats and 5 to 10 appointed seats for community stakeholders. Resident-elected trustees must be residents of the Ohio City neighborhood and a member of Ohio City Incorporated on or before submitting your application.

If you are not a member, visit [ohiocity.org/membership](http://ohiocity.org/membership) to submit a membership application. To confirm membership, contact Lisa Raber at [lraber@ohiocity.org](mailto:lraber@ohiocity.org) or (216) 781-3222, ext 100.

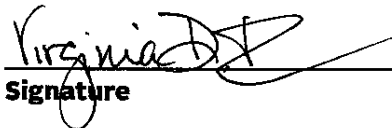
In order to be considered a candidate, a signed copy of the *Ohio City Incorporated Board Expectations* document must be submitted with this application.

Please contact our office by phone or in person or visit [ohiocity.org/board](http://ohiocity.org/board) to review the statement of expectations and commitments.

***I understand that as a member of the Board of Trustees for Ohio City Incorporated, I will be held accountable to the expectations of this position on an annual basis.***

I agree to the expectations and will comply with the requirements.

I cannot meet these expectations.

  
Signature

Virginia D. Benjamin  
Print

9/11/24  
Date

Please ensure the following items below are included with your application. Personal information including address, email, and phone number will not be shared. The rest of your application will be posted on the Ohio City Incorporated website and at relevant candidate events.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part 1: Candidate Information               | <input type="checkbox"/> Application Signed & Dated                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part 2: Experience & Professional Expertise | <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Ohio City Incorporated Board Expectations Document* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part 3: Personal Statement                  | *Available online at <a href="http://ohiocity.org/board">ohiocity.org/board</a>     |

# OHIO CITY INCORPORATED BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPLICATION

Please fill out the contact information below. Personal information including address, email, and phone number will not be shared.

<b>Name:</b>	Virginia ("Gigi") Benjamin	
<b>Address:</b>		
<b>Phone:</b>		
<b>Ohio City Incorporated Membership:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I am currently a Resident Member in-good-standing	
	<input type="checkbox"/> My Resident Membership form is attached to this application.	

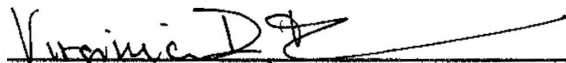
Please check the areas in which you have experience and/or professional expertise. Responses to Part 2 will be made available to Ohio City Incorporated membership prior to the election.

<input type="checkbox"/> Accounting	<input type="checkbox"/> Developer/Builder	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Bilingual	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Activist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finance/Lending	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Connections	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/> Grant Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate
<input type="checkbox"/> Design/Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning

Please answer the following questions & attach with your application. Limit 1 page, single-spaced. Responses to Part 3 will be made available to Ohio City incorporated membership prior to the election.

- 1) Why do you wish to serve on the Ohio City Incorporated Board of Trustees?
  
- 2) In what ways do you feel your strengths, knowledge, skills, and experience will help Ohio City Incorporated further its mission?
  
- 3) Describe your involvement in Ohio City and/or non-Ohio City neighborhood organizations. Include Ohio City Incorporated sponsored committees, projects, or block clubs if applicable.

This application was completed to the best of my knowledge and in good faith:

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 signature Print

9/11/24  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Ohio City Incorporated**  
**ATTN: OCI Governance Committee**  
**3308 Lorain Avenue**  
**Cleveland, OH 44113**

Helen Smith, Governance Committee : hksmith42@hotmail.com  
 Jane Platten, Interim Executive Director : jplatten@ohiocity.org

**OHIO CITY**

GiGi Benjamin OCI Board Application Part 3

- 1) I have lived in Ohio City for almost 10 years and served on the OCI Board of Trustees for 2 terms. Before I moved here, I was active in local affairs in Shaker Heights, where I served as President of our community association, and found that involvement in my neighborhood was the best way to meet our neighbors and contribute to the sense of place. When I moved to Ohio City, I was already aware of the work that OCI had done and felt that my experience in public finance and development projects would be helpful as the neighborhood addresses many challenges arising out of growth. I believe that I have added to the work of the Board during my tenure on the Board.
- 2) Until my retirement at the end of 2022, I practiced law with an emphasis on public finance and economic development projects for more than 40 years and worked with cities and counties, as well developers, bankers and financing organizations such as the Cleveland Port. My focus during that period was on "getting the deal done," recognizing that most projects can be a "win-win" for both the community and the private sector. It is that sense of finding the best way to move projects ahead without sacrificing the goals of each party that informs my service on the OCI Board.

In addition, I have been in a leadership role in several nonprofit organizations, including United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Cleveland Zoological Society. At United Way, I learned a great deal about the needs of our community and the social service agencies that provide support to so many. At the Zoo Society, I have been active in fundraising, a skill that OCI will need in the coming years. I also serve as the Chairman of Gateway Economic Development Corporation, which gives me insight into relationships with the City and Cuyahoga County.

- 3) I have served on the OCI Board as an elected Resident Trustee for the past 6 years, serving on the Finance Committee and as Chair of the Governance Committee. I also led the review and revision of the OCI By-laws. I am actively involved in the Randall-Whitman-John Woodbine Block Club. As mentioned above, I was President of our neighborhood association in our former home of Shaker Heights.

Before my retirement, I provided *pro bono* legal services to the Ohio City Improvement Corporation, the special improvement district providing services to businesses in Ohio City. I assisted OCIC in renewing the approval by the property owners and the City of Cleveland necessary to continue the SID.

We have the opportunity to toast many of our neighbors as they walk past our home in the early evening. I love living in Ohio City!