

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Avon Lake's Community Improvement Corporation teams up with Avon Lake Waterfront Corp. to provide \$98,000 in grants to City's restaurants and bars

Avon Lake, Ohio: On Sunday, March 15, Avon Lake's Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) announced that their organization was committed to financially supporting Avon Lake restaurants and bars in light of Governor DeWine's order to close them. Now, just over one month later, the CIC has completed a grant program that invested \$98,000 into 25 different restaurants and bars in Avon Lake. Along the way, they formed a partnership with Avon Lake Waterfront Corp. (A.L. Waterfront), the group that puts on the Avon Lake Waterfront Wine Festival. With the assistance from A.L. Waterfront, every grantee got \$3,000 or \$4,000.

The CIC was formed in 2013 by the City of Avon Lake with the mission of providing funding and advisory services to advance and promote economic growth in Avon Lake. Its initial funding came from the City by way of revenue from a cell tower. It then got additional contributions in 2014 and 2015 from PolyOne, A.L. Waterfront, and proceeds from the City's Business Expo. The CIC organized a business plan competition in 2015 that awarded \$35,000 in grants to six Avon Lake companies. They have also offered a loan program and a small grant program for the City's small businesses.

When the CIC created its emergency Coronavirus grant program, they wanted funds in the hands of small businesses quickly. They created an application which the City posted on its website. A round of twelve grant awards were sent out on March 22, just one week after the CIC announced its intention of a program. This first round took most of the CIC's funds. The group wanted to provide more grants but thought it would have to be at much lower amounts. It was then that former Avon Lake Councilman Dan Bucci called on behalf of A.L. Waterfront. Having heard about the first round of grants, A.L. Waterfront offered a contribution that put the second round of grants on the same level as the first. Thirteen more restaurants and bars were funded, and now the CIC's emergency relief program has granted \$98,000 to 25 Avon Lake restaurants and bars.

"I've never seen a group of people more motivated and energized by a cause than the CIC in response to this crisis," says Ted Esborn, Economic Development Director for the City of Avon Lake. "These are five volunteer residents of Avon Lake in this group, with young families, who mobilized as soon as they sensed that these businesses would be ordered to close. They announced their program just hours after Governor DeWine made the order. Avon Lake's restaurants and bars are at the heart of the community experience, and the CIC has put \$3,000 or \$4,000 crucial dollars in the hands of each business owner. This group seized the moment, albeit a difficult one."

Quotes from CIC Members (repeated from the 3/15 press release)

Ross Vincent: "The Avon Lake CIC is a group of Avon Lake citizens who have come together to promote the growth of our local businesses and community. In these unprecedented times, we can think of no better way than this to use our resources to help our neighbors in need."

Janice Lapina: "It is unfortunate how COVID-19 is crippling the world. It's important to take action and help each other out. Therefore, Avon Lake CIC has committed to assist our independent restaurant and bar owners during this time of uncertainty."

Steve Luca: "The time for all of us – our great City, its individuals, businesses, faith-based organizations and others – to act is now. The Avon Lake CIC is honored to provide support to our local business community during this moment of uncertainty and instability in our society. We only ask that others who may be in a position to help, please consider doing your part. "

Joe Carson: "During these very difficult and challenging times, we realize that our local restaurants and bars may suffer disproportionately, and we want to be there to support them. We have funds available to provide grants to the owners to help offset loss in revenue. We need to come together as a community to help each other out."

Erin Rudy: "This is an unprecedented situation, but we are happy to do what we can to assist our local entrepreneurs. We are hopeful that this spirit of support will persist throughout the community during this challenging time."