

City of Willoughby Hills

Mayor's Report-February 29, 2020

Mayor Andy Gardner

Mayor's Office: 440-918-8730

PUBLIC INPUT NEEDED

YARD WASTE PROGRAM HEARINGS

Following requests from many residents, the City has negotiated an agreement to add the collection of yard waste to our contract for trash/recycling collection with Republic Services. For \$2.33/month (\$28.00/year), Republic will collect bagged or bundled yard waste (including grass clippings, leaves and branches up to 3' in length) from the end of your driveway with your regular trash/recycling pick-up for the months of April through November. If we elect to add this service to the City's contract, all residents who have Republic Trash/Recycling service will be required to participate. Please let both my office and City Council know if you would appreciate this extra service or if you have concerns about adding this service to our contract. PLEASE NOTE: the City will continue leaf collection as has been done in the past. City Council will be conducting hearings on this matter to gain resident input during City Council Committee of the Whole Meetings on March 9th and 23rd, please let us know your thoughts, whether positive or negative!

REINSTATEMENT OF WHISPER PROGRAM

At the February 24 City Council Committee of the Whole meeting, Councilwoman Tanya Taylor Draper agreed to lead the process of restoring the operations of the Willoughby Hills Isolated Senior Program for Everyday Relief (WHISPER) program. Councilwoman Taylor Draper will be reviewing procedures, rules and regulations to provide services and is looking for your input. Please contact my office or Councilwoman Taylor Draper to share any thoughts you have to help us restore this program for our City's senior citizens in need of assistance.

SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

FOR THOSE RESIDENTS WHO LIVE CLOSE TO THE NORTH CHAGRIN RESERVATION, THE CLEVELAND METROPARKS DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IS CONTINUING THROUGH MARCH 19. CLOSURE SIGNS WILL BE POSTED. FOR YOUR SAFETY, PLEASE HEED THOSE SIGNS.

DISTRACTION BURGLARIES

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, TWO MEN POSING AS UTILITY WORKERS WERE ABLE TO CONVINCED TWO CITY RESIDENTS TO ALLOW THEM INTO THEIR RESIDENCE UNDER THE GUISE THAT THERE WAS A POTENTIAL PROBLEM WITH THE RESIDENTS' UTILITY SERVICE. AFTER A FEW MINUTES, THE RESIDENTS GREW SUSPICIOUS AND ASKED THE MEN TO LEAVE THE HOME. IT WAS LATER DETERMINED THAT THESE MEN WERE NOT UTILITY WORKERS AND WERE LIKELY TRYING TO DISTRACT THE RESIDENTS TO STEAL VALUABLES FROM THE HOME. FORTUNATELY, THE RESIDENTS WERE NOT HARMED AND NOTHING WAS TAKEN. **DO NOT ALLOW ANY UTILITY WORKERS OR ANYONE ELSE THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW INTO YOUR HOME UNLESS YOU HAVE SCHEDULED AN APPOINTMENT. IF ANYONE COMES WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CALL OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY AND ASK THEM TO ASSIST IN VERIFYING THE IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS WANTING TO ENTER YOUR HOME.**

EDDY ROAD TRAFFIC CLOSURES FOR I-271 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

The Ohio Department of Transportation ("ODOT") is planning to replace and realign the bridges from I-271 northbound to I-90 westbound over Eddy Road and over mainline I-271 beginning in March 2020. The contractor will begin preliminary set-up beginning March 2 and full mobilization starting March 9. During this project, a portion of Eddy Road will be closed to eastbound traffic only beginning late-April/early-May for a maximum of 150 days. Traffic will be detoured to Chardon Road during this time. The new bridges should be open to traffic by the end of 2020. Demolition of the old bridge structures, painting, and

landscaping will continue through September 2021. In addition, and as a separate project, ODOT is planning to replace the deck of the Eddy Rd bridge over I-271, which is expected to begin construction in Spring 2021 and finish by the end of 2021.

HAAS ALERT SYSTEM

Our Fire Department has recently installed the HAAS Alerting System in two of our first-out emergency response vehicles (Engine 1214 and our Mobile Command Vehicle 1211). Many of you are familiar with traffic and navigation apps such as Google Maps and Waze which provide roadway hazard & accident alerts to motorists. The HAAS Alert is a collision-prevention system that allows emergency vehicles to notify the motoring public of their presence through such apps (digital alerts) both while responding and when on scene. HAAS Alert also has its own application. You can download the HAAS Application through a link on our City Website (under Safety Departments/Fire Department/HAAS Alert). Remember, slow down and move over for emergency vehicles!

NEW FACES IN CITY HALL/PERSONNEL MATTERS

Welcome Councilman Dan Knecht

On February 18th, City Council unanimously appointed Dan Knecht to fill Dave Fiebig's unexpired Council term (through January 2, 2022). Dan grew up here in Willoughby Hills, attending Garfield School, Willoughby Middle School and South High. He is currently the Service Director in the City of Euclid and has significant experience in managing roads, facilities and sewer systems. As Council at Large, Dan represents all of the City, so please take the time to reach out and meet Dan.

Congratulations Sgt. Leonbruno!

On February 3rd, Officer Greg Leonbruno was sworn in as our City's newest Police Sergeant. Sgt. Leonbruno replaces Sgt. Mike Gerardi who retired in January. Sgt. Leonbruno has a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Bowling Green State University and is a graduate of both the Cleveland Hts. Police Academy (receiving recognition for a score of 96 on the State Peace Officer Certification Exam) and the Trilogy

Series of the FBI Law Enforcement Training School. Sgt. Leonbruno has been a full-time police officer for the City since April, 2012 and also represents the City as a member of the Western Lake County Emergency Response Team.

Welcome New Council Clerk.

Joanne Monaco has been appointed to serve as the new Council Clerk. Joanne is a former bailiff in the Geauga County Common Pleas Court.

Welcome Law Director Mike Lucas & Asst. Law Director Stephanie Landsgraf and Welcome Back Asst. Law Director Tom Lobe

On February 21st, City Council confirmed my appointments of Mike Lucas as Law Director, Stephanie Landsgraf as Assistant Law Director and Tom Lobe as Assistant Law Director. Mike and Stephanie are with the Willoughby law firm of Wiles and Richards, a Lake County firm with significant municipal law experience. Mike currently serves as the Law Director for the City of Willoughby and Stephanie currently serves as the Law Director for the City of Willowick. Tom served the City for many years as Law Director and was kind enough to agree to serve as Assistant Law Director to help familiarize Mike and Stephanie with the history of City matters and provide his own expertise (Tom currently serves as the Law Director for the City of Solon and was recently appointed to serve as the Assistant Law Director for the City of Kirtland). I believe that this team give Willoughby Hills one of the most talented and experienced legal teams in all of Northern Ohio.

Employee Milestone Anniversaries

I am pleased to announce that Community Service Officer Jim Ours celebrated 15 years of full-time service to the City in February. If you see Jim, please thank him for his dedication and service to our community.

Thank-You City Volunteers!

I am very grateful to the many residents that have volunteered to serve on our City Boards and Commissions. I would like to welcome Bob Bartolotta and Pat Grebenc who will serve as our Representative and Alternative Representative to the Chagrin River Watershed Partners.

CITY BUSINESS AND EVENTS

City Events and Recreational Opportunities

Our annual Pancake Breakfast at the Community Center on March 8th from 8:30 AM until 1:30 PM and the Willoughby Hills Lions Club's Pancake Breakfast will be the following Sunday, March 15. Please plan to attend! Tickets are now available at City Hall and through members of the Recreation Commission. Also, mark your calendars for the Spring Craft Show on March 28 and our annual Eggstravaganza on April 4.

I am also proud to announce that for the first time in several years, the City will be hosting an All-City festival as Rock and Roll Day in Willoughby Hills comes to the City on August 8, 2020! The Event will feature concerts, Rock and Roll trivia contests, food trucks, a memorabilia showroom and a classic car show! Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

2020 Road Projects

Legislation has been introduced to approve the engineering work necessary to resurface Graylock Drive, Beech Hills Drive and Evergreen Road. Rockefeller Road (South of Chardon Road) will be covered by separate legislation because it is being funded in part by grants. The legislation will be on its third reading at the March 12th Council meeting. Please let us know your thoughts about our road program.

2020 Road Levy

Our current road levy expires this year. To provide funds for road improvements after 2020, City Council will need to place a new road levy on the November ballot. This spring and fall, I will be working with Council, the Finance Department, our City Engineers and our Road Superintendent to provide several alternatives to residents. In addition to a simple renewal of our current road levy (which, with funds received from the State of Ohio gasoline tax, provides enough funding to only allow the City to resurface roads that are in very bad condition), I am planning to offer three levies that will provide funding for a sustainable road resurfacing program and two more robust programs. Please call my office if you would like to discuss planning for the future of our City's infrastructure.

2020 City Budget

The draft City Budget was provided to City Council on February 24 and was placed on first reading at the February 27th Council meeting. The Budget will be the

discussed in Council Finance Committee meetings on March 9th and 23rd and will be on Second and Third Readings at the March Council meetings on March 12th and 26th.

New Police Vehicles

As I reported last month, the City has purchased two new Chevy Tahoe police vehicles. The new SUV's have been delivered, painted and their decals installed. We are waiting for the emergency equipment to be installed and then they will be ready to be placed into service as WHPD Units 772 and 777. I expect the new vehicles to be on the road, keeping our City safe, by the end of March.

In Memorium

Finally, I'm sad to report the passing City resident Jeff Melvin. Please keep Jeff and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

As you can see, there is quite a bit going on here at City Hall and March will also be very busy as well. If you have any questions about anything happening in our City, don't hesitate to call and I will be happy to answer your question or have the person that can help contact you. I hope to see many of you at the Pancake Breakfasts on March 8 and 15!