

2013 State of the City Address

Members of City Council, honored guests, City staff and citizens of Oakwood:

Why does Oakwood, with a population of 9,202, continue to be “The Premier Residential Community in the Dayton and Miami Valley Region?” It is simple. It is our beautiful neighborhoods, our excellent schools and library, unmatched city services, public safety, public works, recreation and leisure; but most of all because of our citizens.

Neighborhoods

Whether it is an English Colonial on Thruston Blvd., a classic Tudor on Park Avenue, an Italian Renaissance on Schenck Avenue, or a Tudor style English cottage on Acorn Drive, we have outstanding diversity in housing choices.

Four years after the last Dayton region Homearama, the Home Builders Association of Dayton chose Oakwood for the event, featuring five new custom homes at Pointe Oakwood. Over 8,000 people attended this September 2012 event. These homes blend the new with the recognized old charm of Oakwood architecture.

Additional homes are currently under construction at Point Oakwood and this spring, work will start on 10 attached luxury condominiums and an 88 unit assisted care facility. An additional 10 luxury condominiums are planned.

In addition to our residential neighborhoods, our business community continues to thrive. In 2012, we celebrated three significant anniversaries. The Oakwood Register celebrated 20 years, Ashley’s Pastry Shop 30 years and the Oakwood Club celebrated their 50th anniversary

Schools/Library

Everyone knows Oakwood has great schools, in fact, the finest public schools in the region. This has been the case for decades and the tradition continues. Our Oakwood schools had the highest 2012 “Performance Index Score” in the Miami Valley. In 2012, US News and World Report’s published their fourth annual list of “Best U.S. High Schools.” Oakwood earned the Report’s highest honor, a gold medal, ranking 13th in Ohio and 342nd nationally... this out of 22,000 high schools.

Need more evidence, consider this: the Oakwood High School Academic Decathlon team placed first in the state among all divisions. This scholastic competition is unique because the nine member team is tested in art, economics, language and literature, mathematics, music and science and participates in judged events in speech, interview and essay.

In April, our state representative, Jim Butler, honored the team with a resolution on the floor of the Ohio House of Representatives. Did they accept the honor and go home? No, they went to Albuquerque, New Mexico and became the Division III national champions.

Jack Bachman, Heather Brooks, Nathan Gibbs, Cliff Goertemiller, Caleb Kell, Primrose Mangilog, Wilson Mullen, Colleen Noonan and Herbert Sizek, along with Coach Lori Morris, are congratulated for this significant achievement.

Wright Memorial Public Library continued its mission to provide high levels of efficient, friendly and personal service and to foster an atmosphere of intellectual liberty in the American tradition of free ideas. We congratulate them on the passage of their 1.5 mill replacement levy with a 71% affirmative vote.

City Services

The city services offered to Oakwood residents are unsurpassed. We continue to provide weekly backyard trash collection, year-around curb collection of yard waste, fall leaf collection and spring mulch delivery, and sidewalk snow removal. We were honored as a Tree City USA for the 30th consecutive year. Our Johnny Appleseed program has planted over 2,600 trees in Oakwood since the inception of this program. We commend the efforts of our 30 member public works department and our horticulture staff under the leisure services department.

Public Safety

Formed in 1927, our 35 member public safety department is the second oldest consolidated department in the United States. It is unique because all our officers are cross-trained and state-certified in law enforcement, fire fighting and emergency medical services. Our first officer on scene response time for any emergency is under two minutes, by far the fastest in the region. Our fire engine response time is 4.4 minutes; the national standard is 6 minutes. Our medic

response time is 3.6 minutes; the national standard is 13 minutes. Oakwood has the lowest crime rate and fire loss in Montgomery County.

Recreation/Leisure

Where else will you find in a community of 2.2 square miles the parks, gardens and green space found in Oakwood? We offer three neighborhood parks, Shafor Park, Orchardly Park and Fairridge Park.

Our natural areas include Loy Gardens, Elizabeth Gardens, Houk Stream and Centennial Park, and our recreation facilities include the Oakwood Community Center and Gardner pool, the Dog Park at Creager field, Irving field, Old River Sports Complex and Mack Hummon Stadium.

Oakwood also features beautiful public gardens including Smith Gardens and Francine's Garden.

People

Oakwood's strength is its people. Cathy Gibson, clerk of council for the city, retired after 31 years of service to the citizens of Oakwood. An Oakwood High School and Ohio Northern graduate, she served six mayors and three city managers. As City Manager Norbert Klopsch commented, "Her commitment, dedication and work ethic were unmatched. We will miss Cathy very much."

Officer Terry Konicki served the city for over 29 years, seven years as president of FOP Lodge 107. In his leadership capacity, he worked tirelessly with the safety department's command staff to enhance the high service standards and professionalism with which all of our public safety officers perform their daily duties.

The Oakwood Rotary Club presented its Civic Leadership Award to Jeffrey Shulman, attorney at Sebaly, Shillito & Dyer and chair of our Planning Commission, and its Community Service Award to Jay Weiskircher, assistant city manager of the City.

Our citizens are leaders in industry, education, medicine and the arts. Just consider some of the events in which our citizens participated in 2012.

- In January, several hundred people attended the 9th annual Kettering-Oakwood Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast. Last week, we gathered for the 10th annual celebration of this event;
- In May, approximately 700 walkers participated in the 11th Annual Breast Cancer 5K CARE Walk. The event raised over \$16,500 to support a cure for breast cancer;
- That Day in May, sponsored by the City and the Oakwood Rotary Club, continued the tradition of the pancake breakfast, 5K and 10K runs, community parade, games, rides, refreshments and displays;
- The Oakwood Historical Society received a 2012 Historic Preservation Award from Dayton History for its preservation of the Long-Romspert Homestead. In an event that could only occur in Oakwood, the Society offered tours of an Arts and Crafts Bungalow on Wilshire Blvd. The home was a time capsule from the 1940's and 1950's.
- In September, The Oakwood Sister City Association hosted the 40th anniversary of our twinning with LeVesinet, France, a suburb of Paris. The Association also visited LeVesinet in June as part of the twinning. The mission of Sister Cities is promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation—one individual, one community at a time. We have two sister cities: Le Vesinet, and Outremont, a suburb of Montreal.

Community Outreach

Last year, City Council and city staff met with over 500 citizens in 28 neighborhood meetings, three town hall meetings and three open houses to discuss how the repeal of Ohio's estate tax and other state funding cuts affect our community. We heard several common themes, notably:

- 1) We live in this community for a good reason and truly value our comprehensive and high quality city services.
- 2) While new taxes and fees must be part of the solution, the city should continue reducing expenses and be as cost efficient as possible; and
- 3) To the extent that services can be paid for through specific fees, that is preferred over general taxes.

Accordingly, we have made our refuse program self-supporting by reducing expenses and increasing the monthly refuse charge. We established a stormwater utility to account for the costs of this program. We are also increasing fees and reducing expenses at the Oakwood Community Center.

In addition, our union and nonunion employees have agreed to a one year salary freeze and we plan to ask them for an additional year with no increase in compensation.

The combination of these actions will solve about half of our existing financial problem.

The Value Proposition

We have not raised city income taxes since 1984 or city property taxes since 1991. In fact, we reduced property taxes in 2008 by letting an existing levy expire. We have spent less for city services in each of the last four years and will spend less in 2013 than we did in 2012.

Our citizens pay less for water and sewer than most people in Montgomery County. We have reduced our city staff by 10% since 2004 with no reductions in city services.

Tonight, City Council will vote to place a 3.75 mill property tax levy for city services on the May 2013 ballot. This decision was deliberated by Council for many months before we came to a consensus. If the issue passes in May, no additional taxes will be collected until 2014. It will cost the owner of a \$200,000 home about 62 cents a day to keep our unsurpassed city services.

Future Concerns

Our largest source of revenue is the city income tax. We project collections of \$6.2 million in 2013. Because we give a 100% credit for taxes paid to other jurisdictions, for an Oakwood resident working in Dayton or Kettering, where the income tax rates are 2.25%, Oakwood only receives 0.25% of the 2.5% total taxes paid.

15 surrounding communities have increased their income tax rates over the last four years. Accordingly, our city receives about \$330,000 less in income taxes each year.

The City of Beavercreek plans a 1.5% income tax levy in May 2013. If their issue passes, Oakwood will lose another \$80,000 a year. If the City of Dayton were to increase their tax rate to 2.5% from 2.25% we would lose an additional \$300,000 annually. In 2014, we will need to limit the credit we give for local taxes paid to other jurisdictions.

Representatives Cheryl Grossman, R-Grove City, and Mike Henne, R-Clayton, will soon reintroduce legislation formerly known as House Bill 601. I read their 129 page bill and conclude it is the latest assault on the home rule provisions established in the Ohio Constitution 101 years ago. Under the guise of tax uniformity, the legislation reduces the municipal income tax base and will reduce our city income taxes by an additional \$400,000 a year.

Their legislation does not provide for municipal tax uniformity; it is not revenue neutral nor can it ever be revenue neutral; it creates yet another state bureaucracy and provides burdens to municipalities that the State does not impose on itself. This bill creates a cumbersome compliance process that is intended to discourage municipalities from auditing and correcting income tax return filings. It provides an opportunity for certain taxpayers to avoid paying city income taxes, ultimately passing a higher tax burden to others.

They believe this legislation will help create jobs in Ohio, in spite of the fact Ohio is number one in job creation in the Midwest and number four in the country under Governor Kasich. We are also number two in the country in site selection. I have yet to hear the comments of the first CEO of a major company that declined to move to Ohio because of municipal income taxes.

We plan to offer testimony to the Ohio legislature this year regarding the details of this legislation. We will, along with other cities across Ohio, offer alternative legislation that supports uniformity and is revenue neutral. Our concern, and that of the Ohio Municipal League, is that the Grossman/Henne bill will be combined with the 2014/2015 state biennial budget bill this spring and our local legislators,

Senator Lehner and Representative Butler, will be unable to support the cities they represent.

Because it is a well-established fact that local government is the most accountable and responsive government, Oakwood City Council will oppose the efforts of those in Columbus to impose their centralized government and forced regionalism agenda. We represent you and will see that our city provides the services you believe are important and necessary. And in doing so, we will prudently manage the resources our community provides.

Well Governed, Well Managed and Financially Strong

When I joined City Council in 2003, it was my belief that Oakwood was well governed, well managed and financially strong. I still hold that belief and will continue this tradition.

I am proud to serve with Vice Mayor Steve Byington who begins his sixth year on City Council and was recently re-elected to lead the First Suburbs Consortium of Dayton. I am also proud to serve with Stanley Castleman who begins his 10th year on City Council and Rob Stephens and Anne Hilton each of whom begin their fourth year on City Council.

This Council, like those that preceded it, operates in a collegial style and everyone believes in doing the right thing for the citizens of Oakwood. We listen to one another, no one has hidden agendas, and we believe in community service.

Oakwood City Council recently appointed 22 citizens to serve on volunteer community service committees. They join about 130 other citizens in service to our city. These volunteers provide invaluable input and counsel as we address our short-term and long range challenges.

The excellent services provided by our public safety, leisure services and public works departments would not occur if not for the leadership of City Manager Norbert Klopsch. He is recognized throughout the region as an outstanding city manager. He is also blessed with a fine group of department directors including assistant city manager Jay Weiskircher.

We have citizens who are willing to pay the extra costs to have this special Oakwood community. As former city manager J. David Foell once said, "It's not a question of how much you pay in taxes; the question is whether you receive good value for each dollar spent."

With the help of City Council, city staff and the citizens of Oakwood, we will continue to be well governed, well managed and financially strong.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.