

STATE OF THE CITY

We begin 2007 with an active agenda. Work remains on projects from the past year and new ones are already in place. As our region searches for economic growth we look to participate, knowing that our own city can be one of the beneficiaries. Regional leadership has secured investment dollars to both economically improve and market our region. We will follow these developments and support the effort. Our need to see ourselves as part of our region grows as economic challenges increase.

The list of accomplishments in 2006 is long. Exciting changes to our business district received much attention. New retail space was completed and the grand opening held in October. A new crosswalk and pedestrian traffic light facilitates mobility, provides access to destinations and parking in the business district, and improves public safety. We will welcome the first Montgomery County branch of Lebanon Citizens National Bank to Oakwood when it opens in the spring. Our current business district design guidelines are scheduled for review this year to assure that they best serve our city and businesses. All these events contribute to making our business district a destination not only for our own citizens but those outside our community. To improve parking on the east side of Far Hills, the city purchased property as part of a master plan to consolidate and improve customer parking in that area. In our Park Ave. neighborhood business district, plans were unveiled for upgrading the streetscape and parking areas. Approved plans begin with the needed improvement to the public parking lot, including access. City staff and City Council understand the necessity of focusing on our business districts in the current competitive environment.

In a less obvious vein, but equally important, were changes to our infrastructure. After patiently waiting in line for Issue 2 state funding we were able to complete the new sewer system in the Dixon-Patterson neighborhood this past summer. The State provided \$150,000 toward this project. We trust the temporary inconveniences suffered by our citizens will be well rewarded by the benefits of this improvement. Our water meter replacement is down to the last few sites. A significant portion of this city wide project has been competently handled by staff with some challenging obstacles and will serve our city for years to come. A cul-de-sac was created at the termination of Park Rd. west of Ridgeway. Studies indicated that the tax dollars required to correct safety issues on the western end of this road did not warrant keeping it open. Planned for 2007 are improvements to Oakwood Avenue north of

five points. Again, state dollars will assist in that project – this in the amount of \$150,000. Needed new barrier along Ridgeway Rd. have arrived and when installed by our public works department they will provide a more pleasing appearance along with increased safety.

Other important projects concluded in 2006 included the purchase of 28 acres of Old River playing field. These fields had been rented by us from NCR since 1999. With the land purchase the community is assured of permanent access to playing fields for athletic activities. This long term endeavor is a tremendous accomplishment for our city manager and staff. Our requirement to provide a new access road to the fields is a major project for the current year. In March a new medic vehicle arrived. This emergency vehicle was designed specifically to serve our citizens and for the first time not in terms of what would fit into our parking bay. Another project of community value is the specially designed basement space in the new city building to house historical documents collected and maintained by the Oakwood Historical Society. This accomplishment allows our historic records to be stored safely and also provides an agreeable work area for citizens utilizing or cataloguing these important documents. In June we said goodbye to retiring Public Safety Lieutenant Tom Gallimore, after 29 years of service to Oakwood and in July to Public Safety Captain Walt Conroy, after 26 years of service. In July we welcomed Alexander Bebris as our new Safety Department Director. We are grateful to the command staff that responsibly operated the department in the interim between directors. The Safety Department will also be the beneficiary this year of our first citizen volunteer program within our administration.

Dominating our attention in 2006 was the development of Sugar Camp. All of the land at the northwest corner of Far Hills and Schantz Ave. formerly owned by NCR is now owned by private developers. A combined plan for the properties has been approved by the Planning Commission and awaits City Council review. The planned mix of professional office space and empty nester housing units fulfills the long-standing priorities of the community. As development occurs new revenue will alleviate the tax demands on current property owners as well as offering a type of housing not currently available in our city. We also welcome Beth Abraham Synagogue to Oakwood at Sugar Camp. The work required to bring this Sugar Camp reuse project to closure is measured in years. The knowledge and skills of our administrative staff led the original concepts to successful fruition so that we can now look to realizing the benefits. It is indeed a hallmark of the quality leadership we enjoy from our city staff.

In 2006 the city addressed a number of issues. Complaints from citizens regarding the increasing number of deer frequenting their property brought proposals to reduce the deer populations. Citizen rejection of these plans leaves the problem unresolved. Complaints continue as does the danger from deer on our roadways. The number of deer killed by motor vehicles increased dramatically in 2006. The issue remains. Our Health Commissioner, Dr. Mary Pryor, and our Board of Health guided us in review of environmental issues confronting the city. A request from the University of Dayton for an Urban Setting Designation on 49 acres just north of Oakwood and environmental issues at the Sugar Camp development site and our newly acquired playing fields prompted lengthy and thorough research, and public hearings. Findings indicate that the health and safety of our citizens are secure with some requirements in place for procedures in the Sugar Camp development. By action of the Ohio Senate led by our Senator Jeff Jacobsen, Oakwood's long-standing representation on the Regional Transit Authority Board was terminated. Due to the strength of performance, our citizen representative remains a member of the RTA Board and a resource for our concerns. In August, NCR deeded the Wright brothers' home, Hawthorn Hill, to the Wright Family Foundation. The family's plans to turn ownership and management over to the National Park Service within two years, and have Hawthorn Hill open to the public on a regular but limited basis, have been shared with the neighborhood and the city. The details of these plans are not complete and many steps remain in this process. Oakwood is represented in the planning process and our concerns are seriously considered by the Wright family representatives. We will continue to share all information and proposals with the neighbors and the whole community. A current issue under examination is the possibility of moving to a centralized dispatch system for our 911 emergency calls. The conversations regarding this proposal began last year and we have decided to continue exploring the possibility within the limited framework of 911 calls while retaining all other services currently provided by our dispatch professionals here in Oakwood. This will be a lengthy, detailed and critical exploration to determine if we can better serve our citizens through the final centralized dispatch proposal that is developed.

Fiscal year 2006 revealed the increasing difficulty of securing revenues to meet the growing cost of delivering comprehensive and personalized service. Both our income and estate tax revenues fell short of expectations last year. In addition, contracts with the Public Safety Officer union determined by binding conciliation, which is beyond our control, have strained our resources. Existing reserve funds

were used as needed but this cannot continue going forward. The property tax levy renewed by Oakwood citizens in the fall of 2006 provided a statement of support for our city government, but did not bring additional income. We also face reduction in our income tax revenue from the passage of increased income tax by Kettering and several other local cities. In an effort to keep costs in line with revenues, staff continually looks for ways in which to cut expenses. In 2006 we modified our weekly refuse collection operation and were able to cut 32 man-hours from our weekly personnel costs, yet continue to provide the same backdoor service. Balancing the budget at the same service level is a challenge for the future.

Celebration comes naturally to Oakwood and 2006 was no exception. Our fourth Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast jointly sponsored with the city of Kettering welcomed a sell out attendance. In March we invited our community business owners to breakfast. The opportunity for dialogue was beneficial and we look forward to repeating this event. The annual new residents breakfast gathered families at the OCC on a Saturday morning in April. Along with welcoming our new residents, this breakfast allows questions to be asked and information given. In May we once again celebrated our annual "That Day in May" and thank the Oakwood Rotary Club for all the hard work in making this community festival such a success. A special event took place in June. With the completed production of the "Schantz Park Historic District Self-Guided Walking Tour" booklet, the Oakwood Historical Society sponsored a Saturday walking tour to celebrate the introduction of the booklet. This guide continues to be available thanks to the generosity of the Oakwood Rotary Foundation. The summer continued with blanket concerts at Smith Gardens, the Giving Strings Concert on Lonsdale and a very festive Ice Cream Social at Shafor Park. The beautiful landscape displays throughout the city seen during the summer were recognized with City Beautiful Awards. These awards express appreciation for the effort our citizens make to enhance our neighborhoods. In the fall our Scarecrow Row competition was again offered with delightfully creative and enjoyable results. This celebration grew last fall with the addition of the Fall Family Festival. This new event was enthusiastically welcomed by the community which speaks to repeating it this year. During the winter holiday season we enjoyed the Lighting of Oakwood annual event. With the efforts of the Environmental Committee and community volunteers, along with our residents, the city became a spectacular display of streets lined with luminaries. This magical setting was the backdrop for the tree lighting family celebration at Shafor Park. Throughout this past year activity in preparation for our Centennial Celebration in 2008 has increased. Our Co-chairpersons Madeline Iseli and Dick Good are leading

the planning and organizing for this grand celebration. Expect much more activity in the coming year as we engage the community in completing plans for 2008.

Over the past year, City Council participated in a diverse group of regional organizations. Vice Mayor Carlo McGinnis represents Oakwood on the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Roger Blumensheid is the Vice-chairman of the Miami Valley Communications Council, Bill Duncan meets with the South Suburban Teen Drug/Alcohol Task Force representing Oakwood, Stanley Castleman is a member of the Montgomery County Economic Development/Government Equity Committee and I serve Oakwood as President of the Greater Dayton Mayors and Managers Association and as our representative on the Dayton First Suburbs Council. We have established a closer link to WPAFB through a liaison from the base. We are participating in developing a county-wide Geographic Information System which will provide invaluable information to expedite city projects. Closer to home we twice met jointly with Board of Education and staff and Wright Library Board and staff to share information, concerns and ideas. One specific outcome of these meetings is that we changed the bi-monthly "Oakwood City/School Scene" to the "Oakwood Scene", and added Wright Library to the publication.

In all of these activities we have been supported and guided by a magnificent city staff led by our Manager, Norbert Klopsch with the help of Assistant City Manager Jay Weiskircher. Their diligent, intelligent daily administration is the backbone of both Council activities and service to our citizens. Their open door policy to citizen concerns and suggestions adds depth to all our deliberation and decisions. Our confidence in the quality and reliability of our city staff allows Council to move forward as issues and projects are presented. In this work, City Council acts as a team with respect and consideration of each member's contributions and points of view. I applaud and thank my fellow Council members for their consistent focus on the best interests of our citizens and our city. Aided by the many citizens who comprise the roster of our city committees and the testimony of interested residents, decisions of Council represent a composite of community thinking. This is our purpose as we continue to recognize our greatest community asset, the citizens of Oakwood. We look forward to 2007 with its promise of interesting challenges and opportunities to serve our community.