Dear Fellow Residents:
Welcome to the inaugural issue of “In the Loop.” I hope you have been enjoying your summer! Sharonville is a very busy place this time of year with the many people who enjoy our Community Center programs; Camp Sharonville; the City parks, along with Sharon Woods Park; and the Family Aquatic Center. Hopefully, you and your family have been able to get outside and enjoy Sharonville’s many offerings. This is also a busy time for our City Staff; therefore, the following is an update on several items:

Road Projects

Road Improvements: In the last two summers, the City has been very aggressive with residential street paving projects by spending over $2.5 million on these improvements. Putting that amount in perspective, the 5-year average annual amount that was spent from 2011 – 2015 was just under $600,000. This year’s program focused on the following roads: Concerto, Grandview, Aztec, Conestoga, Fernhill, Antioch, Elljay, Teal, and Dowlin.

In addition to residential streets, major thoroughfares are also being addressed. For example, the engineering for improvements on Fields Er-tel Road, from SR 42 to the Copperfield subdivision is underway, with construction to occur next year. This is a joint project with West Chester Township -- they are responsible for the northern part of the road whereas the southern portion is within Sharonville. A couple of years ago, the City approached West Chester regarding the proposed improvement and, after some discussions, they decided to partner with us to accomplish this. Finally, improvements to Chester Road will soon be complete with utilities placed underground; new curbs, gutters and sidewalks; asphalt street replacement; new decorative street lights and traffic signals. This majority of this work should be finished by the end of 2017.

Upcoming Road Projects: We intend to be aggressive with residential road improvements in next year’s budget as well, with a focus on the West-Side of the City. The final 2018 budget will be presented to City Council in December. Also, the City was successful in receiving federal grant dollars to help fund improvements to Hauck Road, which will include, in part, the addition of a shared middle lane from Reading Road to SR 42. This project is earmarked for 2020. We are also working with ODOT to improve SR 42 by adding a right-turn lane onto Hauck Road and also discussing potential highway ramp improvements in the future. Last, the City was successful in obtaining a federal grant to help fund a Shared-Use Path on Kemper Road from SR 42 to the bridge over Sharon Woods Lake. This is a long-needed project, which will begin in 2020.
SharonFest

Thank you to the community volunteers who work with the City to put on SharonFest, a wonderful festival that helps over 30 non-profit organizations. Once again, fun was had by all! It takes a lot of volunteers to help plan for the annual event as well as with assisting during SharonFest; therefore, if interested in volunteering, the Committee’s email address is info@sharonfest.com.

Night Market

We are looking forward to the Night Market event in Downtown Sharonville on September 9th from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. This event will feature live music and over 30 food and craft vendors. Should be a great time!

Recent Legislation

Medical Marijuana: State law recently authorized Medical Marijuana within Ohio. We all likely know people who can benefit from its use. As permitted by that state law, however, Sharonville, along with many other communities throughout the state, has banned the sale or processing of medical marijuana within our City limits. Although many I have talked with have supported this decision, I have received a few questions regarding that stance. The possession or sale of marijuana, including medical marijuana, remains a federal crime. Medical marijuana cannot truly become “legal” until the Department of Justice, and other federal agencies, stop enforcing the Controlled Substances Act, which lists the drug as a Schedule I controlled substance. It is because of this, and other operational issues with the law, that we thought the prohibition made sense at this time. This decision can always be re-considered at a later date, especially if our concerns are addressed by the state and federal governments.

Front-Yard Food Gardens: Upon Planning Commission’s recommendation, City Council recently passed legislation which placed restrictions on the amount of agricultural use that can occur in the front yards of residential properties. Many cities prohibit Front-Yard Food Gardens, but we understood that a balancing act between allowing for some food growth in front yards versus the aesthetic nature/impact on neighbors from these gardens was needed. Therefore, if you are interested in starting a front-yard food garden, please check with the City’s Community Development Office at 513-563-0033 for these regulations.
**Flu Shots**

For those interested in the City’s Flu Shot Clinic, it is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26th from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center. No appointment is necessary for this clinic. Insurance will be billed, but, if not accepted, or if someone does not have insurance, they will not be turned away for lack of payment -- the flu shot will still be administered albeit at a different table for tracking purposes. If you are unable to attend that open clinic, Hamilton County Public Health will also offer influenza immunizations at their regularly scheduled clinics, held at the Sharonville Fire Department on the first and third Wednesdays of October, November, and December from 9:00 am–12:00 pm. These clinics do require an appointment. To schedule an appointment, please call 513-946-7882.

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**Public Works Department**

The City’s Public Works staff has a lot of pride associated with their Snow-Plow Removal Efforts. We often hear comments on how our streets are cleaner sooner than other cities in the region. Every year, workers are able to compete against others in snow plow “roadeo” events. Recently, in the Hamilton County Engineer’s Roadrodeo, 6 City employees placed in the top 13 spots, including the top 3! Congratulations to Matt Baum, Beav Schmuesser, and Joe Lisi who were the top 3, along with Billy Aven, John Schroeder, and Jason Beatty, who finished 7th, 11th, and 13th, respectively. Sharonville Public Works won the overall Municipality Division as well. After that event, the Public Works Officials of Southwest Ohio hosted an event that included 20 jurisdictions and 40 drivers. The City’s top 3 from the contest above competed and Beav Schmuesser was the overall winner! This is the type of quality employees the City has in our Public Works Department.

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**Police Department**

I am very proud of the City’s Police Department, led by Chief Blasky. With all of the media coverage recently regarding Use Of Force, I thought it would be appropriate to share with you the City’s statistics for the last 3 full years. From 2014 through 2016, the Police Department arrested 2,430 individuals. On these occasions, use of force was applied by our officers a total of 26 times (1.07%). Of these 26, the police never shot a firearm; tasers were deployed 9 times; physical force was used 15 times; the City’s K9 bit one individual; and pepper spray was used once.
SilverSneakers

The Community Center is celebrating the one-year anniversary of partnership with SilverSneakers. This is an accomplishment of which I am very proud. If you are not familiar with the program, Tivity SilverSneakers is the nation’s leading exercise program designed exclusively for Medicare-eligible adults. The SilverSneakers program offers physical activity, health education and social events, helping to reduce health care costs driven by the physical and mental effects of aging and physician and hospital visits. The City offers their SilverSneaker members a full facility membership to include the fitness equipment, indoor walking/running track, free programs, and outdoor swimming pool, and signature SilverSneakers classes, which are designed specifically for older adults and taught by certified instructors. The Community Center currently has impacted over 700 SilverSneakers members’ lives through physical and health education. If you are a SilverSneaker member and would like to join the Sharonville Community Center, please contact Carol Crawford, Program Coordinator, at 513-563-2895.

Frequently Asked Questions

If you are like me, it seems like there is always a train stoppage within Sharonville when I’m in a hurry to get somewhere. We are often asked, “Why can’t the City do something about stopped traffic?” When blockages occur, especially during rush hour, the City’s Police Department attempts to contact the railroad to get an update. We occasionally issue citations as well, under certain circumstances. The problem is, even though City and Ohio laws prohibit blockages over a certain amount of time, Courts have held that these regulations are pre-empted by federal laws under the US Constitution’s Commerce Clause and federal rules don’t set any limit on how long trains can block roads. The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, here in Cincinnati, has held that restrictions like the above would require railroads to shorten its trains’ length, in turn requiring it to run more trains, and that exceeds a city’s local regulatory authority. Railroads are well-aware of these court cases. With that said, we will continue to have discussions with the railroad on this issue.