



City of Seven Hills, Ohio

7325 Summitview Drive Seven Hills, OH 44131

Dear Residents,

First and foremost, I hope that this newsletter finds everyone safe and healthy. Second, with the closing of the door on 2020 and the new year upon us, I hope that the healing process soon begins on all fronts. After witnessing our residents come together so many times in spite of so many challenges, I have no doubt this will once again be the case.

Our City has literally weathered the storm. To start the year, we experienced a 100-year rainfall. This summer, a very rare microburst hit the center of the city. To wrap up the year, the largest 24-hour snowfall in over 50 years blanketed our City. Our City has weathered the COVID impacts better than most. We have managed to keep all essential City services operating safely throughout the year. Further, we have been able to completely offset the financial hardships that were brought upon us from the pandemic.

At this time, the books have not closed on 2020, but we do forecast that we will end the year with general fund revenue exceeding expenses. We will be putting aside this surplus to help pay for expected 2021 infrastructure improvements.

Looking ahead to 2021, you will see robust infrastructure activity, economic development and not only the return, but also the addition of, new community events (as soon as it safe to do so).

The 2020 challenges did not slow our Partnerships and Progress goals down. Below are just a few of the seeds planted in 2020 that will come to fruition in 2021.

Partnerships: The City's request for resurfacing funds through the County 50/50 program was approved for Chestnut Rd. The City will get the maximum \$250,000 allowed under the program towards this project.

We continue to work with the NEORS to restore the natural floodplain in the Donna Rae / Forest Overlook area. You can expect a few more homes to be cleared this spring as part of this project. Last year we won the competitive county supplement grant for a gazebo to be built on Hillside and Broadview. We expect the new gazebo to be ready to serve the community this coming Memorial Weekend.

Further we have applied for two more county grants. The first is a block grant for \$150,000 towards new bathrooms, concessions and storage at Calvin park (by the ball fields). The other is a supplemental grant for \$50,000 towards a new community bus (The current bus is 19 years old, in poor shape and is not handicapped accessible).

For 2021, we have expanded our partnership with Cuyahoga County Public Works for additional sewer maintenance, cleaning and repairs. This partnership has enabled the City to perform significantly more sewer cleaning than we have ever in the past as we have the ability to utilize the County's Sewer Trucks (you may have noticed them working 2nd shift in your neighborhood) and our own in-house sewer team.

Progress: Perhaps most exciting for me personally is the City has taken the initial steps to develop a master plan for our six City parks. With the passing of issue 41, the City will be undertaking major improvements to all our parks. This will be a long-term capital investment that we intend to phase in over the next three years. There will be many opportunities along the way for public feedback, and the major expenditures will all go to Council for approval. In addition to the previously mentioned resurfacing of Chestnut we are prepared to resurface 10 additional streets this year. All together this represents approximately a \$2.6 million investment in our streets.

1. Elmhurst Drive (East Pleasant Valley to Evelyn)
2. Summitview Drive
3. East Clearview Avenue
4. East Decker Drive (Northview to E. Dartmoor)
5. East Hillsdale Avenue (W. 9th to Northview)
6. Glenella Drive
7. Jasmine Drive (H.N. 2938 To Western Terminus)
8. Karen Drive
9. South Main Hill Drive
10. Tanglewood Lane

Our water management task force continues to build upon the framework laid in 2020. Preliminary plans for this year (approximate investment \$2 million) include the following projects:

1. Replace the Cheryl Ann culvert and related repairs in the general area.
2. Lateral and additional spot repairs in the Firethorn, Bayberry and Bittersweet area.
3. Dredge and Clean Calvin Park and Somerset Lane retention basins.
4. Researching an additional water management device near Cresthill Drive

Economic Development: I'm very excited to announce that Erie Bank will be relocating their Northeast Ohio Regional Market Headquarters to Seven Hills. Erie Bank primarily operates as a commercial bank but does offer a full line of retail services as well. The new construction will be built north of Rockside Rd. west of Lombardo and east of Mural. **The facility will have 6,000 sq. ft and will employ roughly 20 people, bringing to Seven Hills a new payroll of north of \$1.5 million!**

The Rockside Rd. Project. This project was recently in the news as the developer of record, Fairmount Properties, was noted for the COVID related developments at Pinecrest. I addressed the City via online memo in October but would like to take this opportunity to keep everyone informed (as this is the first City wide mailing since then). The private property in questions

remains fully owned by LSB Seven Hills LLC. and LSB Seven Hills LLC has contracted with Fairmount Properties for the exclusive right to develop the property. The City and the developer have already agreed to development terms, terms that I believe were incredibly flexible on our behalf (with the interest of making the project as feasible as possible). Perhaps most importantly, we facilitated a \$39 million tax incentive, the most allowed by law for a project of this size. In short, the City has done absolutely everything it can to help get this project off the ground. The ball is firmly in the court of the developer at this point, and they (Fairmount Properties) continue to express their intent to develop the property.

Construction of the first ever Meijer in Cuyahoga County remains ahead of schedule. The last communicated target opening date from Meijer leadership was Memorial Weekend. However, we are all hopeful, given the status of construction, that this date could be moved up. Further great news related to the Meijer project (note this project was 100% privately financed), is that Seven Hills was able to take advantage of tax law to create a TIF/Economic development zone around this construction. What does this mean? It allows the City to recapture an estimated \$2.4 million (over 30 yrs) in new property tax revenue from the Meijer project that would have left our City for other tax agencies such as the port authority etc. This money will now be available to reinvest in Seven Hills infrastructure projects that hopefully will spur even greater investment in our City. With the opening of this store, another 300 jobs will come to the community. Check out <https://jobs.meijer.com/stores> to learn more about these opportunities.

Other expected openings in 2021 are Raising Canes at the Southeastern corner of Rockside Rd and Lombardo Center and the Dairy Queen Grill n Chill at the former Ruby Tuesday location.

Wrapping up, I hope you have seen the progress that started in 2020 all around town. As evidenced by the plans noted above, 2021 promises to be even more active on all fronts: streets, sewers, parks, new community events and new businesses. I leave you with the following: in spite of obstacles, morale is good at City Hall, we as a City are hitting on all cylinders, and we are doing it in a fiscally responsible manner.

Best wishes for a great 2021!

Mayor Tony Biasiotta