

Olmsted Township



Established 1814

www.olmstedtownship.org

26900 Cook Road • Olmsted Township, Ohio 44138

Olmsted Township "A Community of Diverse Neighborhoods"

January 2013

Contact Information

Police Department:
440-235-3335

Fire Department:
440-235-3746

Department of Public Service: 440-235-1011

Building Department:
440-235-4225

Fiscal Officer:
440-235-3099

**Board of Trustees
Town Hall:**
440-235-3051

Get the latest info:

www.olmstedtownship.org

Visit us on Facebook

Inside this issue:

<i>Township Plan: 2013</i>	2
<i>Emergency Preparedness</i>	3
<i>Recreation Study</i>	3
<i>Service Department Update</i>	4
<i>The Balance Sheet</i>	5
<i>Community Connection</i>	6

Master Plan Defines Future Possibilities

As Trustees, we are often asked, "Where is the Township going?" For the past year, with the help of township residents, employees, business owners and members of County Planning, we have worked to create a Master Comprehensive Land Use plan. The plan answers the major questions of what can be built, and where it can be built. Public meetings were a large part of developing the plan.

What is the Plan?

This "master plan" is the legal architecture that defines land use and structural standards in Olmsted Township. This plan demonstrates forethought for action. The plan ensures property owners have advance notice of where particular uses are permitted. The plan ensures zoning is enforced based upon uniform and objective standards. Without this comprehensive master plan, the Township is prey for lawsuits.

This comprehensive approach is important as we move forward with plans for a town center and other economic development projects like the Joint Economic Development District (JEDD). The comprehensive master plan defines, in advance, where permitted zoning classifications and permitted uses can occur. The plan provides safeguards that support a managed, greener, safe and healthy township.



Partnership with County Public Works is helping the Trustees move long dormant sewer and infrastructure projects forward.

Between now and the end of 2017 there is an economic development "window of opportunity." Having a master plan provides a community driven framework for action and decision-making for developers, Trustees, Board of Zoning Appeals and Zoning Commission members to follow in this process.

A Critical Path for Action:

Table 1, *Priorities* below shows the economic development priorities. Residents see completing infrastructure projects such as sewers and roads as essential to a positive future. This is why the Trustees have already met numerous times with the Northeast Regional Sewer District and Cuyahoga County engineers to prioritize and activate long dormant sewer and water projects along Fitch, Bronson, Cook and Stearns Roads. County, state and federal funding packages are being assessed to support needed action.

Table 1: Master Plan - Priority Rankings

Economic Development	Create "mixed use town center" at Stearns and Bagley; JEDD: attract healthcare, biomedical, light industrial; update building codes and zoning
Infrastructure	Sewers: Storm and Sanitary, Sidewalks, Flooding, Road Maintenance
Parks and Green Space	Usable green spaces as gathering places, better use of school and other existing facilities for recreation, incorporate green space, retail spaces, connectors, Quality of Life survey
Quality of Life	Unify, organize, expand, recreation programming for all ages, start annual community festival, community center
Neighborhoods and Housing	Property maintenance enforcement, bikeways and hiking, 55 and over moderately priced housing

Continued on page 6

In the Public Interest: Township Agenda: 2013

Sometimes, change isn't just good, it is necessary. Anonymous



Jeanene Kress,
Trustee



Sherri Lippus,
Trustee



Scott Ross,
Trustee

Since early 2012, we have spent our time investigating, listening and acting to create a stronger foundation for services for all residents. Our approach to governing is to look for not only short term gain but long term benefits.

Engaging With Our Partners

We have worked with our partners in surrounding communities and at the County level to examine how we can make our relationships more cost effective while providing residents with services. This means reevaluating and revisiting long dormant plans for infrastructure: sewers, roads,

and land use. As Trustees, we have met with our business community to understand their needs. Finally, we have worked with our employees and supporting committees such as the Zoning Board and Board of Zoning Appeals to help them understand our success as a Township comes from focusing on the priorities of respect, service, fiscal responsibility and teamwork.

This service driven approach has achieved some successes. The Master Plan, created with the input of County planning and public works, local residents and business leaders, is our legal framework for future development. These conversations will drive progress on priorities such as creation of a Town Center, the development of a business district and JEDD and the expansion and maintenance of our sewers, water and roads.

Where We Stand Today

This is a start. However, changes in the state and county and in the desires of residents mean old rules and realities have changed. The County by state law is required to provide services to a township. The new Cuyahoga County government has changed its view of how these services are to be provided.

The County's outsourcing of road maintenance, ice and snow removal, plus the selling off of the Fitch Road Service Yard and other properties is only the beginning of this changing relationship with the Township.

The state has changed funding for townships. Estate taxes and support funding have been decreasing since 2007. Beginning in 2013, estate tax revenue will end, and other projected state support will drop to about \$12,000.

In 2012 in anticipation of the changes, the Township took steps to reduce costs: freezing overtime and allowing unfilled positions to remain vacant. We have begun a process of wage freezes and increasing healthcare contributions. However, in the long run, these are band aids if we are to continue to provide the level of safety through police, fire and road services, while being able to invest in economic development, sewers and water line installation.

Future Options: Key Questions

In 2013, change will be necessary for Olmsted Township to fulfill its role as a safe and desirable place to live, work and grow. It will be imperative for us to explore options for governance that address fiscal integrity and efficient provision of services to our community.

Some may say now is the time for merger. This option has already been rejected at the ballot box by residents of Olmsted Township. Merger with any one of our neighboring communities will present challenges. *Do we as residents of Olmsted Township want to replace one set of issues with another set from a neighboring community?* We have worked diligently to set a vision for the future of our community. *Do we want to relinquish this vision for the future to someone else with perhaps a different set of priorities?*

Numerous conversations over the past year with County officials, residents and our business community have helped us understand that this time, right now, is our window opportunity for a bright future. As Trustees, we pledge to you that we will continue to explore all options for our future. In the process, we will communicate with you on many levels including our website, Facebook, our newsletters, and community meetings.

Our commitment is clear: ethical leadership, fiscal integrity, efficient cost effective provision of services and an ongoing pledge to make Olmsted Township an outstanding place to live and work.



Fitch Road overpass brings positive feedback. The positive side of partnerships between County and communities resulted in better traffic flow and the reduction of train noise.

Emergency Preparedness: Planning and Practice



Seventy two hours before Hurricane Sandy was due to impact our area, the Township Fire, Police, and Service Departments were preparing. Vehicles and equipment were double checked, fueled and made ready to respond. Off duty personnel were alerted to possible activation and recall. Fire Chiefs in both Olmsted Township and Olmsted Falls were ready to open the Emergency

Operation Centers if needed. The Olmsted CERT team was placed on standby, and was prepared to open any of our designated shelters if needed.

We encourage all residents to follow the FEMA recommendations and prepare their households with emergency supplies in order to be prepared for the next emergency. The article below details how you and your family can prepare yourselves when the unexpected happens.



The Fire Department, along with CERT volunteers, conducted a successful drive.

Tips to Improve Your Family's Emergency Readiness



Superstorm Sandy and the recent blizzard show how natural disasters can disrupt our lives. The *Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)* is a group of well trained volunteers who help coordinate community disaster planning and preparation. They have found individuals and families can do much *ahead of time* to help increase our readiness for disaster. *CERT* recommends each family develop a family communication plan, and a 72 hour supply kit.

In a fast paced world, disaster may strike when the family is not all together. Loss of power may impact cellphone/texting availability. This is why it is recommended your family discuss this situation and designate a rally point where all go to meet in this kind of emergency.

An emergency kit for your car and home are essential. In your car, keep some water, extra blankets, energy bars, and a basic first aid kit. In your home, store a gallon of water per person per day for at least three days. Store food that doesn't require heating or refrigeration, extra paper products, sanitary wipes, flash lights, battery powered radio, extra batteries, and a first aid kit. To learn more details about emergency prep kits or to get involved in community disaster preparation visit www.olmstedcert.org.

Recreation Update

Feedback from a recent survey of residents in both Olmsted Township and Olmsted Falls illustrates that residents believe recreation is less about a place, and more about the coordinated delivery of services for all age groups and interests. Overall, more input is needed, especially from people over 45. Finally, more specific details related to pricing, desired services and venues are needed before decisions can be made.



Joint Shredding events with Olmsted Falls helped residents securely recycle tons of clutter and file fodder. Look for dates for this year on our website.

On the Road: Department of Public Services

At the Olmsted Township Department of Public Service, we really appreciate a second set of eyes – “Yours” – to help keep our road safe. Please call your Service Department at 440-235-1011 if you notice any of the following:

- Dead animals
- Street lights out
- Debris or Litter
- Tree branches that are blocking signage
- Road hazards of any kind



Update on Brentwood Pumping Station and Fitch Service Yard Purchase: The Township is in final negotiations with the County to purchase former County facilities. The County driven process was done using competitive bids. The Township must still perform due diligence to assure funds are spent wisely and there are no hidden costs related to environmental remediation. One property, located on Usher Road, will provide for the establishment of a gateway to expanded recreation. The second property will enable the township to centralize road maintenance services. The property is large enough to support another tenant interested in shared road or vehicle maintenance.

Snow and Ice Removal: The Township is fully prepared for snow and ice removal on the 22 miles of township roads. Ongoing dialogue with the County has put in place a plan to ensure that County Roads: Bagley, Cook, Fitch, Schady, Stearns and others will be plowed and salted.

Crack Sealing of Township Roads: The warmer fall weather enabled our crews to continue to seal cracks in township roads south of Bagley Road. As you recall, township roads north of Bagley were worked on earlier. This “preventative maintenance” helps to lessen the water damage caused by the inevitable freeze and thaw experienced in Northeast Ohio.

The Aftermath of Hurricane Sandy: Hurricane Sandy kept your Department of Public Service busy during the week of her arrival and two weeks afterwards with the clean-up efforts. Road closures were quickly identified and noted and several extra days of branch chipping and dumpsters for clean up were offered to the residents. We worked to coordinate with First Energy to ensure fallen wires were re-secured and electricity was back on for Township residents. The Township will receive about \$17,000 reimbursement from FEMA to help offset our disaster recovery costs.

Teamwork Beautifies Community:

The first annual holiday tree lighting enabled employees and local businesses to partner for the benefit of all residents. Vita-Mix, Lorain National Bank, German-American Cultural Center, Swings-n-Things, Olmsted Ice, Bruno Landscaping and the Trustees and each Township Department donated funds to sponsor a tree. As weather permits, the trees will be relocated to beautify the municipal complex. Department of Public Service staff Martin Gosciewski and Jason Kreps prepare ground while co-worker Michael Dzek (not shown) transports trees to the site.



The Balance Sheet: *2013 Brings Shrinking Revenues*



Shrinking revenue is posing a large problem for most Ohio municipalities. As a Township, our overall operating budget is about \$6 million. Over the past few years, the State has reduced revenues to the Township by eliminating estate tax payments and overall aid. Additionally, the County has begun shifting more of the cost of operations to local municipalities like ours.

The Township Trustees, anticipating this change, put in place a program to reduce overtime, increase the use of part time staffing and increase employee healthcare contribution. The result was our annual expenses were less than revenues by about \$100,000.

The Township will end 2012 with about \$1,000,000 in the bank, an increase over the prior year. However, in 2013 the township is expected to receive \$547,000 less in State funds. In addition, our portion of State assistance to townships has been cut to \$12,500.

In 2012, the Trustees and Fiscal Officer created a Fiscal Review Committee made up of residents. The purpose was to help develop financial systems which enabled the Township to plan and project financial needs. This meant budgeting and internal fiscal controls could be better used.

We are pleased to report these collective actions have improved our processes. Along with the input of other outside eyes, the Trustees have accepted the recommendations of the Fiscal Officer and the committee. These recommendations improve internal controls and improve the chances that budgeted and actual expenses align.

2013 is an important year for the Township. With a new development plan and priorities in place, achieving township's long term goals requires a comprehensive look at our financial situation. This ensures community priorities and funding align. In the past, items such as road maintenance and capital spending for long term needs were sacrificed to meet short term interests. This year, the Township will act to replace aging police and fire vehicles and begin the implementation of a comprehensive road maintenance plan.

Visit our website for more details on our budget and long-term plans.

Shady Farm Growing Green

The first year of a partnership between Cleveland Crops and Olmsted Township has produced a bumper crop of benefits. In addition to the bushels of freshly grown produce, a reservoir and future leaf recycling area will be created using grant funds to support operations next year. The six acre farm is located on Shady Road and employs about 10 - 15 workers in the spring and summer.





Established 1814

www.olmstedtownship.org

26900 Cook Road • Olmsted Township, Ohio 44138

Olmsted Township

Olmsted Township "A Community of Diverse Neighborhoods"

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BEREA OH
PERMIT #333



Community Engagement: The Police Department hosts many events to engage residents of all ages. Coffee with the Chief is a popular event. Tours of the station and vehicles are offered to local groups. Block Watches and the local DARE and School Resources Officer Programs are ways citizens and officers can organize to promote neighborhood and individual safety.

Master Plan continued from page 1

The master plan reflects the needs of a community with a clearer vision of what residents want. With almost half the Township's population being children under 18 or residents over 65, we have a demand for many diverse services. Residents see a place with neighborhood parks, linked by "greenways." They see local shops providing for groceries, dining and employment. They see a vibrant, well-planned business and commercial community that contributes to the funding of the future. They see the master plan is a tool to help us create a future worthy of our dreams.



All Aboard for Fun

Over 80 residents took part in the first annual bus tour of Olmsted Township hosted by Township Trustees. Feedback was great and people made new friends while having a chance to meet Township staff. The idea for the tour came from a local resident. The trip enabled residents to learn more about local history, understand the rationale for economic development and see the many neighborhoods within the Township. Included in the cost of the tour, a lunch was served at the German Club.

*Visit our website to learn more:
www.olmstedtownship.org*