

2019 State of the City Address

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

30 years ago my family moved to the City of Oakwood. Like many of you, we wanted our eight year old daughter and our five year son to attend an excellent school district. We were excited about being able to walk to school, Wright Memorial Library, Dorothy Lane Market and the Oakwood Community Center. We fell in love with our home and its distinct architectural style. When we arrived, we were immediately accepted and welcomed as new neighbors.

30 years ago, I had no idea I would have the opportunity to serve our community as a member of Oakwood City Council. I am honored to begin my 17th year as a member of City Council and my 10th year as your Mayor.

20 years ago, Steven Byington moved to the City of Oakwood. As an architect, he was attracted to the diverse architectural history and character of our housing stock. He was also attracted by the safety of our neighborhoods and the community engagement of our citizens.

20 years ago, Mr. Byington also had no idea he would have the opportunity to serve our community as a member of Oakwood City Council. Steve is also honored to begin his 12th year as a member of Oakwood City Council and his 10th year as our Vice Mayor.

Council members Rob Stephens, Anne Hilton and Chris Epley were born and raised in Oakwood, graduated from our excellent school district and have served our community with distinction. Council members Stephens and Hilton begin their 10th year on City Council and council member Epley begins his sixth 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.

On behalf of Oakwood City Council it is my honor to proclaim that Oakwood continues to be the premier residential community in the Dayton region.

We have this distinction because of our beautiful neighborhoods, our excellent public schools and library, unmatched city services, including public safety, public works, recreation and leisure, and most of all because of our citizens.

City Staff and Volunteers

We have an outstanding city staff led by City Manager Norbert Klopsch. He is recognized throughout the region as an outstanding city manager.

Under the leadership of Alan Hill, our Public Safety Director, we added experienced Public Safety Officers Justin Slone, Jesse Schaffer, Ryan Wells and Chris Slone. Justin Slone earned top honors from the Sinclair police academy in academics, top gun and physical fitness. This has only happened three times in the history of Sinclair's police academies out of about 2,000 graduates. All three are Oakwood Public Safety Officers. Justin joins Sarah Whitaker and Cameron McElroy in this elite group.

We offered our first Citizens Police Academy in 2018. This 10 week program is designed to educate citizens about the functions of our Public Safety Department and the challenges of modern day policing matters.

We look forward to implementing a new program entitled Assisting and Contributing to Oakwood Resident Needs (ACORN) in 2019.

We continually receive notes and comments from citizens complementing our Public Works Department for their courteous and outstanding service. Of particular note, the Oakwood Rotary Club presented its Community Service Award to Kenneth Perkins. Mr. Perkins has 28 years of public service in Oakwood and in the words of Mr. Klopsch, "has distinguished himself as a man with a very strong work ethic and impeccable character. He is recognized on city staff and throughout the Oakwood community as an outstanding employee and leader."

A special mention also belongs to Carol Collins, our leisure services director, who has served our city for 44 years. She and her staff are directly responsible for our beautiful city parks, our designation as a Tree City USA for the 36th year, and for operating our Oakwood Community Center and all of the excellent recreation programs available to our citizens of all ages.

Our finance director, Cindy Stafford, received another Auditor of State Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting. She and her staff continue our tradition of transparency in all financial respects.

Our assistant finance director, Alice Young, received the Jesse Haines Award presented by Montgomery County Auditor Karl Keith. The award was established to acknowledge local government finance professionals who have served with distinction and integrity. Alice Young has served our city for over 40 years and is a worthy recipient of this award.

Rob Jacques continues to serve as our law director consistently providing sound and timely legal counsel and advice to the city manager, staff and to City Council.

Jennifer Wilder joined staff as director of personnel and properties, filling a position vacated with the 2017 retirement of Assistant City Manager Jay Weiskircher. Jennifer is a fine addition to staff.

Dr. Richard Garrison retired as our Health Commissioner after serving our city in various positions for 35 years. We appointed Dr. Stephen Enseleit as only our fifth Health Commissioner since our incorporation as a city in 1931.

We are blessed to have over 100 citizen volunteers who serve on our Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Board of Health, Property Maintenance Board, Budget Review Committee, Beatification and other committees.

Of particular note, Jeffrey Shulman retired as Chair of our Planning Commission after serving our city for 18 years. Jeff was a tireless volunteer who epitomizes what it means to give back to the community in a meaningful way.

Bill Frapwell received the Oakwood Rotary Club Civic Leadership Award. He has served on our Budget Review Committee for over 25 years, the last 15 years as vice-chair. He also served on the Oakwood Public Facilities Focus Group and the Oakwood Comprehensive Planning Committee.

Skip and Martha Ordeman stepped down as co-chairs of our annual Friends of Smith Gardens membership/fundraising drive. Over the last 12 years of their leadership, they raised nearly \$240,000 to support and maintain this unique public asset. Steve Kelch, the grandson of Carlton Smith, chaired our 2018 fundraiser and is excited to celebrate the 45th anniversary of Smith Gardens in 2019.

We will issue our 2018 Annual Report to every household in the near future. This report provides an abundance of information about our city and the services we provide to our citizens. Accordingly, I will not repeat tonight the good news found in the report. Please read this interesting report at your leisure.

Oakwood Schools and Wright Library

Everyone knows Oakwood has great schools but did you know *US News and World Report* ranked Oakwood High School #1 in the Dayton area.

The OHS Academic Decathlon team won the Division II National Championship for the seventh year in a row. They earned their highest score ever competing against students from the United States, China and England.

In 2019, Wright Memorial Public Library celebrates its 80th anniversary. Under the leadership of Director, Kristi Hale, they received their first four-star rating from Library Journal's 2018 Star Libraries report. The index measures circulation, visits, program attendance and public internet

use. Wright Library ranked in the top 1% of libraries under the \$4.9 million in expenditures category. They also completed a \$500,000 renovation and restoration of their beautiful building which is on the National Historic Register.

Notable Community Events

In May, around 350 people participated in the 17th annual Care Walk to fight cancer. The event raised \$15,000 this year and over \$250,000 since its inception.

That Day in May continued its tradition of the pancake breakfast, 5k and 10k runs, parade, car show, games, rides and food trucks.

In August, over 300 people enjoyed the OHS Marching Band at John and MJ Gray's farm in Oakwood.

Dorothy Lane Market celebrated its 70th anniversary with a carnival.

Hundreds of music lovers attended the 19th annual Giving Strings concert to benefit a local charity. The event raised about \$2,900.

More than 1,500 people walked in the 5th annual Out of Darkness Walk for suicide prevention. The event raised over \$60,000 in 2018 and over \$250,000 since inception.

Girl Scout Troup 30149, as part of their Silver Award project, commissioned and raised money to pay for a veteran's memorial sculpture at Orchardly Park to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I.

The Oakwood Historical Society sponsored its first-ever holiday home tour featuring homes on Schantz Avenue, Oakwood Avenue, Volusia Avenue and Southview Road. These homeowners are commended for the pride in their homes and for welcoming others to view these beautiful properties.

On a sad note, Harry Ebeling passed away on July 14, 2018 at the age of 85. Harry, the man affectionately known as "Mr. Oakwood", was a founding member of the Oakwood Historical Society and was instrumental in building the foundation upon which our wonderful historical society now thrives.

We also lost Bill Hager at the age of 89. Bill was very passionate about historical preservation and played a significant role in the creation of The Schantz Park Historic District, Oakwood's first national historic district.

Neighborhoods

We have outstanding diversity in housing choices. Although most of our housing stock is over 70 years old, our homes and properties are better maintained than any other city around and our home values prove it. In 2018, 75% of Oakwood home sales were higher than the County appraised value.

Financial Stewardship

The last eight years of the Governor Kasich administration have been difficult for counties, cities and villages. The State of Ohio broke a 75 year partnership between state and local governments.

Instead of us working together as partners, and recognizing the enormously important role that local government plays in providing services to the citizens of Ohio, the State chose to treat us as an expenditure to be reduced.

Under the leadership of City Council, our outstanding city staff and the advice and counsel of our 35 member Budget Review Committee, we met these challenges to our financial stability.

We reduced expenses each year between 2009 and 2014. We had modest increases in spending in the last few years but that included major capital expenditures to redesign Shroyer Road and replace our 65 year old tennis courts at the Oakwood Community Center.

Our spending in 2018 was about the same as we spent in 2011 and only 2.5% higher than our 2008 spending. We now offer a 90% credit for city taxes paid to other jurisdictions. This important action reduced our continuing loss of revenue when surrounding cities raise their tax rates and ensures that all Oakwood residents with taxable income pay at least 0.25% to Oakwood.

A New Relationship

We congratulate our newly elected Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted. They have publically stated their interest in improving relations with local governments and we will support them with their efforts.

We also support the Ohio Municipal League's 2019 Public Policy Agenda. It includes:

- Restore the Local Government Fund
- Preserve Home Rule
- Respect Municipal Income Tax Authority
- Invest in Public Infrastructure, and
- Partner to fight the Opioid Crisis

Well Governed, Well Managed and Financially Strong

Steve, you and I made a good decision when we moved to Oakwood so many years ago. Rob, Anne and Chris made good decisions to stay in Oakwood.

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.

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 again for the opportunity to serve you.