

Aurora

From the Mayor's Office

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Aurora Welcomes New K9 Officer

Aurora is pleased to announce that the city has a new K9 Officer. Nero, a male German Shepard born on January 29, 2014, and his handler Officer Dale Riley recently trained together at Excel K9 Services in Hiram. Officer Riley and Nero will work together at community events, in the tracking of suspects, in article searches and on narcotics detection, and in crowd control situations.

Thank you to The Rotary Club of Aurora for its generous donation, to Aurora Vet Clinic for providing free care, and to Pet Supplies in Streetsboro for providing dog food free of charge. Welcome Nero!



Dear Neighbor,

A lot is going on in Aurora to make our city more attractive, vibrant, and connected. We used the pleasant spring and summer weather to pave roads, build sidewalks (!), groom parks, and complete ballfields, among other projects. We have also installed new Historic District signs in collaboration with the Landmark Commission and you should notice additional lighting and festive decorations this December.

The Ad Hoc Recreation Committee has done good work this year under the leadership of Councilman Scott Wolf, reviewing options and associated costs for new facilities in Aurora, and no, I don't just mean a rec center! The committee's first recommendation was delivered early on, to develop an outdoor complex of fields, trails and an arboretum at the Hartman Farm on Townline Road. We are having preliminary engineering work done for a potential Hartman project – the operative word is POTENTIAL!

When people read about plans or projects in the paper, hear things out and about, or see something on Facebook, many think they are "done deals" when it comes to city projects or proposals. However, committees, council members, members of the administration, residents and others

are always offering and discussing ideas to move our city forward, and ideas are good, but that does not mean something is a done deal. A project typically takes lengthy vetting through various committees and/or Council, the administration needs to make it a priority as a good idea for the community, and funding needs to be available for it to actually happen. The process in between also gives residents a chance to express their opinions.



Site plans for new commercial construction must be approved by the Planning Commission.

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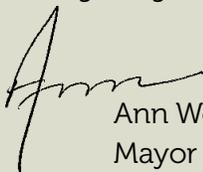
Last year you may recall that the Recreation Advisory Committee – a permanent rec oversight committee that meets regularly – was discussing the possibility of a zipline course at Sunny Lake Park. Boy, that was an idea I don't think I had even heard about yet, and when it appeared in the Advocate I got lots of calls and emails from people who did not want it to happen. I always appreciate

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Mayor's letter continued from page 1 resident input, but ideas are not done deals. I did not like the idea either, and as you know, a zipline course did not happen.

Before anyone gets too excited over a *recreation center*, plans, options, locations, operations, and funding would have to be discussed at many levels. Ultimately the public would likely play a role in its funding, because the city does not have the financial resources to pay for it without a levy, bond issue, or something similar. I believe that taxpayer money – YOUR money – must be spent very carefully, so this discussion would be a lengthy process. This is just one of many considerations on the table, and others may be more urgent (such as road repairs, water line replacements and storm-water infrastructure).

As you might imagine, municipal budgeting is a balancing process, juggling the needs and wants of the community. Council, under the leadership of President George Horvat, has been a great partner in getting things done this year in Aurora. I think the Hartman field complex is a good idea and one worthy of further exploration. That is why we are having a plan done, and at some point we will undoubtedly discuss funding with Council. In any case, look for many new and exciting things to come in 2016!



Ann Womer Benjamin,
Mayor of Aurora

Coming in 2016 - Keep your eye on...

- **More sidewalks – along SR43 from Town Center to Aurora Hudson and connecting neighborhoods and retail areas.**
- **Starbucks – new location at the former BP Gas Station.**
- **Water line on Shawnee – early spring.**



Building Aurora

How does a person with property, a project proposal, or a home improvement plan get through city processes and obtain the necessary permits? Well, the first place to start is Planning, Zoning and Building headed by Director Denise Januska. If the project is for a new business in Aurora, chances are that the applicant has already talked to Jack Burge, Economic Development Director, who can provide possible locations and help guide the proposal through city processes.

Site plans for new *commercial* construction must be approved by the Planning Commission, ably chaired by Councilwoman Kathi Grandillo, after being reviewed by Aurora's Planning, Zoning and Building Department ("PZB"). The building and use must fit Aurora's zoning code. Building deviations or variances with respect to setbacks from lot lines, roadways, and adjacent buildings and height variances must be approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. Planning Commission reviews wetland variances.

Any construction in historic districts must also be reviewed by the Landmark Commission. Exterior details, materials, designs, colors, etc. must be approved by the Architectural Board of Review ("ABR"). Decisions against the applicant at ABR or Planning Commission may be appealed to Council. Permits must be obtained from PZB before any construction commences.

Stormwater Improvement

July 14, 2015, was a hard day for much of Northeast Ohio, and Aurora was no exception. The city recorded more than three inches of rain in less than an hour, qualifying it as a 200-year storm or worse. Neighborhoods, roads, homes and even City Hall experienced flooding, and the city has been working hard since then to address some of the major issues. However, this was a storm that would have overwhelmed the typical storm sewers in any municipality, since such infrastructure is generally designed to handle 5-year to 10-year

storms at best. To build more capacity is expensive and often not able to be installed because the pipes would be too large.

City staff were out during the storm assessing its impact, assisting residents, and identifying and correcting – or at least marking – hazards, and in the subsequent weeks they helped residents clean up debris, repaired culverts, cleaned out ditches and reinforced roadways. Service Director John Trew, Engineer Justin Czekaj and I have

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Thank You!

2015 has indeed been an exciting year. Thank you for your comments, thoughts and ideas. I have enjoyed meeting with many residents, businesses and groups. We have reached out to residents on many issues including flooding and stormwater issues, Geauga Lake opportunities and new proposed development in

the city. Aurora has much to offer and our employees are committed to excellence and service to our residents and businesses. Please feel free to stop by or contact my office at City Hall at 330-995-9126 or mayor@auroraoh.com.

I hope that you and your families have a joyful holiday season and a healthy, safe, and prosperous 2016!



Mayor at the 2015 Blue and Gold Banquet



Mayor and Legion Chaplain Larry Sharp at Memorial Day ceremony
Photo by Ken Lahmers



Mayor with U.S. Senator Rob Portman and Grand Marshal Laura Holman on July 4



The Aurora Raptors visit the Mayor at City Hall



Mayor with city and chamber officials and local business representatives at the ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the new sidewalk on SR82



Mayor with AHS Robotics Team

Message from Council

Aurora citizens serve an important role in the operation of our city government. Currently there are fourteen different committees, boards and commissions whose citizen members are appointed by the Mayor. Seventy citizens serve on these committees, all volunteers who devote their time and expertise.

In addition, all citizens are provided with multiple opportunities to voice their concerns and ideas at various city meetings under rules for citizen participation established by City Council or adopted by the specific committee. During each meeting of City Council held on the second and fourth Monday of the month, citizens are permitted to speak on the legislation on the agenda prior to Council action, and again on any topic before the meeting ends. If Council suspends its rules to pass legislation before three readings, citizens are again given the opportunity to speak to that item.

The members of City Council are your elected representatives who can bring your concerns before Council at any time. Contact them directly or through the Clerk of Council's office at 330-995-9125 or hawksd@auroraoh.com.

Stormwater Improvement continued from page 2

been meeting with residents at their homes across the city to help evaluate particular stormwater issues they may have experienced.

Meanwhile, the city embarked on an aggressive stormwater evaluation program using several engineering firms. With the support of Council, engineer-

ing reports have been completed for East Homestead, Stone Hill Oval in Hawthorn, and Sherwood. Additional engineering work has been approved for Geauga Lake and Hawthorn. Council and the administration will consider the possible implementation of recommendations and their funding over the coming months.



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Please call me at 330-995-9123,
or email me at mayor@auroraoh.com.
Thank you for working with us!

- Police/Fire Emergency** – 911
- City Hall** – 330-562-6131
- City Council** – 330-995-9125
- Mayor's Office** – 330-995-9126
- Parks & Recreation** – 330-562-4333
- Planning, Zoning & Building** – 330-562-9564
- Service** – 330-995-9116
- Water & Utilities** – 330-995-9109



East Pioneer Triangle Renovation

With the move of the circa 1805 Deed House to the Pioneer triangle location, renovations of the Ebenezer Sheldon building are progressing. The city has been restoring the exterior throughout the fall and the Aurora Historical Society led by John Kudley continues to plan the interior renovation. Meanwhile the city is also working on plans to lay out a park surrounding the Deed House. Keep watching for more developments!



Aurora Enjoys Fitch Endorsement

In late October, Fitch Ratings of New York reaffirmed Aurora's AAA financial rating. Fitch noted the city's strong financial management, conservative budgeting practices and demonstrated willingness to reduce expenditures. Healthy economic development activity in the city, strong reserves and low debt were also mentioned in the report which confirmed the award of Fitch's highest municipal rating.

