

Aurora

From the Mayor's Office



July
2017



Photo by Jeff Gerber

Helping to Keep Aurora Safe

Aurora Police Chief Brian Byard successfully completed the 10-week highly selective FBI National Academy program which was held in Quantico, Virginia this spring. Program candidates participate in a wide range of leadership and specialized training. The Chief's participation was a great honor for him, the Aurora Police Department and the Aurora community, and will directly benefit our department's operations. Watch for the department's "National Night Out" August 1, 5-8 p.m.



Police Chief
Brian Byard

Rides Available!

The Aurora Transportation Program continues to provide transportation to Aurora seniors and adults with disabilities. For more information about the program or to register contact the City of Aurora Transportation Program at 330-995-8795.



Mayor Ann Womer
Benjamin

Happy Summer!

Did you know that our beautiful community hosted the 2017 Tree City USA luncheon for Northeast Ohio this year? We welcomed more than 250 guests on May 10 at the Bertram for this annual awards program. The Aurora Tree Commission headed by Deborah Davis, Parks and Recreation and my office planned the event for months, and many guests said it was one of the best ever. Aurora's own Jeff Griff, owner of Lowe's Greenhouse, gave a splendid talk about his family's decades of work in landscaping and preserving and

protecting trees.

That kind of collaboration showcases the best of our community, and government works best when it is collaborative. We have enjoyed similar collaboration with our top-rated schools, which are governed by the Aurora Board of Education, and with Aurora City Council, under the leadership of President George Horvat. Council's support and enthusiasm have generated great progress for our city. More than 3000 feet of sidewalks, road paving, two replaced

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Master Plan Review Commission will be hosting a public meeting on July 25 from 6-8 pm at the Walker Building for your input.

Aurora Business Is Booming

Aurora has been able to attract significant new businesses in the last several years, among them the Metallurgy Division of Pyrotek, which built a beautiful state-of-the-art \$10 million facility in the industrial park and brought 81 full-time employees to the city. This year Piping Rock, a Long Island maker of health care products and vitamins, chose Aurora for its \$11.9 million expansion, expecting to create 350

jobs in the next five years. Two local companies are also eyeing expansion in the city: Trelleborg, which is working on a \$16 million investment bringing about 64 new jobs, and McMaster-Carr, planning a 410,000 square foot building. Other companies are expanding as well, including JIT Packaging and R.P. Gatta Inc. Economic Development Director Jack Burge and I work tirelessly to cultivate these new opportunities for Aurora's future financial stability.

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water lines, new programs like the Aurora Transportation Program, and the creation of Pioneer Park featuring the Deed House were the result of Council's and my shared vision for moving Aurora forward. It has been a productive partnership for our community!

Much is being accomplished. Sidewalks on S. Chillicothe south of Pioneer have been bid and should start shortly. More new water lines are planned, and Geauga Lake redevelopment opportunities continue to be evaluated. Several road and intersection issues are to be engineered for improvements, 3000 feet of new sidewalks are in the works, and the multi-year Hartman recreation complex is under way. While full-time staffing levels have remained consistent, we continue to review our staffing needs as the community grows.

Aurora's strong and expanding business base helps fund our services, improvements and programs through the resulting business taxes, comprising about 77% of the city's income tax revenue. Tax incentives like abatements are one of the key

tools communities use to attract new businesses which, if they come, will then contribute to the ongoing revenue base of the community, including the schools. We carefully consider giving an abatement or other tax incentive, evaluating the size of the company's investment in the community, the stability of the business, and the likely payroll coming to Aurora. The community would not receive any tax money if the business did not come here in the first place, and business attraction is so competitive that tax incentives are critical.

The bottom line is that moving Aurora forward is a balancing act, planning expenses carefully, using resources efficiently and effectively, working with Council closely to align priorities, and maintaining a solid business base so that our revenue stream remains vibrant. We are working hard on all fronts to do just that!

Ann Womer Benjamin, Mayor

Save the Date...

Homearama in Aurora

The Home Builders Association (www.hbacleveland.com) of Greater Cleveland is bringing Homearama to Aurora, September 8-24, weekly Thursday - Sunday. Four newly

AURORA RESIDENT NIGHT
2017 Homearama
\$5 DISCOUNT
 Thursday Only / Sept. 14
 4 - 9 pm

built homes in Barrington Estates will be on the tour which will feature more than 50 booths to view and lots of entertainment for you to enjoy.

The City Is Sound



We continue to chart a course of careful spending, secure reserves, and conservative planning as we move Aurora forward. Aurora has maintained its top "AAA" rating from the rating agency Fitch despite a new and stricter methodology of review. In addition, Aurora's outside auditors just completed the city's annual audit resulting in a clean opinion with no findings. We are fortunate to have the great management and oversight of Finance Director Tim Clymer and his team of competent people who protect our city and its finances.

Hartman Farm Is Taking Shape

You will remember that at the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Recreation Committee last year, the city is undertaking the transformation of Hartman Farm on Townline Road into a wonderful outdoor recreation complex. The plan provides for five soccer fields, four baseball fields, a tree arboretum, a cross-country course, and trails and parking areas. This year Council approved a \$600,000 Hartman budget for the construction of three soccer fields, a parking area, and the arboretum. The city was also able to purchase five acres of land fronting on 82 and adjacent to the Hartman property which will allow for further connections from Hartman south to other parks.

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On The Go....

My office is open!

Thank you for your comments, thoughts and ideas.

Feel free to stop by or contact

my office at 330-995-9126 or mayor@auroraoh.com. Together, let's keep Aurora moving forward!



Aurora Girls Basketball team lauded for winning the Suburban League American Conference.



Mayor thanks Katie and John Monroe, Co-Chairs for the successful Fill a Bag, Feed a Family food collection in April.



State Rep. Sarah LaTourette and the Mayor speak at Harmon Middle School's Mock Congress.



Mayor greets WWII veteran Buzz Wagner at Memorial Day ceremony.



Mayor with Congressman Dave Joyce at a St. Patrick's Day event.



Mayor, Aurora Historical Society President John Kudley, and Landmark Commission Chairman Jeff Clark unveil the Ohio historical marker for Ebenezer Sheldon Deed House at Pioneer Park.



Mayor honoring Sister Lu Haidnick, with Fr. Daprile, for her 20 years of service at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.



Mayor and Aurora Tree Commission member Kim Pease congratulate Arbor Day 1st place winners.

Message from Council

by George Horvat

Our residential growth continues and we have worked with the Mayor and Economic Development Director to bring some new and exciting businesses to the industrial section of Aurora. Council is also working with the administration to bring development to the former Gauga Lake Park area.

Aurora hosted the Tree City convention at the Bertram in May of this year, attended by many dignitaries from surrounding communities. It was a fantastic program and was a great opportunity to showcase our beautiful city.



The 5-year Master Plan Review Commission has been very busy updating the vision for the city for the next few years. Watch for announcements of meetings and please feel free to attend and contribute – this is a document for all of us and our future generations.

If you have any questions or need information on Council activity, please contact Donna Hawks, Council Clerk, at 330-995-9125, or email HawksD@auroraoh.com. Donna can answer your questions or put you in touch with your Ward Councilperson for assistance.

Geauga Lake Attracting Interest

Liberty Ford will be the first new business in the mixed-use area on the Aurora side of the former Gauga Lake property. It will be constructing a \$7+ million campus facility which will be nicely landscaped and set back from 43. Liberty Ford has also been working with the city's Arborist

and will be planting new trees since many were removed for construction. The company, which is moving from Solon, estimates its initial payroll at \$3.7 million.



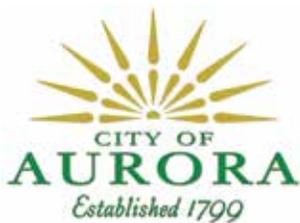


Mayor Ann Womer Benjamin
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Please call me at 330-995-9123,
or email me at mayor@auroraoh.com.
Thank you for working with us!

- 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



Congratulations Jerry Kohanski!

School Board President Jerry Kohanski was selected as this year's Grand Marshal for the July Fourth parade and celebration. Jerry has been a member of the Aurora Board of Education for 20 years and has served as President for 18 years. He has led the school district to great heights in achievement and scholarship and has been instrumental in gaining the district national recognition in the top 1% of Ohio schools.

Do you have your lockbox?



At the suggestion of resident Carol Guthrie, Aurora launched a new lockbox program this spring for the benefit of residents. After researching the best options, the city purchased small lockboxes which hang over an outside house door. The box can hold a key which will only be accessible by fire and police personnel for an emergency and would save your door or window from being kicked in or broken. These boxes can be purchased for \$30 at the Aurora Fire Department which will sign you up for the program.