



MIDDLETOWN OHIO

ONE DONHAM PLAZA  
MIDDLETOWN OH 45042

## Weekly Update to City Council from the City Manager February 7, 2010

### **Culinary Institute**

We continue to have dialogue in order to firm up the vision for this project. As you may recall a few months ago, Perry Thatcher brought groups together to discuss forming a culinary institute at the Manchester Inn. We all believe that a culinary institute in Middletown would enrich the community, benefit the region and serve as a great example of academic institutions coming together to provide services. Funding continues to be a major obstacle for all parties as the price tag is in the multi-million category regardless of whether or not the Manchester Inn is used or a new building is constructed. Since they say “funding follows vision”, we are formulating the vision!

### **Snow Event**

Thanks to our road crews for doing a great job of clearing the snow this weekend. We worked 2 shifts beginning Friday evening, February 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM and ending Saturday evening, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 8 PM. The snow event resulted in 552 personnel hours and 555 tons of salt for a total estimated cost of \$43,000. Mother nature’s gifts can be costly.

### **2010 Local Street Improvement Program \$2M budget**

Great news!! We will be spending nearly \$2Million on our local streets this year thanks to grants received. In addition, we will be resurfacing Lefferson, University and Sutphin for a total of nearly \$8M on street improvements in 2010. In addition, we’ve applied for another \$2.6M in funding – see topic following this for more info.

If Council would like a more in-depth discussion at an upcoming Council meeting, please advise, otherwise, we are geared up to proceed full force!

Utilizing our street pavement rating program, the Engineering Division has selected the following streets for resurfacing as part of the 2010 Local Street Improvement Project.

Aberdeen Dr. – Central Ave. to Inland Dr.  
Bellemonte St – all  
Berwick Ln. – all  
Cambridge Dr. – Manchester Rd. to Wicklow Dr.  
Holly Ave. – Marshall Rd. to Vancouver St.  
Jackson Ln. – Roosevelt Blvd. to Grand Ave.  
Lafayette Ave. – Main St. to Verity Pkwy.  
Lamberton St. – Lefferson Rd. to Corta Via Dr.  
Ronald Dr. – Marshall Ave. to Arcadia Dr.  
Stanley St. – all  
Wicoff St. – Roosevelt Blvd. to Woodlawn Ave.  
Woodlawn Ave. – University Blvd. to Sutphin St.  
Yankee Rd. – Main St. to Verity Pkwy.

These streets total approximately 15 lane miles of pavement. The selection process took into account a number of factors that included the 2008 Pavement Condition Index (PCI) ratings, upcoming gas line replacement projects programmed by Duke Energy, pothole complaints received over the past two years, and traffic volumes. Since the project is funded through the Ohio Public Works Commission, we are required to focus on collector streets and entrances to subdivisions where higher traffic volumes are generally expected. The selection process also attempted to spread the work throughout the City.

As part of this project, adjacent property owners will be required to repair any defective curb and gutter, drive aprons, and sidewalks as per City policy. Property owners will have the option of doing the work themselves, hiring a contractor, or having the City do the work for them. If the City performs the work, the property owners will have the option of paying upon completion or having the costs assessed through their property taxes over a five year period.

As discussed with City Council during the budget process, \$2,000,000 is budgeted for the project which includes a grant for \$1,375,000 from the Ohio Public Works Commission. The remaining balance will come from several funds which include \$200,000 from CDBG, \$200,000 from Capital, \$125,000 from Water, and \$100,000 from Storm Water.

Staff will be identifying defective concrete in the coming months in order to pursue the Sidewalk Curb and Gutter (SWC&G) Program. The corresponding roadway work will commence after July 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **\$2.6M applied for through ARRA Funding for additional street paving**

The Engineering Division has submitted another application for ARRA Funds through the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI). As a reminder, these funds are available only on eligible streets – typically our thoroughfares and heavier travelled collector streets.

Staff had 9 days to develop a project and submit for funding. The new round of funding, called the Jobs for Main Street Act (JMSA) is on a very short timetable, requiring plans and specifications to be submitted to ODOT by October 1, 2010. As a result, projects will need to be relatively simple so we have submitted for another resurfacing project and have included consulting fees as part of the request.

The application submitted is to resurface the remaining two sections of Breiel Boulevard (Oxford State Road to Lefferson Road & Central Avenue to Manchester Road). The project scope is similar to the University Boulevard Resurfacing Project scheduled for this year, and is estimated at \$2.6 million.

## **Pendleton Art Center**

We are narrowing down building choices for the Pendleton Art Center and hope to have a clear direction in the next couple of weeks.

## **Finance Sub Committee**

All Council Members are welcome to attend the Finance Sub Committee meeting this Thursday at 5:00 p.m. in conference room 2C. We will be reviewing the year-end report for 2009.

## **Regional Dean for Miami Regional Campuses**

Open sessions for the public to meet the Regional Dean Candidates are being held over the next three weeks; Council Members are encouraged to attend the sessions if your schedule permits.

2/10, 3:45 – 4:45 p.m., Johnston Hall, Dr. Michael Pratt

2/18, 3:15 – 4:15 p.m., Johnston Hall, Dr. David Pearson

2/23, 3:15 – 4:15 p.m., Johnston Hall, Dr. David Corcoran

## **Green River, Wyoming, Makes It Illegal To Use Cell Phone While Driving.**

In response to a fatal accident, Green River, WY city council voted 6 to 1 to ban the use of cell phones while driving. Bluetooth and hands-free phone use will still be legal. Fines for the first offense are \$65 and \$210 for the second violation, although residents can be fined up to a max of \$750.

**A Note from our friend, Steve Husemann, interim City Manager in Middletown, now City Manager in Mooresville, NC:**

**Steve Husemann is a big zero...** That's right. I am a big zero and I really thank God for it. I just returned from Duke University's Bone Marrow Transplant Clinic and was advised that my M-spike blood protein level is zero. That means that I am in remission. I feel normal, I look normal and I am working full time. I even have hair, (well, as much as before). This final test result is what I have been praying for. God has truly blessed me through out both my recovery from the bone marrow transplant and in the cancer fighting process. He has guided my brilliant doctors both here in Mooresville and at Duke and given me knowledgeable and caring health care professionals in both areas.

I am very thankful for all of you who have kept me in your thoughts and prayers. It has meant a lot to me as I have ridden this emotional roller coaster.

Cancer or not, I am truly blessed to have such good friends. This experience has made me appreciate the fact that every day is a gift from God. Steve

**Seattle Downtown Losing Retail Stores To Suburbs**

Retail dropped by 10% in the past year in the core of the downtown retail district, and in the overall downtown, the drop has been 10% over 5 years. Due, in part, to store consolidations by national chains and increased competition from the suburbs. Note from Judy: a natural evolution that all cities work to counteract.

**Info From the Butler County Treasurer**

Amidst declining property values, a major question this year is, **My property value went down; why didn't my taxes?** When levies or bond issues are passed by the voting public (for schools or agencies), the State Tax Commissioner sets the tax "rate" at a level which produces the amount promised by the levy. For many taxpayers, levies comprise up to 80% of the bill, meaning a reduction in value won't mean a proportional decrease in taxes because the tax rate has been increased to cover any shortfall to the taxing authority. The only proportional tax relief from the reduced value of property is found in the "inside millage" portion, which is 15 to 20% of an entire tax bill, depending on location of property (taxing district).

A frequent question is, **When will I receive my tax bill?** The Butler County Treasurer normally mails bills out in January and July of each year, with due dates at least 20 days later. Due to the recent decline in property values, the Auditor voluntarily revalued properties in 2009. In addition, 2009 was an astounding year for contesting property values through the Board of

Revision process. The mailing of tax bills is slightly delayed this year due to these unusual occurrences. We expect tax bills to be in the mail by February 11, 2010, and they are due March 3, 2010. Of course, most taxpayers do not mind the extra time to pay their bill, but schools and other taxing agencies awaiting their funds are anxious to receive them, so we work as quickly as possible. Yet, considering we're mailing 160,000 bills with various complex taxing computations, it must also be a careful and deliberate process.

Another common question is, **I cannot sell my property for the value it says on my tax bill. How do I contest my property value?** Since the Butler County Auditor is tasked with assessing property values, our office would instruct the caller to contact the Auditor's office at (513)887-3154 or to visit the Auditor's website [www.butlercountyauditor.org](http://www.butlercountyauditor.org) to fill out an application for a Board of Revision hearing. Applications can be filed with the Auditor during a short window, January 1 through March 31, and a hearing will be scheduled for later in the year. The Board of Revision is comprised of the Auditor, Treasurer and County Commissioner, or their representatives. During this hearing, you must present evidence as to why you believe your property is valued too high. While hearings are quick and informal, State Law puts the burden of proof on the taxpayer. Appraisals, purchase price, and sales comparisons of surrounding properties are good pieces of evidence for taxpayers to present to the Board.

Some taxpayers inadvertently pay their tax bills late and find themselves with a penalty. Callers frequently request, **I always pay on time, but paid a day late. Can you remove the penalty?** Nearly all processes and procedures (i.e. "Rules") in the Butler County Treasurer's Office are prescribed by State Law, and interest and penalties affixed to late tax payments are no exception. If your payment is less than ten days late, there is a State-mandated late charge of 5% of your tax bill. A 10% late charge is attached to any payment over ten days late. The law does allow some discretion to remit penalties in certain instances, but if there is late payment history in the preceding three years, chances of penalties being remitted are greatly diminished. To request an application, you can visit our website at [www.butlercountytreasurer.org](http://www.butlercountytreasurer.org) or call our office at (513)887-3181.

Some taxpayers are not able to pay their tax bill when due, and in those cases we may set up a payment plan for past due taxes. Taxpayers without a mortgage escrow may prefer not paying six months worth of payments all at once, and in those cases we will set up an escrow payment plan. For payment plans, simply call the Treasurer's office at (513)887-3181.

In closing, please remember the Butler County Treasurer's Office is open 8am – 5pm, Monday through Friday. Our purpose and mission is to provide Butler County taxpayers with respectful and courteous service, to work with taxpayers on payment plans, and to answer taxpayer questions timely and thoroughly.

## Upcoming Events

February 9	Board of Health meeting – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Room 2C - City Building 7:30 a.m.
February 10	Planning Commission meeting – Council Chambers - City Building 6:30 p.m.
February 10	Police Advisory Board meeting - Police Training Room (LL) 5:30 p.m.
February 11	CVB meeting – Conference Room 2C in City Building 8:30 a.m.
February 11	Finance SubCommittee meeting – Conference 2C 5:00p.m.
February 15	Presidents’ Day – City Building Closed
February 16	Middletown Public Housing Agency meeting –Council Chambers 5:30 p.m.
February 16	City Council meeting –Council Chambers 6:30 p.m.
February 18	Tree Commission meeting – MUM – 105 Levey Hall @ Noon

### **Links for additional information:**

City Manager’s Weekly Update: [www.cityofmiddletown.org](http://www.cityofmiddletown.org)

Middletown Community Calendar: <http://www.calendarwiz.com/middletowncalendar> (copy and paste in your web browser)

Pothole Patrol: [www.cityofmiddletown.org](http://www.cityofmiddletown.org) or call 727-3691 (Option 2)

Have a great week! Judy