

As Chairman of the Genoa Township Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to present the 2016 State of The Township - a reflection on 2016 with a little prospective look into 2017.

In general the state of Genoa Township is very good. Our township continues to be “A Nice Place to Live” which isn’t just our slogan but a reflection of the people that call our township home. I believe our Township’s identity is its patch-work of neighborhoods, the individual homes lining our roads, contrasted with our still undeveloped land, interwoven with our parks and trails, and all supported by our outstanding services. Whether it is the new family looking for their first home, the growing family looking to “move-up” or the empty –nesters wanting to downsize yet stay in the township close to their family, Genoa Township should be a “Nice Place to Live” for everyone.

Being re-elected in 2015 Pat Meyers was sworn in as our Fiscal Officer in 2016 . The relationship between Pat, his Office and the Trustees couldn’t be better. While technically we are two completely separate elected offices - we work together keeping the fiscal operations and management of the township records as our highest priority.

In 2016 new trustee Frank Dantonio was also sworn in. Frank brings to the township a combination of private sector experience with a focus on finances, tax policy and fiscal operations as well as his past public sector experience as a former Big Walnut school board member.

I also want to welcome Connie Goodman being sworn in tonight as our newest Trustee. Ms. Goodman brings a combination of involvement in the township as well as a perspective that neither Mr. Dantonio nor Mr. Gebhardt can provide and it is welcomed.

In addition, Genoa Twp. is now home to the new State Representative for the 68th House District, Rick Carfagna. Rick is the first State Representative from Genoa Township in decades the last being our wonderful resident Joan Lawrence. We wish Rep. Carfagna well and thank him for his seven years of service as a Genoa Township trustee.

Of special significance, 2016 marked the Bicentennial for Genoa Township which provided us an opportunity to look back over the last 200 years the township has been in existence. Passenger rail service was once available, sawmills and grist mills existed on what is now the bottom of Hoover Reservoir, we had a post office. A Bicentennial celebration was held in August, a special logo was designed and painted on the McNamera barn, and a time-capsule was put together so future residents will be informed and possibly amused at life in the “good old days of 2016 Genoa Township”.

FISCAL:

The township continues to be on sound financial ground, but we cannot continue to just do business as usual. Fiscal oversight and management will be a top priority going forward in 2017 and beyond. We will continue to evaluate programs, monitor budget stability and evaluate the structure of our Levy and General funds.

The trustees have established an operating budget for 2017. But, even with monthly financial reports in the trustees will be closely monitoring the General Fund especially, and will make necessary adjustments in order to be under projected expenses at the end of 2017. We have to be cognizant of

“taxpayer saturation”, that is - to keep in mind the resident’s total tax bill - not just the township portion. We also must understand that while “cutting taxes” is politically endearing and an admirable goal, our resident’s total tax bill is determined both; by those within the township; as well as many more beyond our township boundaries. Actions in response just to rhetoric and demagoguery can have long-term unintended consequences we may regret down the road, but we will still look at reasonable ways in which to manage both the expense and tax revenue side of the township’s ledger.

In 2016 Genoa Township enrolled in the Ohio Checkbook.com program through the Ohio Treasurer’s Office. This program is accessible through the Township’s website and shows every expenditure made by the township.

ADMINISTRATION:

The Township fulfilled an important 2016 goal by hiring Leslie Strader as a part-time Communications Director to focus on improving communications between the township and our residents, helping with community events, increasing utilization of social media and leading the effort to improve the township’s website and brand. We are excited to have Leslie, also a township resident, on-board.

The township completed a facilities assessment and an IT assessment in 2016. These assessments were completed to help the township identify needs and to begin a plan to address those needs. We anticipate that work will take place in 2017 to improve or replace certain facilities, especially our police department office and maintenance equipment storage. Our IT systems needs up-dated to address today’s security threats as well as remove “IT silos” making information more accessible to the public and making township operations more efficient.

The Trustees have developed specific goals for 2017. The Departments heads have also developed goals for each department trickling down to goals for each employee. Establishing goals will help ensure the township is addressing priority issues, focusing dollars and staff resources and establish a benchmark from which achievements can be measured, realizing issues will just “pop-up” that will need addressed throughout the year.

In 2016 the Township implemented the Electric and Natural Gas Aggregation programs. Over 4234 households are participating in one or both programs resulting in a savings on their gas and electric bills.

The township continued to be involved with the Genoa Township Business Association and supported the Business Expo.

PARKS:

The township continued its traditions of an Easter Egg Hunt, the Halloween Village, Movie Nights and National Night out in addition to the Bicentennial Celebration. Thousands of residents participated a show of overwhelming support of these events.

New modern restrooms were installed at McNamera Park and Center Green Park in 2016 joining Freeman Park where restrooms were completed in 2015.

A total of 1,875 feet of new trail was constructed by the township along Maxtown Road to Sunbury Road. This new trail will intersect with the new trail being built in conjunction with the Sunbury Road improvements and will tie into the Westerville Trail System and beyond. In addition as part of the development agreement between the township and Epcon a trail/sidewalk extension was completed from Heritage Church west to Tussic Road, providing new trail or sidewalk access along the entire length of Maxtown Road.

ZONING:

A major accomplishment in 2016 was completing the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Up-date. The Comp Plan provides a blueprint for development and land use in the township. While needed updates were made no significant changes to density levels or other major land use concepts were made at this time.

The Trustees and Zoning commission will be embarking on a review and up-dating of the Township Zoning Resolution in 2017. As with the Comp Plan this will be done through a public process but with a more aggressive time-line.

In 2016 the Zoning department worked on 328 individual zoning permits an increase of 61 over 2015.

ROADS & BRIDGES

As usual there were a number of road improvement projects initiated and completed in 2016 either by the township, in conjunction with the county or state or separately by the county or state:

Installation of the traffic signal at SR3 & Plumb Road was completed in 2016 by the state at the request of and in cooperation with the township. This had been the most dangerous and deadly intersection in the township.

Work has begun by the County on the intersection improvements at Worthington Road and Big Walnut Rd.

The County and City of Westerville have begun work on the widening of Sunbury Road south of Maxtown.

Re-surfacing was completed by the county and state on Sunbury Road, SR 3 and the township made improvements to Maxtown Road.

Design work began on much needed improvements to the Mt. Royal & Old 3C intersection by the County, construction is to begin in 2017.

The township completely re-built Rookery Way in Medallion Estates.

Major drainage projects were completed which reduced flooding and standing water on Ruckmore, Charles and Paul Roads.

POLICE:

The township is fortunate to receive continued support from its taxpayers which enables us to have the only township Police department of any township in Delaware County. While the Sheriff Department does an outstanding job throughout the county, they are not able to provide the responsiveness, law enforcement and community policing that the residents of Genoa Township have come to expect and support.

Lt. Russ Ciballi was promoted to Deputy Chief continuing his 21 years of service to the township police department.

The Department was awarded CALEA re-certification – establishing and recognizing the high standard for law enforcement, training and over-all department management we expect in the township.

The township welcomed a new K-9 team funded totally through personal contributions; Handler/ Officer Mike Sigman and K-9 officer “Ben” make –up this great team.

Active shooter training was conducted at the Genoa Middle School in cooperation with the Township Fire/EMS department, City of Westerville, Westerville School district and the county showing the effective cooperation we have with adjacent jurisdictions.

Through the efforts of resident Jay Woodall, our Police Dept. and Central H.S. “The Bridge Program” was implemented to help improve understanding and build positive relationships between students and the police. Thank you!

Community policing continues to be a popular activity through Coffee with a Cop, the Halloween Night Candy Patrols and our House Watch and Call a Senior Citizen programs. Residents continue to express high satisfaction with the services provided by the Police Department.

FIRE/EMS:

The Genoa Township fire department continued with its policy of cross-training our firefighters and EMS to maximize service and efficiency for our residents.

The department responded to 1,939 calls for fire or EMS service in 2016 .

The staff participated in 4800 hours of training and advanced training in firefighting, rescue, and EMS training.

A Tornado warning siren directed at outdoor activities was erected in 2016 at the township’s Safety Services area.

The Chief, in conjunction with the Trustees have been evaluating an EMS billing program similar to that being implemented by the county and other jurisdictions. If implemented, the residents will not pay an added cost for utilizing township EMS services or transport. Any charge would be billed to their insurance carrier which is already taken into account in their premium. The program is planned to be initiated in early 2017.

Discussions continued in 2016 related to the issue of duplicative EMS service between several townships including Genoa, the City of Delaware and the County. Hopefully 2017 will bring some closure to this issue.

In conclusion, this State of the Township highlighted just some of the activities and accomplishments in 2016 with a little preview of 2017.

It brings to mind the familiar analogy of the swan appearing to glide effortlessly across the pond – yet below the water’s surface a lot of paddling is going on to maintain momentum. The goal of the trustees, employees and our many volunteers is to provide the services and community you have come to expect and support; plow the snow, put out the fires, arrest the bad guys, fix the roads, have trails and parks, and manage the tax dollars wisely, do it all with the outward appearance that it just... effortlessly gets done.

You are always welcomed and actually encouraged to look below the water’s surface. You will see a lot of dedicated employees and volunteers paddling hard to ensure you and your family have a pleasant experience on this pond we call Genoa Township -- and we appreciate the opportunity to do it for you.

Thank you