



Message from the Mayor

State of the City of University Heights, Ohio: January 18, 2011

Dear Residents,

Happy New Year! I hope that this year will be a good one for you and your families. As I begin my second year as your mayor I want to give you my perspective on our City. First, some quick facts about University Heights: Our population is 13,000 and our 4400 households have an average size of 2.5 people. We are diverse in ethnicity and language. Our makeup is 73% White, 19% Black or African American, 4% Asian and 2% Hispanic. Ten percent of us speak a language other than English at home.

We are an educated group. Sixty-seven percent of us have a bachelors degree or higher. We are employed mainly in professional occupations. Fifty-eight percent of us are employed in management, professional and related occupations; twenty-five percent are employed in sales and office occupations; eleven percent are employed in service occupations. Our median household income is \$72,141.

My first year as your mayor was a busy one and resulted in operational changes and cost savings for you. I reduced City Hall staffing by 6%; reassigned employees to create workflow efficiencies; appointed a part-time Manager of Senior Services; appointed a full-time Finance Director; updated the website and joined Facebook; established late-night hours on Wednesdays during summer months; cut the cost of producing the community newsletter; cut costs for towels, linens and phone services; purchased items instead of renting them weekly; reduced costs for building maintenance; reduced costs by consolidating the purchase of cleaning supplies and office supplies under one employee; produced a new Service Dept policy booklet; eliminated erroneous billing from the Illuminating Company; and established appropriate fund accounting for the City's books. There was also the cleanup of financial issues from 2008-2009.

Some of the financial setbacks are still being addressed but, all in all, I believe we have a handle on the City's finances. We finished the year with a surplus of \$800,000, approximately \$500,000 more than originally projected in the budget. This increase is largely due to higher than anticipated collections from the Regional Income Tax Agency (R.I.T.A.) in addition to the settlement of a large estate.

University Heights typically has an annual surplus ranging from \$100,000 to \$350,000 so this is a banner year for our City. We need to use these funds wisely and continue cost-cutting into 2011. The 2011 budget I will present to the City Council will contain:

- 1) \$60,000 for payments due on the University Square parking garage bonds. The City is currently several years in arrears on these payments and will make \$60,000 annual payments for the next 7 years to satisfy the debt;
- 2) \$200,000 for a repayment to the County of annual property tax payments from 2006-2009 that were lowered retroactively due to successful appeals to the Boards of Revision by commercial property owners;
- 3) \$100,000 to pay down short-term notes that are rolled over annually;
- 4) \$50,000 to establish a capital fund for equipment purchases;
- 5) \$100,000 for a 2011 road program to resurface City streets;
- 6) \$50,000 to establish a rainy day fund to defray expected cutbacks from the State in monies normally returned to the City as the Local Government Fund;
- 7) \$65,000 for the City's required contribution to planned County road resurfacing projects - the 2011 North Taylor Road resurfacing project and the 2012 Belvoir Boulevard resurfacing project;
- 8) \$100,000 for the Street Maintenance fund; and
- 9) \$75,000 for the Sewer Maintenance fund.

The delivery of services to residents is being evaluated by the Administration for efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Within the next month a residential survey will determine the relative value of various City services. Since the City's budgetary constraints are projected to continue, we need to be proactive in assessing services to residents and careful about making changes. I assure you that I will make no changes to City services without input from residents.

Your City administration is committed to continuing its stewardship of taxpayer dollars. In recent months I have been meeting with the mayors of our neighboring communities to identify ways to collaborate to share resources and lower costs.

The City Council will address the delivery of senior transportation, review the study commissioned in 2009 for rubbish collection, continue its evaluation of EMS billing and consider an update of the zoning code.

Our City has been fortunate in obtaining donated funds and grant money this past year for various purposes: free First Alert fire and smoke detectors; a new pumper truck for the Fire Dept; a free ambulance stretcher; free medical items for the ambulances; free background checks for citizens volunteering for the Community Emergency Response Team; reduced costs for bulletproof vests for the Police Dept; reduced costs for the D.A.R.E. program and the Juvenile Diversion program; free portable digital audio recorders and a laptop computer/mobile data terminal; and a rain garden. In 2011 your City administration will continue pursuing grant dollars to fund special programs and capital equipment purchases for the City.

We have so many things to celebrate about our City. Sound fiscal management has kept our City in the black. Our treasured asset, John Carroll University, continues to focus positive attention on University Heights. Our public schools have received recognition with the State's 2010 Teacher of the Year, Natalie Wester, and the State's 2010 School Treasurer of the Year, Scott Gainer. The Building Department oversaw a large number of home improvement projects with the issuance of 1,836 permits. The Police Department formed a cooperative agreement with nearby cities for SWAT services. The Fire Department performed 340 home safety inspections with the introduction of a residential fire safety program.


Our green initiatives are blossoming. We established a water demonstration rain garden with \$10,000 of grant funds from the NEORS at 2603 Ashurst Road. A ¼-acre community garden on North Taylor Road will open this spring, with available planting sites for residents. An additional garden on Jackson Boulevard is planned for development this year to continue the preservation of green space in our City.

I appreciate the confidence you have placed in me to work with your City Council for the continual growth of our City. It is my intention to continue the delivery of services to you that you have come to expect while keeping costs within our means. As always, if you have any issue or concern about the City please feel free to contact me by email at mayor@universityheights.com or by phone at 932-7800 x 222. Thank you.

Regards,



Susan Infeld
Mayor

 (cut here)

2011 FEDERAL HOLIDAYS

City Hall offices will be closed on the dates listed below. **Trash pick-up will be delayed by one day on the dates marked with an asterisk (*).** Please save this information for future use.

- Monday, February 21 – Presidents' Day ***
- Monday, May 30 – Memorial Day ***
- Monday, July 4 – Independence Day ***
- Monday, September 5 – Labor Day ***
- Friday, November 11 – Veteran's Day**
- Thursday, November 24 – Thanksgiving Day ***
- Monday, December 26 – Christmas Day Observed ***



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