



**January, 2017**

**MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

**Mayor Jude Hehman**

**City of Fort Mitchell, KY**

I hope your new year is off to a great beginning. My second year in office as your mayor was challenging yet productive. Most importantly we learned that our focus in 2017 needs to be on improving communication with residents. Our Facebook followers are up to 2,100 from 900 in 2015 and our e-newsletter subscribers are up to 1,400. While this shows that we are hitting the segment of our population that is electronically connected, I continue to hear from residents that are not and sometimes missing out on city news. Council and I are exploring various cost-effective options to address the communication gap. We hope to collaborate with Fort Mitchell Living Magazine even more in 2017 to help get the word out to our residents.

**2016 Highlights:**

- Council lowered city taxes this year which puts the tax rate at the lowest it has been since 2004.
- Due to increased costs for trash collection, council approved a one-day per week trash pick-up. This was done with the understanding that in 2017, we will seek bids again; this time in coordination with Lakeside Park, to seek better prices. Please be on the lookout for that information.
- Recreation events have been streamlined to be more focused on community-wide events that is paying off. Participation has increased with over 100 residents and sometimes 200+ residents participating in community events for fall and winter events.
- Fortside and Summit Lane road reconstruction project were completed and we collaborated with the Northern Kentucky Water District to resurface a portion of Burdsall Avenue in conjunction with their water main replacement project.
- After receiving community input, a grant request has been withdrawn for widening of sidewalks along Dixie Highway. Based upon recommendations provided by an arborist at the sidewalk meeting, our tree board will be working on a two to three-year plan to replace the aging trees on Dixie Highway.
- Along with council's support, we are in the process of purchasing body cameras for our police officers which will not only help them but also our community. This year we will also be welcoming a new K-9 officer to our team thanks to the very generous support of our businesses and residents.
- Our full-time staff at the fire department increased to nine including the hiring of our first full-time fire chief and minimum staffing was increased to four personnel at nights and weekends to ensure that two ALS ambulances are available 24 hours a day. An ambulance was purchased in keeping with our equipment replacement plan.
- Fort Mitchell joined forces with Kenton County to distribute door hangers with information about the heroin epidemic to every residence in the city and will be looking for other opportunities to increase awareness.

**Goals for 2017:**

- A top priority continues to be the redevelopment of the Drawbridge site. However, there are approvals from the state, such as the Certificate of Need (CON) that Christ Hospital needs to obtain before the project can move forward. In the meantime, we continue to work with the developer on other parts of the project that will be needed once approval is granted.
- The park board held two public meetings on the long-range plan for General Ormsby Mitchell Park in January. I commend the park board for volunteering as much time as they did in making sure all aspects of the three options were considered. They will be making a recommendation to council for their consideration.
- You can see that our downtown business district is beginning to make a comeback. We will continue to support our businesses with any help they need including recognizing businesses such as Stephens Cabinetry and Cummings Dentistry for their investment. We will continue to find creative ways to address the parking issues as well as supporting the newly formed City of Fort Mitchell Downtown Business Association.
- 2017 road projects include reconstruction of the remaining portion of Burdsall along with Allentown and Thompson this spring and summer.
- Most importantly, as I mentioned earlier, our focus is going to be on improving overall communication with residents.

Last year I promised you that we would be challenging the status quo and part of that process involves discussing ideas with the community that are not always comfortable or accepted. I can say with full confidence that while we may propose new ideas, we have always been respectful of what the community desires and we always listen to the concerns and suggestions of our residents. I hope that this year you will continue to support me and our councilmembers in the challenges that lay ahead of us. If there is anything we can help you with, please reach out to me or our staff that always goes above and beyond to help our residents. I look forward to serving as your mayor another year!

Sincerely,

**Mayor Jude Hehman**