



## **January 2018 MAYOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

At the beginning of every year I write this column as a report to the community outlining what we accomplished last year and what you can expect to see this upcoming year. I hope you find this summary informative. As you know, we are a much sought after community and will always experience some level of change but my goal has always been to make sure that this change aligns with your vision for our community. On that note, this upcoming year I encourage you to get involved and share your thoughts on the issues our community will be facing.

In 2018, pensions are going to be a big topic of discussion at the state and local level. As a city we have been paying into the County Employees Retirement System (CERS) for years. However, the pension system overall is underfunded and our legislators are working diligently to find solutions. As chairman of the Kenton County Mayors Group, I have collaborated with other mayors to present our point of view and offer thoughtful solutions. This is an important topic that I hope you keep on your radar and voice your opinions on.

We are beginning the process of developing a Strategic Economic Development Plan for our historic commercial district around Greyhound Tavern. An impressive 3.5 million dollars has been privately invested by our businesses in the last two years. The goal with this project is to develop strategies in collaboration with businesses and residents that will look at streetscape improvements, potential incentives, traffic, parking and other issues. We have established a committee of residents, business owners and elected officials who will oversee this project. There will be two opportunities for public input where I hope you will join us and offer feedback.

We are also working closely with the Northern Kentucky Water District to address the water main replacement project on Highland Avenue. The portion of water main from Longmeadow to the end of Highland will be replaced the first quarter of this year. The second phase of the project will be from Dixie to Floral Avenue. We are also planning on several road resurfacing projects this spring including Pleasant Ridge, Greenbriar and Grace Avenue. Work is also underway to install sidewalks on Orphanage Road. Easements are being negotiated after which the project will be bid out. We are waiting to hear from the state regarding the timing of the left turn lane project on Dixie Highway to Beechwood Road. Our goal is for this to be a summer project when schools are closed to minimize traffic disruption.

The Park Board is finalizing their design for General Ormsby Mitchell Park based on the feedback they received at the two public meetings last year. They are planning on having one more public meeting this summer to unveil the final design. They currently intend to start making improvements in 2019. Due to the huge success we have had in community style recreation events, we are working on a family focused event called Party in the Fort that is scheduled for May 18<sup>th</sup> at the DCCH grounds. A very popular band has been booked for the event along with several fun activities. This event is to celebrate our city and I hope you will consider volunteering to make this event a great success.

As you can see, there are many opportunities this year for you to get involved with this community. If these are not your priorities but you have an idea, I encourage you to get your neighbors together, build some support and bring it forward. If it is a community priority, we will do everything we can to get it done. I look forward to hearing from you and serving as your mayor another year!

#### 2017 Accomplishments:

- ✓ For a third year in a row we did not increase property taxes. We tightened our spending more so than before by finding efficiencies and looking for opportunities to partner with adjoining communities.
- ✓ Hired six full-time firefighters to ensure adequate personnel are available to provide fire and Emergency Medical Services.
- ✓ Applied for a grant to construct the missing section of sidewalk between Grandview Tavern and Fort Mitchell Place Condominiums in collaboration with the City of Crescent Springs and hope to hear about the grant in early spring.
- ✓ Major reconstruction of Burdsall, Allentown and Thompson was completed.
- ✓ Several community cookouts/events were held by our police department to engage the community. In addition, side street traffic enforcement was increased.
- ✓ The Tree Board issued an RFP and selected a consultant to develop a master plan for the replacement of trees along Dixie Highway.
- ✓ Our recreation events continue to be a huge draw for our community. By partnering with the downtown business association we were able to draw 300+ people to our annual tree lighting event. Fort Mitchell Baptist Church and LiveWell Fort Mitchell have been great partners on our Halloween event drawing 200+ people to that event. Annual recreation report with cost and attendance information is posted on the city website.
- ✓ Established partnership with Fort Mitchell Living to provide our community with yet another source of information in addition to our e-newsletter, social media and website.

**Mayor Jude Hehman**