

2012 STATE OF THE CITY
Gemini Center ~ Fairview Park, Ohio
Mayor Eileen Ann Patton
March 14, 2012

Our mission will continue and that is – the City of Fairview Park, its Mayor, Council and employees, will enhance the quality of life for all residents by providing excellent service in an efficient and cost-effective manner. We are a desirable community because we are a safe community, we have good planning, a great quality of life, good housing choices, excellent schools, nationally recognized library, perfect location to downtown, airport and highways, an open and responsive government, great staff of employees, and we believe in responsible management of your tax dollars.

I would like to update you on the Financial State of our city. Our General Fund dollars are spent on personnel, equipment, utility bills, and the general operations of our departments. The general fund generates dollars mostly through income tax. Our general fund income tax has declined over the past three years from \$4.7 million in 2009 to \$4.4 million in 2012. The loss of income tax from NASA is the largest cause. Our Street Program, funded by a quarter percent income tax voted on by the residents, has seen the same decline from \$970,000 in 2009 to \$884,000 in 2012. And our Gemini Center, funded by ½% income tax, also felt the decrease in revenue from \$1.8 million to \$1.7 million in 2012. Due to

the steps taken during this difficult year, we ended 2011 with a million dollar carry over balance in both the General Fund and the Gemini Recreation Fund.

However, property values get reassessed this year and Columbus has informed us that the estate tax of approximately \$400,000 that we receive is in its final year, delinquencies in property tax payments will cost the city \$148,000 and the local government fund will be cut by \$302,000 this year.

Our Finance Department recently received the distinguished CAFR award citing excellence in financial reporting.

The Director and I recently met with financial experts in reviewing our bonds on the Gemini Project and we are now in the process of presenting to city council an ordinance that could save the Gemini/Recreation Fund an estimated total of \$80,000 per year by refinancing this note from 2005.

Union contracts were negotiated for a two-year period last year with the union agreeing to a 0% increase in 2011 and a 1% in 2012. Health insurance premiums for employee contributions were increased to \$186.00 per month for a family and \$93.00 per month for a single. Thanks to our police, fire and service unions, along with Bill McGinty, our Assistant Law Director, and Director Rocco for the many meetings that took place resulting in this final agreement.

Our small but effective Building Department oversee permits, maintain housing records, register contractors, conduct inspections, issue occupancy permits

for new structures and businesses, and handle exterior property maintenance issues.

Forty more permits were requested in 2011 than the previous year, for a total of 1,403. Construction for 2011 was valued at over \$5,000,000.

This department implemented a program to inspect rental homes in our community. We have eight less rental homes than the previous year and of the 247 registered rental homes, 210 were issued a license during this period, collecting \$29,400.00. Apartment inspections are also made each year in concert with our Fire Prevention Bureau. When violations are found, the property owner is given 30 days to make correction. We have 39 apartment complexes, totaling 82 buildings with 1,783 units offered for rent. In 2011, a total of \$20,396.00 was collected.

Five new garages were built, 12 decks, and 35 homeowners had major alterations made to their homes. We appreciate the investment that our residents continue in our community.

Our Fire Department has seen many changes this past year. The year began with a new Fire Chief, along with promotions in rank of captain and lieutenant. Six firefighters retired and three have been recently hired. Fire Department personnel have remained very busy again this year with a total of 1,785 runs which

include squad, fire and miscellaneous runs. We had a total of three major fires in 2011.

Our Police Department replaced its entire inventory of handguns by purchasing Glock 40 calibers. We acquired a portable handheld fingerprint identification system, four evidence technician kits, three new police cars, three new tasers, a Motorola portable radio and a new camera/tv security system for the Police Department, City Hall and the Senior Center. The Police Department now has a 24/7 Operation Medicine Cabinet program for our residents. This secure, drop-off box located in the police station provides an easy and safe way to dispose of prescription medication pills. Our police officers stayed very busy last year with an increase of 258 more calls totaling 12,407 calls into our Police Department.

Our Senior Center is continues to grow in popularity! In 2011:

27,000 visits were recorded, along with

7,600 priority van rides,

11,300 hot lunch meals.

150 – \$50 vouchers were given out for our farmers market.

1,300 seniors received free computer classes

180 received flu vaccinations

And 50 residential yards were cleaned-up through our Seniors helping Seniors program with the help of the students at FHS.

When many of our seniors are not at the Senior Center, they can be found at the Gemini Recreation Center. In the fall of last year, we presented to our seniors the Silver Sneakers Program. There is no cost to the participants, as their insurance pays the center \$3.00 per visit. After six months, we have 565 Silver Sneakers members.

Late last fall, our Recreation Director left after 12 years with the city to oversee the building of the new YMCA being constructed in another community. A new Recreation Director has been approved by City Council and will officially join the team on April 16.

In 2011,

6,285 members filled our center

50 programs for youth and adult were offered

And 16 variety of fitness classes were welcomed

In January 2011 we hosted a “New Membership Drive” and 101 new members signed up. We welcome each of them and we hope they enjoy the Gemini center as much as many of us do.

Our Service Department activities focused on getting things done with less. In many instances, this activity took the form of scaled back projects while seeking outside funding to get things done without city money.

Instead of the normal Annual Street Program which typically costs up to \$900,000, the city selectively chose six streets for full depth concrete repairs and joint/crack sealing at selected locations for a total street cost of \$469,125.00.

In an effort to reduce costs, particularly overtime, Service continued the 24-hour, three-shift operations in the winter months. We used 1,213 tons of salt this winter, 605 tons less than the previous winter at a cost of \$55,300,391.

Last week, City Council passed legislation with regard to our rubbish collection contract with Republic Waste. This new contract will improve our recycling efforts with increased service for yard waste and reduce our costs per household. We anticipate rolling out this new automated program in July of this year and it will include each residence receiving a trash container and a recycle container that will be automated. Yard waste will be picked up separately and will go to a yard waste recycling center. Our new contract will be \$11.84 per household, vs. the previous amount of \$14.40 per household. Last year, the \$10.00 per household was extended for two years as this revenue helps off set our trash/recycle cost of almost \$1 million. Public meetings will be set.

Efforts towards “greener” Fairview Park along with keeping harmful waste from entering our land fills, we offered two special recycle/shredding days last year. We collected shredded paper, tires and household hazardous waste.

Due to the popularity of this program, this year we will be offering drop-off on the First Monday of each month. We will once again have two shredding-only days, with the first one taking place on Saturday, April 28th.

As we continue to seek out grant dollars, last year many of our city trees were diagnosed with the ash tree disease. Eighty-four new trees were replaced at a cost of \$22,298, with a grant from ODNR for \$11,700. We also received \$71,500 to replace the old city hall boiler which has been operating since the 1960’s. We have recently taken steps to apply for a \$150,000 full grant from the County to implement a streetscape for Lorain Road between West 223 Street and the North Olmsted border. We are hopeful for good news by early summer.

Last year we purchased a Ford F550 truck and a tractor at the cost of \$56,895.00.

The year 2011 also marked a year of tremendous challenges for the Service Department as they faced many obstacles thrown at us by Mother Nature. Extreme weather events began in February and continued throughout the year.

Our Sewer Projects last year totaled \$ 434,042 and they included a variety of projects and phases.

Phase 1, 2 and 3 saw the cleaning, televising, grouting, smoke testing of the sanitary lines on Esther Avenue, and West 227, 228 & 229 South, West 227 & 229 North. We are preparing for additional sewer work this year at a cost of \$584,000.

Beginning this summer, we will participate in a “first ever” joint sewer cleaning program that will increase productivity and allow us to clean more sewers in less time with less manpower. This example of a “city to city” collaboration could be a model for all 59 cities in Cuyahoga County.

Economic Development – Development Director Jim Kennedy We are pleased to report that a total of eleven new businesses opened in Fairview Park, including Earth Fare at Westgate, Menchies Frozen Yogurt, Financial Network, Homecare Network of Ohio, Rival Gear, Cox Solutions, North Point Renovations, Guys Pizza, Huntington Bank and NC Home Decor.

For 13 years, I have been reporting on the ups and downs of our struggle to keep the two NASA buildings up and operating in our city. As I have reported in the past, NASA Glenn removed all of the civil servants from this building and relocated them to another community, leaving one vendor as the only company on this site. We were recently notified that the remaining business will be vacating this building as well. They will be making this northern campus available to private developers through the public auction process. It is our hope that we will

be reporting to you within the year that a sale has taken place, as this area is located in a prime location near the airport and the highways.

This past year found us in the exciting process of “branding” our downtown area with the addition of a new owner, Lamar Management, at our shopping center. This year, new, positive changes will be happening at the center that will include the demolition of the two-story building at the western end and a new façade.

The sale of the Cleveland Motel also took place last year and was sold to North Coast Credit Union. This once blighted site, sold for \$150,000.00, North Coast’s total investment to our community is \$840,000, along with a \$590,000 payroll.

We are pleased to update you on the old Garnett School site. Last year, the City purchased the Board of Education Building and Garnett School from the Fairview Park Schools for \$1.00. This sale became a transfer in return for twelve years of no payments for use of the Gemini Center per the joint use agreement. The City, in turn, sold the property to O’Neill Management for \$720,000.00. Mr. John O’Neill, a Fairview High School Graduate, will be constructing a nursing and assisted living facility. Total investment including new construction, furniture and fixtures total over \$15 million with a new payroll of \$4.8 million, which will result in annual income tax of \$100,000 thousand and new property tax of almost \$500,000 annually. This project is very important and exciting for our community

as it will fulfill three needs. The first is the development of this vacant property as designed by the Gemini Project. The second is for revenue that the city and the schools will receive in the form of income tax and property tax. And lastly, this project will allow many of our senior residents to remain in our community in their later years.

This year brings an exciting new program to our community. The 2012 City Master Plan has been implemented and the first meeting took place a couple weeks ago. This team of 19 residents representing neighborhoods, the business community, City Council, schools and churches will help set a clear vision for the city that is reflective of the values of Fairview Park citizens. They will help “set the table” for future development and focus on strategic plans relevant to the needs of our community. Funding for the plan has been made possible through a grant from Cuyahoga County.

Last year, on May 12, the city was honored to participate in the first ever Business Showcase, sponsored by our Fairview Park Chamber of Commerce where businesses were on display for visitors to review products and services offered to our residents. We look forward to the Second Annual Showcase being held at the Gemini Center on April 26.

Our very popular city e-newsletter has nearly 800 subscribers.

Today is about celebrating our town and I am sure many of you in this room enjoyed how beautiful our town looked last year with the beautiful hanging baskets throughout our main street and at the Gemini. Twenty-eight baskets were beautifully displayed. To help defray the cost of the beautiful flowering baskets, we are offering “sponsorships” of each basket at a cost of \$45.00. As we only have a limited number of baskets for sponsorship, you don’t want to miss out on this great opportunity.

Thank you for spending the afternoon with me, thanks to all our city employees for their dedication to our community. Without them, reports such as this would not be possible.