



From the Mayor's Office

July 2022



Dr. Tomko Named July 4th Grand Marshal

This year's Fourth of July parade Grand Marshal was Dr. James W. Tomko, OD. Jim and his wife Joan have been residents of Aurora since 1989 and he started his thriving optometry practice here 32 years ago. Dr. Tomko serves as current President of Aurora's Moebius Nature Center and The Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland, for which he oversees management of three wildlife sanctuaries in Aurora. He has served on Aurora's Tree Commission since 1994 and is a 32-year member of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, currently serves as treasurer of his church, and regularly supports numerous community groups and organizations.

Jim has contributed so much to this community for decades. Congratulations and thank you Dr. Tomko!



Jim and his wife Joan are pictured with the Mayor on the 4th of July.

Dear Neighbor,

With summer in full swing, it is really wonderful to see so many people enjoying the Aurora Splash Pad, our sidewalks, our many parks, and our restaurants and retail establishments. This is a great hometown, and it was truly fun celebrating our great community with all of you on the Fourth of July. Kudos go to Parks and Rec Director Laura Holman, Fire Chief Dave Barnes, Police Chief Brian Byard, and Service Director Harry Stark and their staffs for working so hard to make the holiday not only special but safe in Aurora. Thank you all for a fabulous holiday weekend!

The Master Plan Review Commission, comprised of nine residents, has been working diligently on its mission to review and update the city's 2017 Master Plan. Such an update is required by the city's Charter every five years, and I have used the 2012 and 2017 Master Plans for ideas and guidance

as we move forward.

Early in my tenure we increased off-street parking in the center of town and rezoned the Geauga Lake area to mixed-use, pursuant to recommendations in the 2012 Master Plan. Among the 2017 Master Plan recommendations accomplished, we created a Joint Economic Development District ("JEDD") with Bainbridge Township for the Geauga Lake Park property in Bainbridge, continued to purchase land to protect greenspace, and installed sidewalks and decorative lighting in the center of town to further identify and enhance the "Town Center." Thank you to Commission Chairman Mike Keckan, Daisy Alford-Smith, Dale Moravec, Margaret Emrick, Julie Lazor, Deborah Scharler, Brian Miller, Cheryl Dierckman, and Chris Strecker for their commitment to this important undertaking.

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Remembering Ward Five Representative Kathi Grandillo

Ward Five Council Representative Kathi Grandillo passed away on January 18th. Kathi was a member of City Council since 2012 and was an active leader on many city and community committees. Kathi's engaging personality and commitment to the community served her constituents well. She will be remembered as a loyal friend and dedicated public servant.

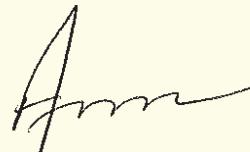
Mayor's Letter continued from page 1

In August we will be bidding adieu to our longtime Fire Chief, David Barnes, who is retiring after 45 years with the Aurora Fire Department and 20 as its Chief. Dave has served this community exceedingly well, and there was no question in my mind that I would reappoint him as Chief when I became Mayor in 2014. He has cultivated a dedicated, professional staff, managing well through multiple key retirements and hiring capable firefighter/paramedics for our city. Early on in my tenure, Chief Barnes saved an employee's life at the scene of a catastrophic accident, and he has saved lives routinely. He is always

a cool head in challenging situations and is known for his down-home demeanor and quick assessment in any emergency.

Dave and his wife, Jan, have raised two children in Aurora, Brad and Devin, and Dave's mother lives here as well. He is a beloved figure in our town, and I personally want to wish him much fun and relaxation in his retirement!

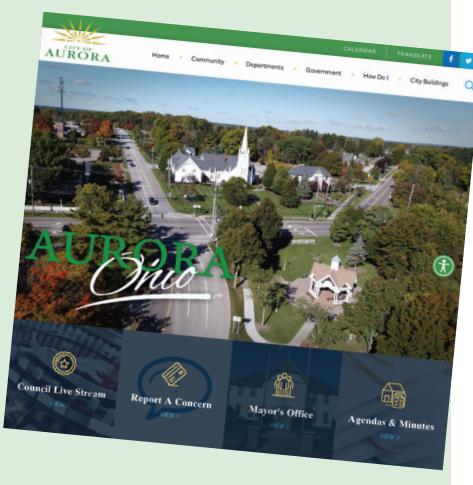
Aurora Strong!



Ann Womer Benjamin, Mayor

New City Website Goes Live

The city launched a new website in June although the auroraoh.com domain remains the same. The website is now more accessible for users and will allow departments to share information with residents with increased efficiency and accuracy. A new feature enables residents to report a concern on the website and the issue will then be forwarded to the correct department and addressed promptly. This feature is not for emergency issues.



Voters Support the Fire Tax Levy Renewal



Fire Chief David Barnes

In May, the voters approved the renewal of the 1.5-mil Fire Paramedic levy. This levy generates approximately \$965,000 annually which the city uses for five firefighter/paramedics and various equipment including heart monitors, rescue vehicles, turnout gear, and cot loading systems. Thanks to the voters, the Fire Department will continue to be able to maintain adequate staffing and provide exceptional emergency services because of the support of this community.

City Connectivity Continues

In an effort to make Aurora a more safe and walkable community, a new sidewalk has been installed on Aurora-Hudson Road from the existing sidewalk near Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church to the existing sidewalks on Greenmen Way. With this new 760 feet of sidewalk, the city has installed more than 2 1/2 miles of sidewalks since 2014.

Signalization Project Almost Complete

Aurora's traffic signal system is being upgraded through a major signalization project to synchronize lights and more efficiently manage traffic flow. The city applied for and received an AMATS grant for the project, which came in at \$3.165 million, under original estimates, of which the city's share is 20%. The city has 17 intersections with signals, one traffic flasher and eight school zone flashers. Lights and poles have been installed but the actuators, which trigger lights based on traffic, are still being installed. The project is expected to be completed later this summer.

Fireworks are Prohibited in Aurora

As a reminder to residents, the City of Aurora does not allow the discharge of consumer grade fireworks within the city limits. Only shows by licensed technicians who have obtained a permit are permitted. A recent change in Ohio law now allows discharge in other areas of the state but many cities like Aurora have opted out. To protect residents and homes, Aurora enforces its ordinances prohibiting the private discharge of consumer grade fireworks. To report an illegal display, please contact the Aurora Police Department at 330.562.8181.

[>>auroraoh.com](http://auroraoh.com)

The Best of Aurora

Thank you for your comments, thoughts and ideas. office at City Hall at 330.995.9126 or mayor@auroraoh.com.

Please feel free to contact my



The Mayor is pictured with Aurora Seniors during her Senior State of the City.



Mayor Ann Womer Benjamin swore in the nine members of the 2022 Master Plan Review Commission earlier this year.



The Mayor, a member of the Legion Auxiliary, filled in Memorial Day carrying the colors with the VFW and American Legion veterans.



Mayor Womer Benjamin swore in Aurora's first new Police Officer of the year in January with Chief Brian Byard and members of the Aurora Police Department present for the event. Congratulations and welcome to Officer Nathan Boston!



New Eagle Scouts Matt Singleton and Nate Ruehr each received a proclamation at their ceremony in April.



As a part of regular neighborhood outreach, the Mayor met with the Villas of Bertram HOA members pictured above, the president of which is Rama Rao Panguluri (3rd from L).



New Ward Five Council Representative Sarah Grdina Gilmore was sworn in this past February by Law Director Dean DePiero.



The Aurora Athletics 12U travel baseball team recently won the Nations Baseball Ohio State Championship tournament in Massillon. The Mayor enjoyed visiting with the team and coaches, Tim Logan and Dave Lieberth, before the team played a game at Hartman Park.



Fill a Bag, Feed a Family Co-Leaders Sam Russell Jr., Bruce Harris and Martin Swartzentruber are presented with a proclamation from Mayor Womer Benjamin for their amazing and helpful community food program.



The Mayor helped to welcome Ace Hardware owners Shana and Jason Wallenstein during their official grand opening in April. Instead of a conventional ribbon cutting, though, the Mayor used a chain saw to cut the wooden 2X4 sign.

[>>auroraoh.com](http://auroraoh.com)

Message from Council

Welcome to the summer. I hope that everyone enjoyed the city's 4th of July festivities.

City Council has been hard at work making plans to install a new audio visual system in council chambers. The current system has been in place for approximately 17 years and is in desperate need of an upgrade. We are hopeful that our new system will be installed in time for our August 15th City Council meeting. The goal of this audio visual upgrade is to allow for easier viewing and community interaction, not only during City Council meetings, but also during any city committee or board meeting. The new system will include enhanced functionality for presentations, broadcasting, recording, and web streaming.

Please reach out to your council representative with any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

George Horvat
Council President

Sunny Lake Dam Rebuilt

Since an inspection by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in 2014, the city has commissioned studies of Sunny Lake Dam to determine the most effective reconstruction of the failing dam. The first phase was creating a model to evaluate the function of the lake and its outlets. The second phase included design concepts and provided recommendations for a reconstructed dam to ODNR. ODNR supported one of the design concepts, so the city hired an engineering firm to design the new earthen dam and outlets for Sunny Lake. The project's construction began earlier this year and as of July 1st, the walking path was reopened and the newly installed dam was operating.



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contact the Mayor or
your Council
representative.

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Keep in Touch!

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or email me at mayor@auroraoh.com.

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City Council – 330.995.9125

Mayor's Office – 330.995.9126

Parks & Recreation – 330.562.4333

Planning, Zoning & Building – 330.562.9564

Service – 330.995.9116

Water & Utilities – 330.995.9109

Ward 1 – Brad Duguay, wardone@auroraoh.com

Ward 2 – Dennis Kovach, wardtwo@auroraoh.com

Ward 3 – Reva Barner, wardthree@auroraoh.com

Ward 4 – George Horvat, wardfour@auroraoh.com

Ward 5 – Sarah Gilmore, wardfive@auroraoh.com

Ward 6 – Harold Hatridge, wardsix@auroraoh.com

At Large 1 – John Kudley, atlarge1@auroraoh.com

At Large 2 – Peter French, atlarge2@auroraoh.com

At Large 3 – Scott Wolf, atlarge3@auroraoh.com

Upcoming Community Events

8/2 - National Night Out and Truck and Tractor Night hosted by the Aurora Police Department along with the Aurora Parks and Rec Department from 5:00-8:00 p.m. This free, family friendly event will be held at Kiwanis-Moore Park and will have many city vehicles and equipment on display. City personnel will be grilling food and prizes will be available.

8/6- Josh Gilbert Band Drive-Up Concert at Hartman Park from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

9/17 – Wishgarden Concert at Veterans Memorial Park

from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

9/18 - The Classic Car Show at Sunny Lake Park from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

10/1 - Fall Festival and Business Showcase at Sunny Lake Park from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

10/15- The next Shred Day will be held at the Aurora Service Center parking lot at 158 West Pioneer Trail from 9 a.m. to noon. This free secure document shredding event is for residents only and there is a limit of six boxes per household.

10/31 - Trick or Treat from 6:00-8:00 p.m.