

Sycamore Township

NEWS

Winter 2017

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As we approach the end of calendar year 2017 and the beginning of a new year, it's a good idea to take stock of all the positive things that have happened in Sycamore Township during the past 12 months.

We place a high priority on our safety services, and we're pleased to have added four fulltime Sheriff's Deputies (along with the funding of a narcotics officer) and nine Firefighters/Medics to serve you. Staffing at our fire stations is higher than most surrounding communities, and we appreciate the prompt response times that all our first responders have helped us achieve. And we added these resources without the need for additional property taxes, meaning that Sycamore Township residents still pay the lowest property tax millage of any township in Hamilton County. It's been more than 11 years since the last property tax levy—no other township can make that claim.



Denny Connor, Trustee

The summer months were busy at our parks, with a steady stream of shelter rentals, and almost constant use of our fields for baseball, softball, lacrosse and soccer. Events like our annual Festival in Sycamore and Luminaria, and the availability of walking paths in our parks, give all of our residents the chance to have a pleasant outdoor experience in Sycamore Township.

Our Maintenance staff does a terrific job of keeping our parks in pristine condition, and we appreciate their efforts. They're now wrapping up a busy leaf collection season, and preparing to serve you with excellent snow removal if the need arises. We also completed a successful summer of sidewalk repair, curb replacement and road maintenance projects throughout the Township.

Our Planning & Zoning Department approved a record number of permits in 2017, as you and your neighbors continue to improve and beautify our residential neighborhoods. In our Kenwood business district, we continue to have one of the most successful retail complexes in the Midwest. We've nearly completed the process of burying all utilities underground near the Kenwood Towne Centre. Now, in addition to the aesthetic improvements, we'll have backup circuits to avoid major power outages in this important area.

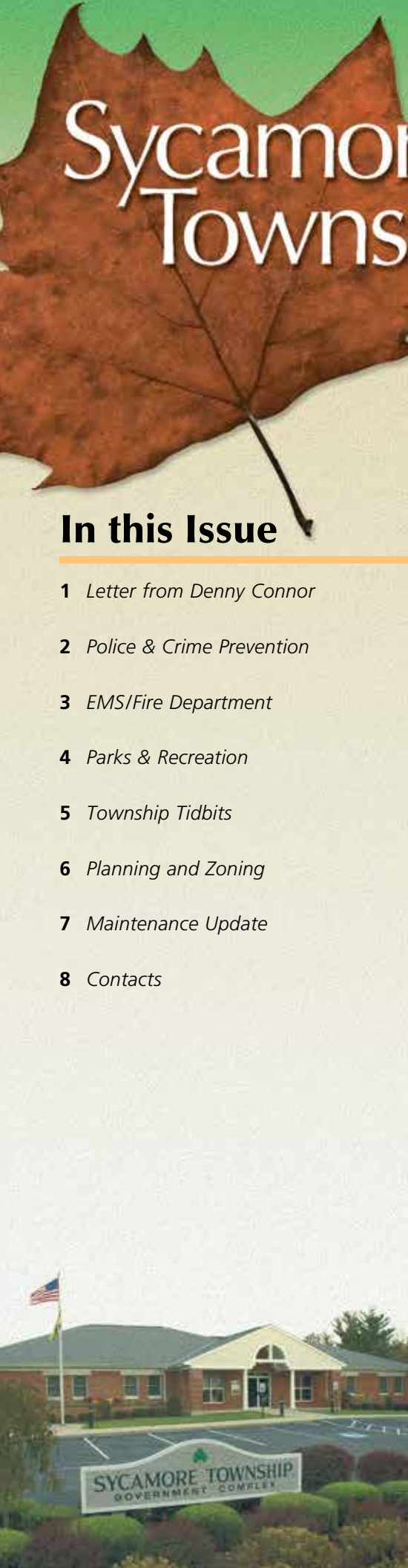
And, with the completion of the election season, our Township Board of Trustees will undergo a transition in the coming year. Congratulations to Jim LaBarbara, who will be joining the Board in January, and to Tom Weidman, who was re-elected to a four-year term. We also owe a sincere thank you to Cliff Bishop, who will be leaving the Board after 24 years of dedicated service to our Township.

On behalf of the current (and future) Board members, Fiscal Officer Rob Porter and the rest of the Township staff, thank you for your continued support in 2017. We offer you best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season and a terrific new year in 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Denny W. Connor".

Denny Connor
Trustee





Police & Crime Prevention



Tory L. Smith, Lieutenant
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

BODY-WORN CAMERA SYSTEMS

In early to mid-2018 you may notice a new piece of equipment being utilized by Hamilton County Sheriff's Patrol Deputies working in the field. This equipment and the related technology has quickly become an industry standard for civilian law enforcement across the nation. I am referring to remote, wireless, body-worn camera systems.

Body-worn cameras (BWC) were first worn by police officers in the United Kingdom in 2005. The United States military uses similar systems during combat operations. The cameras themselves are surprisingly small and lightweight, and they're designed to either be worn on the officer's chest or torso, or configured with a helmet or pair of glasses worn on the head. This technology has become a valuable tool for the police and the community alike, as one of the immediate benefits is increased accountability for both the officer and the citizen. Let's be honest—human beings simply behave differently if they know they are being watched or monitored. Much like a cruiser dashboard camera, cell phone camera, or other surveillance system, the BWC gives any viewer of the footage captured a unique perspective.

While the BWC is certainly a valuable tool, it is important for all of us to remember that it has limitations just like any other device. Consider the following factors:

- A camera doesn't see as you and I see. It can capture a broad perspective, but it doesn't focus on what the officer is looking at. The camera doesn't follow the eyes of the person wearing it. Furthermore, the camera only records in two dimensions (2D). The BWC does not record depth of field, which is the third dimension (3D) captured & processed by the human eye.
- The camera cannot detect, capture, feel, or act on tactile factors. For instance, a suspect may tense up right before attempting to assault an officer or flee on foot. The camera doesn't record information gathered by the officer's remaining senses.
- A camera, depending on quality, type, settings, and configuration, may "see" better than a human in low light.

This can lead to unreasonable expectations from those viewing the video later. "Why didn't the officer see that? It's right there in the video." It's quite possible that he or she simply couldn't.

- The existence of a BWC sometimes leads to immediate second-guessing. Video footage is not always a complete & accurate representation of what an officer sees, especially in a deadly force encounter. Unfortunately, misinformation is sometimes used by the public as context when deciding whether an officer behaved appropriately or not. The speed of the camera doesn't move at the speed of life. The BWC captures information; it doesn't evaluate it or make decisions. The human is required to do that.

Some citizens may question the legality of recording devices. It's also fair to say that a significant number of people prefer not to be recorded, period. It's important to note that in the State of Ohio, the laws governing such recordings are known as "one-party consent" laws. Obviously, a Sheriff's Deputy working in his or her official capacity represents *one* of the parties involved in any given police encounter. Furthermore, when the Sheriff's Office responds to a call for service, no matter what the nature of that call is, the officer involved is there for a lawful purpose. Regardless of whether the video recording takes place in a parking lot, school, retail location, or private residence, the activation and use of the BWC is completely legal.

Currently, there is no State or Federal law that *requires* local law enforcement agencies to use BWC systems. It is up to each individual department to decide what equipment to use and how to write and develop their own policy.

Regardless of tech-related shortcomings, pros and cons, or controversial cases, the BWC is a valuable piece of equipment available to law enforcement. Use of these systems is becoming more widespread and the increased implementation is commensurate with the level of societal expectation. When a critical incident occurs, citizens and interested parties *expect* to see police video. The use of this technology can aid the law enforcement agency in terms of accountability and transparency in the community it serves.

So, if you happen to have contact with a Hamilton County Sheriff's Patrol Deputy in the coming months, keep in mind you're likely being watched by more than just the officer with whom you're interacting!



EMS/Fire Department



Rob Penny, Fire Chief

Hope everyone enjoyed the warm weather and the wonderful summer we had here in Sycamore Township! Now it is time to prepare for the cold winter months ahead. Some people like to have campfires and portable chimneys to enjoy the outdoors in the colder months. Keep in mind the following regulations and laws that pertain to burning outdoors:

**No open burning shall be conducted in an area in which an air alert, warning or emergency is in effect.*

PORTABLE CHIMNEYS ARE PERMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING CAUTIONS:

- Do not use portable chimneys for waste disposal purposes.
- Only clean, dry, seasoned firewood is allowed.
- Do not use any flammable liquids to start the fire.
- Do not use them in an enclosed area such as a screened-in porch or overhang.
- Do not use less than 25 feet from a structure or combustible materials.
- **Outdoor chimneys should be cleaned before use.** Remember that ashes will remain hot for 24 to 30 hours after use and should therefore be discarded in metal containers. Firewood may continue to ember long after the fire is out. Once discarded wood is placed in a confined container it will heat up again and cause an ignition. Any materials mixed with the wood could catch fire.



CAMP/RECREATIONAL TYPE FIRES ARE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- The fire must be contained in a structure made of solid material such as stone, brick or metal.
- The fire must be at least 25 feet from any structure or combustibles.
- The fire may not be larger than three feet across and two feet high.
- Use only seasoned firewood for burning - no trash, leaves, tires, wiring or brush.
- Do not burn any outdoor fire on windy days.
- Do not use any flammable liquids to ignite the fire.

**If there is a chance that smoke from any type of fire is going to go directly toward someone's house or in an area where other people are being affected by the smoke you should not burn at all.*

Bonfires require a permit. To obtain a permit contact Sycamore Township Fire Prevention at 791-8447.

To learn more about burning outdoors, visit epa.ohio.gov/dapc/general/openburning.aspx





Parks & Recreation



Mike McKeown,
Parks & Rec. Director

JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL DILLONVALE LUMINARIA

Sycamore Township and Dillonvale IGA are teaming up again to sponsor the annual Dillonvale Luminaria. The event will be held on Saturday, December 9, 2017, from 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. at the Pavilion in Bechtold Park. Dillonvale IGA will provide donuts, cookies, and warm drinks. Bethel Baptist Temple will be presenting a live Nativity scene and Christmas carolers. Santa will be there to greet the kids. Christmas music will fill the air. Hayrides will take people through the streets of Dillonvale to view all the holiday decorations. We encourage all Dillonvale residents to decorate the sidewalks in front of their homes with luminaria bags. The kits will be available at Ace Hardware in the Dillonvale Shopping Center. Prizes will be awarded to the three best decorated properties! Come join the fun and get in the spirit of the season at the annual Dillonvale Luminaria!



WINTER EVENTS

Brush Chipping Program

December 2, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Behind Twp. Administration Bldg.
8540 Kenwood Road

Luminaria

December 9, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Bechtold Pavilion
4312 Sycamore Road

Fall Leaf Collection Ends

December 11

Christmas Tree Drop Off

December 26 – January 26
Bechtold Park
4312 Sycamore Road
McDaniel Sports Complex
11797 Solzman Road





TOWNSHIP TIDBITS

OFFICER SPOTLIGHT

Patrol Officer Josh Evans is a six year veteran of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. Josh is currently assigned to Patrol District 3 where he has patrolled Sycamore Township almost exclusively for a year and a half.

On July 5th, 2017, shortly before midnight, Deputy Evans was dispatched to handle a theft report; the circumstances involved property being stolen from three unlocked vehicles that were parked in a residential area in Dillonvale. After speaking with the victims and collecting the necessary information, Deputy Evans began searching the area. Almost immediately Deputy Evans discovered a fourth vehicle with its dome light on. He knew he was close and that in all likelihood, the perpetrator(s) were nearby. Josh broadcasted the information to Deer Park police and a short time later a Deer Park officer located a juvenile subject inside yet another vehicle. When Deputy Evans and the Deer Park police officer attempted to stop and question the subject, the perpetrator fled on foot. Deputy Evans pursued and captured the subject after a foot chase.

After being arrested, the subject was interviewed. During this interview the perpetrator identified a juvenile co-defendant and confessed that the pair had entered over 300 unlocked vehicles in Sycamore Township, Deer Park, Blue Ash, and Sharonville, over a period of a week to ten days. The co-defendant was located and arrested approximately five hours later. Furthermore, the pair admitted to stealing three motor vehicles, which led to auto theft charges being filed by the Deer Park Police Department. During the course of the investigation Deputy Evans was able to recover a significant amount of the stolen property from three Sycamore Township residents.



The heads-up police work performed by Patrol Officer Josh Evans on July 5th, 2017, exemplifies the hard work, dedication, and level of service that our Deputies are capable of. Josh went the extra mile that night instead of simply gathering basic information and "filing" a report. His solid police work clearly benefits the community and serves as a great example for his peers. The efforts of Patrol Officer Josh Evans are worthy of recognition.

CONGRATULATIONS CHARLES GRIFFITH!



Trustees Denny Connor, Tom Weidman and Cliff Bishop proudly presented a resolution honoring Mr. Charles Griffith for his service during the Vietnam War at the Trustee meeting on September 21, 2017. Sunday, September 24, 2017 was declared "Charles M. Griffith Day" in Sycamore Township. Please join us in honoring and thanking Mr. Griffith for his dedication and service.

TOWNSHIP GOLF OUTING PROCEEDS DONATED TO CYSTIC FIBROSIS



Trustees Tom Weidman, Denny Connor and Cliff Bishop, with event organizer Rick Wietmarschen, present Victoria Molin, representative of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, with a check for the proceeds of the Sycamore Township Golf Outing. This year's Golf Outing raised \$8,846.06 for Cystic Fibrosis, the largest amount ever raised by this event!





Planning & Zoning



Harry Holbert,
Zoning Administrator

As the fall months approach, many will tackle long-awaited home improvement projects. As fun as it sounds, there are a few zoning requirements. Most exterior improvement projects require a zoning certificate and inspections: decks, fences, pools, sheds, car ports, and room additions to name a few.

Zoning certificate applications and requirements are available at the Township Administration Building and online at www.sycamoretownship.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/permitting-inspections. Typically, they can be processed within 3-5 business days.

Two of the most frequently asked questions are regarding fences and sheds. Fences are permitted; however, there are a few requirements. Fences located in the rear yard are permitted to be a maximum height of six feet above grade and may be of a solid variety. In the side yard(s), the maximum height permitted is four feet above the average grade and the fence must be 75% open. Currently no fences are permitted in the front yard. All fences are permitted to be placed up to the property line. Sheds are permitted as well; however, they must be located in the rear yard, must be a minimum of three feet from the property line, six feet from any other structure and must not take up more than 35% of the rear yard. Decks, additions and porches are also permitted subject to the zoning setback requirements.

We would also like to remind homeowners about the storage of boats, campers and other similar recreational vehicles. The Township zoning code does not permit the parking of any boat, trailer, R.V. or mobile home in a front or side yard in a residential district. These types of recreational vehicles may be parked or stored in a garage or other accessory use structure or in the rear yard of a residential district and are required to be parked on a paved surface. Wheels or other similar transporting devices shall not be removed, nor shall any trailer be temporarily or permanently affixed to the ground.

Please note, we have these codes in place to help make Sycamore Township an attractive and highly regarded place to live, work and play.

If you have any questions about zoning, please contact the Planning/Zoning Department at (513) 792-7250 or visit our website at www.sycamoretownship.org.

WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES

Hanson Audio Video, has opened at 10800 Montgomery Road near Eddie Merlot's. Their staff is comprised of highly skilled professionals with many years of experience and certifications in a wide range of audio, video, automation, computer and networking applications. They excel at custom room/system design and installation services, along with on-going support after the initial install.

Just in time for holiday shopping, the new Marshalls and HomeGoods stores are now open for business at Kenwood Square near TJ Maxx and Dick's Sporting Goods.





Maintenance Department



Tracy Kellums, Superintendent

NEW RADAR UNIT

Some of you may have seen a new radar unit around your neighborhood recently. The Township has purchased this unit to help in areas where problems with speeding have been reported. This unit provides traffic counts along with data that tells us how fast the traffic is averaging, the top speed of the traffic, the 85 percentile speed etc. We are then able to share this data with the Sheriff's office so they can patrol accordingly and enforce the posted speed limit. This unit is installed in one location for approximately two weeks while we collect data. It will then be moved to a different location for another two week period. If you see it in your neighborhood don't be surprised when it disappears, it is not a permanent installation, but it may be back in the future.



SNOW REMOVAL

With the winter season upon us, it is time to think about inclement weather. Township residents can be confident that our Maintenance Department is prepared for snow and ice removal. The trucks, salt machines and plows are ready to go. The Township has plenty of salt on hand in our two salt domes, one at the administration complex on Kenwood Road and the other at Schuler Park on Deerfield Road.

Hopefully, we won't need any of these this winter, but in case we do, we ask you to remove your cars from the street during snow events. This allows the crews to clean your streets in a safe and efficient manner. Let's work together to have a safe winter season!





Winter 2017

Tom Weidman, President

Cliff Bishop, Vice-President

Denny Connor, Trustee

Robert C. Porter III, Fiscal Officer

R. Douglas Miller, Law Director

Greg Bickford, AICP, Administrator

791-8447 – Fax 792-8564

Tracy Kellums, Superintendent

792-7257 – Fax 792-8564

Mike McKeown, Parks & Rec. Director

792-7270 – Fax 792-8564

Rob Penny, Fire Chief

792-8565 – Fax 792-8564

Harry L. Holbert, Jr., Zoning Administrator

792-7252 – Fax 792-8564

Tory L. Smith, Lieutenant

District Three Commander

Hamilton County Sheriff's Office

774-6351 – Fax 774-6350

Fire and Police Emergency – **911**

Sycamore Township Administrative Office

791-8447

www.sycamoretownship.org



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Sycamore Twp., Ohio 45236

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Tom Weidman
President



Cliff Bishop
Vice President



Denny Connor
Trustee



Robert C. Porter III
Fiscal Officer

You can leave messages for your elected officials by calling the Sycamore Township Administration Office at 791-8447.