

# Sycamore Township

# NEWS

Fall 2018

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It was this time last year that I was knocking on doors, introducing myself to the residents of Sycamore Township and listening to your suggestions for improvement. I'm happy to say that with the help of my fellow trustees some of those suggestions have become a reality. Ideas from residents are always encouraged and appreciated.



Jim LaBarbara  
Trustee

The Board recently hired six new fulltime members to our EMS/Fire Department and Chief Penny is happy that a new ambulance is on the way. The additional staff was necessary because of the dwindling part time roster of qualified fire fighters. The new hires will allow the Township to give our residents the highest level of Safety Services, and as needed we will add more to this team.

We've recently taken a giant step forward in becoming more transparent when we partnered with Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel's Ohio Checkbook website to show our taxpayers how their money is spent. This is an easy way for residents to access, visualize and understand our expenditures and financial information. On our website, click on Ohio Checkbook. The site can also be found at [sycamoretownshiphamilton.ohiocheckbook.com](http://sycamoretownshiphamilton.ohiocheckbook.com).

In an effort to be more efficient and responsive to residents' concerns, the Board recently upgraded the audio equipment in the Trustee meeting room and is now recording all workshop and Thursday night Trustee meetings. There has been an increase in attendance and participation at all meetings. If you can't make a meeting you can hear those meetings on our website under Audio. In addition, we are working on updating our Zoning Resolution. More information is available on the website. Thank you to all who have submitted comments so far.

Fall means Mother Nature is shedding her leaves, and our terrific Maintenance Department is busy preparing for the Fall Leaf Pickup Program. Please remember as you rake or blow your leaves to the curb, keep them on the edge of your lawn and out of the street.

Along with my fellow trustees, Denny Connor and Tom Weidman, our Fiscal Officer, Rob Porter, and the Sycamore Township Staff we are searching for ways to use your tax dollars wisely, to continue to strive to improve our community to keep up with our motto, "There's More in Sycamore." Keep informed by using our website [www.SycamoreTownship.org](http://www.SycamoreTownship.org). We welcome your thoughts, ideas and opinions. If we can help you in any way, please contact us at 513-791-8447.

Sycamore Township is a great place to live, work and play. We wish you a wonderful, fun-filled Fall season and encourage you to go out and enjoy our beautiful Township.

Sincerely,

Jim LaBarbara  
Trustee





## Police & Crime Prevention

### OFFICER SPOTLIGHT



*Patrol Officer Alexander Berlin*



*Patrol officer Justin French*



*Patrol Officer Robert Jim*

Shortly before midnight on Saturday, July 7th, 2018, Sheriff's Deputies working in Sycamore Township were dispatched for the report of a suicidal person. Dispatchers relayed information that the individual involved was attempting to hang himself. The initial details regarding the exact location of the incident, as well as information about what was happening, were confusing and unclear at first.

When Deputies arrived at the residence in question, they found an unlocked door. Patrol Officers Alex Berlin, Justin French and Robert Jim entered the dwelling and immediately began searching for the victim. Deputy Jim searched and secured the first floor as Deputies French and Berlin made their way upstairs. Once they reached the second floor, Deputy French located the victim in a bedroom, hanging by a rope. Deputy French quickly called for Deputy Berlin and he began lifting the person upward to relieve the pressure on the victim's neck. Deputy Berlin entered the room and was able to use his knife to cut the rope. The officers were then able to lay the person on the floor and completely remove the rope from the victim's neck. Sycamore Township Fire Department personnel took charge by checking and evaluating the person and eventually transporting the victim to University Hospital.

Patrol Officers Berlin, French, and Jim demonstrated great courage and quick thinking as they entered into a precarious situation. From the time of dispatch, to the time of arrival with subsequent entry and search, there were many unknowns. The efforts of three Hamilton County Sheriff's Patrol Officers, working quickly and cohesively, saved the life of a human being. These officers represented themselves, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, and Sycamore Township in a positive, professional manner.

### SUICIDE & CRISIS INTERVENTION

The events described in the "Officer Spotlight" portion of this newsletter remind us all of a harsh and sobering reality. The subject of suicide is difficult for many of us to discuss or truly understand; it's simply something most of us do not like to think about. Meanwhile, the suicide rate in the United States has quietly increased by 25% since 1999. According to an article recently published in the New York Times, suicide is now the tenth leading cause of death in our country. This problem transcends all age and gender groups, as well as all religious, ethnic, social-economic, and geographical boundaries.

In 2017, Sycamore Township Deputies responded to over 50 calls for service that involved an actual suicide or an individual having thoughts of suicide.

Sheriff's Deputies and Firefighters may not be formally credentialed mental health experts, or ordained clergymen, or trained therapists who oversee long-term care or treatment. However, the men and women working in public safety can (and often do) represent the first link in the chain that connects the person in crisis to the help and resources needed. Cops and Firefighters are good listeners. They are compassionate, duty-bound people. They are kind, patient, and objective. In short, they are your first line of defense and they are here to help.

**If you or someone you know is struggling in a time of mental or emotional crisis, we urge you to reach out. The Crisis & Suicide Hotline for the Greater Cincinnati area is 281-CARE (2273). The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputies are in direct contact with Mobile Crisis Teams and they can summon help quickly.**





# EMS/Fire Department



Rob Penny, Fire Chief

I hope everyone had a great summer! While fall will soon be arriving, we often must still deal with heat conditions and powerful sun rays.

### Here is something we never think about:

How many times do we leave a bottle of water in our cars? On the seat or in a cup holder in the console?

What a surprise when a construction worker left a bottle of water on the seat in his truck and minutes later found smoke coming from his vehicle. After investigating, he found a burn hole in his seat caused by the sun rays coming through the bottle. The light passes through the car window first, yet there's still enough heat left to go through the plastic bottle and cause burning. Conceivably, this would be worse on a hot day or if the window was down, because the window filters the light.



Given the right kind of plastic or glass container and the right environmental conditions, sun shining through a water bottle can indeed lead to combustion. A round plastic or glass bottle filled with clear water can act as a lens that concentrates the sun's energy on one point. A magnification takes place, causing energy, and works the same as using a magnifying glass.

*What can you do to prevent this?*

1. Don't leave bottles in vehicles or near windows in buildings, or, if you must leave one in your car, cover it up.
2. Better still, use purpose-built water bottles which are not made of clear glass or plastic.



### A REMINDER ABOUT UNUSED MEDICATIONS:

Store all medications out of the reach of children, especially heart and blood pressure drugs and narcotics (pain control). A small dosage of such medications can do harm to a small child. Keep in mind, if you have medications around the house that you no longer use, you may drop them off at the Fire Station at 8540 Kenwood Road where there is a medication waste dispenser for safe disposal of unwanted medications. Medications may be dropped off between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. any day of the week. Please note liquid medications in glass bottles and syringes will not be accepted.





# BECHTOLD PARK SYCAMORE TOWNSHIP

## Parks & Recreation



Mike McKeown,  
Parks & Rec. Director

### ANOTHER GREAT FESTIVAL IN SYCAMORE IN THE BOOKS!

The 26th annual Festival in Sycamore was a huge success! Between 15,000–20,000 people enjoyed delicious food, cold drinks, rides and the fantastic performances of THE DAVE MASON/STEVE CROPPER ROCK AND SOUL REVUE, NIGHT RANGER, and all of the local and regional acts. **Thank you to everyone who attended!**

A huge thank you goes out to all those who work so hard to make the Festival possible. As usual, the members of the maintenance staff did an outstanding job of setting up, tearing down, and cleaning up after the event. The administrative staff members did a wonderful job helping organize the Festival and working backstage to make sure things ran well. The members of the Park Committee who volunteered their time provided invaluable help. The Hamilton County Sheriff's Department and Sycamore Township EMS and Fire Department provided security for the event.

The Festival could not go on each year without our generous sponsors. Thank you to Gold Sponsors Mercedes Benz of Cincinnati and West Chester and the Sycamore Township Republican Club, Silver Sponsors Kids First Sports Center, Bradley Payne LLC, Neyer Properties, TEC Engineering, Brandstetter Carroll Inc., and Major Sponsors Mobile Mower Maintenance, Rumpke, Advantage Signs, A&A Drywall, Atkins and Stang Electric, The Kleingers Group, Walnut Grove Playgrounds and JK Meurer.

**Thanks again for making the 2018 Festival in Sycamore one of the best ever.**



### CONGRATULATIONS 8TH ANNUAL CAR SHOW WINNERS

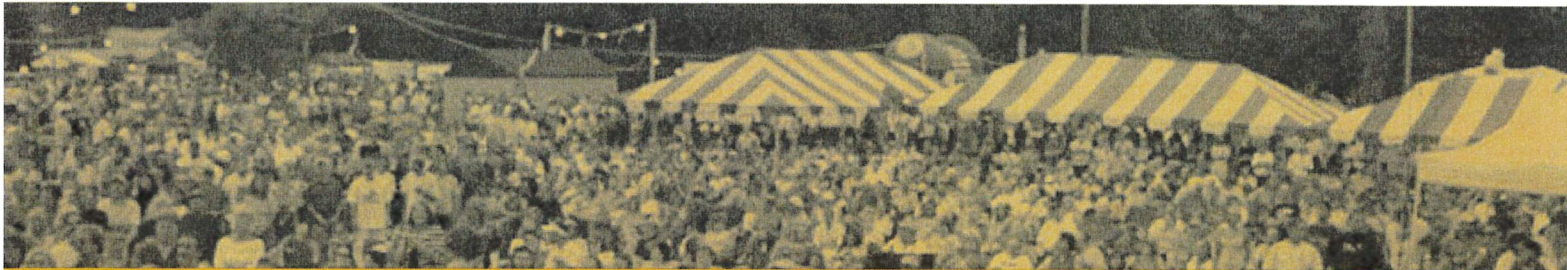


Trustees Tom Weidman, Denny Connor and Jim LaBarbara congratulate Best of Show winner Bill Green, shown here with his winning 1965 Ford Mustang.



Trustees' Choice winner Don Vanderpool and his 1957 Ford Fairlane with Trustees Tom Weidman, Jim LaBarbara and Denny Connor.





# Township Tidbits

## UTILITY AGGREGATION UPDATE

Sycamore Township is a Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) certified government aggregator and operates "opt-out" electric and natural gas aggregation programs. These programs are designed to take advantage of group buying power to find the most stable and cost effective natural gas and electric rates for residents and small business owners in Sycamore Township.

All eligible accounts in Sycamore Township are automatically enrolled in each program. Being an "opt-out" program allows the customer the ability to "opt-out" of the program and seek the best rate on their own, whether it's with another third party broker or simply having Duke Energy be your supplier.

If you are a member of the Township natural gas aggregation program, you should have received a notice in the mail informing you of the continuation of the program. Every year the Township is required to send out notices advising you of your rights under the program and how to opt out if you wish. Sycamore Township has partnered with Constellation Energy for the upcoming two year cycle. Your gas rate will be locked in at \$0.449 per CCF through the winter heating months. It will not go any higher and even has the chance to flex down based on the market. Duke Energy's current rate is \$0.5405 per CCF for the same time period with no guarantees of a rate lock.

In addition to the Natural Gas Aggregation program, the Township has partnered with Dynegy Energy Services for the Electric Aggregation program. Similar to the natural gas program, eligible customers will soon receive an "opt out" notice for electric aggregation. The electric rate is locked in at \$05.49 per kilowatt hour. Duke Energy's rate is currently at \$05.94 with no rate lock guarantee. The electric rate is good through the December 2020 billing cycle.

If you are in either one of the programs and do nothing after receiving the "opt out" notice, then you will automatically continue in the program. If you do not receive an "opt out" notice then you are either with another aggregator or are an ineligible account. The easiest way to verify if you are in either program is to look at your bill. Under Electric – Residential you should see "Dynegy – Rate DE59" and under Gas – Residential you should see "Constellation – F523".

With either program, you are free to opt out and opt back in at any time with no penalty. If you decide to opt out and go with another provider, please make sure that you are aware of any terms and conditions that will apply, including termination fees.

Sycamore Township also wants to stress that NO ONE representing Sycamore Township will ever approach you about switching into the program. Sycamore Township and its aggregation partners WILL NEVER solicit you or ask for your account number. If anyone solicits you in person or over the phone representing themselves as either with Sycamore Township or one of our aggregation partners, it is a scam. Residents should feel free to reach out to the Sheriff's Office at 513-825-2280 if there are solicitors in the area who do not have the proper transient vendor permits.

If you ever have any questions regarding either program or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact the Township Offices at 513-791-8447. You may also email Greg Bickford, Administrator at [gbickford@sycamoretownship.org](mailto:gbickford@sycamoretownship.org).

## FALL EVENTS

### Fall Compost Giveaway

September 15  
8AM – 4PM  
Hartzell United  
Methodist Church  
8999 Applewood Drive

### Brush Chipping Program

October 6  
November 3  
December 1  
8AM – 4PM  
Behind Administration Bldg.  
8540 Kenwood Rd.

### Fall Leaf Collection

October 15–December 14

### Halloween Trick-or-Treating

October 31  
6 PM – 8PM

### Election Day

November 6



Trustees Tom Weidman, Jim LaBarbara and Denny Connor joined the staff of the new Lollipops store at the Kenwood Towne Center for their Grand Opening. Lollipops offers one-of-a-kind sweets and beautifully packaged gifts.







# Planning & Zoning



Harry Holbert,  
Planning & Zoning Administrator

## BALANCING GROWTH

Reading the title of this article alone could lead one to believe that Sycamore Township is an undeveloped community with hundreds of acres of vacant developable land. In reality, Sycamore Township is a community nearly built out, but that continues to experience unprecedented growth and has for many years.

In Sycamore Township's case, growth comes in the form of redevelopment and reuse of existing underdeveloped land. Back in the early 1950's and 60's, local storm water management didn't exist. It wasn't until the 1970's that the Clean Water Act requirements were put into place. Today, many of these older areas are being redeveloped with stricter guidelines in place and better overall site development. Not only are these new developments required to comply with new

watershed regulations (both quality and quantity), current Township landscaping, parking and signage requirements will also be part of the review process.

The Township has been able to maintain our level of services without an increase in taxes due to its balance of both commercial and residential properties. This balance has proven to be a winning formula and we have you, our residents, property owners and business owners, to thank.

Sycamore Township is home to one of the premier shopping destinations in the country. In addition, we are home to several Fortune 500 companies, Cincinnati Top 100 companies and more. With a residential population of 20,000, and a daytime population of around 100,000 (up to 200,000 during the holiday shopping season), Sycamore Township has a vested interest in its people and its businesses. Thank you for allowing us to maintain our level of services to you.

Currently, we are reviewing proposed updates to the Zoning Resolution so don't miss the opportunity to voice your opinion through our website, email, voicemail or by USPS. Remember to visit our website for new information or to add your email address to our subscriber lists to receive Zoning and Board of Trustees agendas, newsletters and breaking news straight to your inbox.

## ZONING APPROVAL REQUIRED

Please keep in mind that a zoning certificate is required for the following residential projects:

- New Single Family Homes
- Room Additions
- Detached Garages
- Decks
- Pools
- Sheds/Accessory Use Structures
- Fences (new and replacement of existing fencing)
- Retaining Walls
- Front Porches
- PODs (Movable Storage Units)
- In-Home Occupations

A zoning certificate ensures that the project is compliant with the current Zoning Resolution. For most residential projects, with the exception of fences and sheds under 200 sq. ft. in area, the zoning certificate is the first step in the process, and a building permit through Hamilton County Building Department will also be required.

Zoning certificate applications, submittal requirements and fee information are available on our website at [www.sycamoretownship.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/permitting-inspections/](http://www.sycamoretownship.org/departments/planning-and-zoning/permitting-inspections/). Many residential projects have no review fees associated with them, and those that do have minimal fees, provided residents apply prior to beginning any work. If you have any questions or are unsure if a permit is necessary, please call the Planning and Zoning office at 513-792-7250 before starting your project.

### TOWNSHIP OFFICE:

- 513-791-8447

### PROPERTY MAINTENANCE:

- Call 513-792-7250 or 7249 (staff member)
- Call 513-792-7279 (hotline)
- Visit our website (online Services, Property Complaint Form)

***\*We do take anonymous complaints.***

### HARRY HOLBERT JR:

- 513-792-7252





# Maintenance Department



Tracy Kellums, Superintendent

## RUMPKE RECYCLING UPDATE

As many of you know, the Township has negotiated with Rumpke on behalf of our residents to include free recycling for their trash customers on a biweekly schedule. We realize that communication between Rumpke and our citizens with regard to this agreement has not been the best. We have made Rumpke aware of the problem and were told Rumpke is working on straightening everything out. I would like to take this opportunity to explain how this agreement came about and why the Township pursued it.



There are two main reasons why we looked into this and brought Rumpke onboard. First, our Township wide recycling rate is currently about 12%. This means that of all the waste that is collected throughout the Township, only 12% is recycled and kept out of the landfills. While this number represents a good effort by our citizens, we realized that it could be better. Rumpke serves 84% of our residents, however, only 48% of those residents were recycling. It made sense to approach Rumpke to determine if there was anything we could do to increase our recycling percentage. Second, we learned Rumpke was charging our residents many different rates for the same service. Our goal was to simplify those rates and save our residents money at the same time.

We realize that one plan does not fit everyone; however, we were looking to find a way to improve service for many of you, and we are optimistic that this plan will do just that. At the start of the new program, Rumpke has had a 10% increase in recycling customers and we expect this number to continue to grow. We won't know for almost a year the full effect this program will have on the Township's recycling numbers, but they are definitely headed in the right direction.

If you have not received your calendar from Rumpke for your recycling schedule by the time you receive this newsletter, please call them at 1-800-828-8171. They have had some internal issues getting the schedule up and running and they have indicated to us that they are working to improve.

It is also important to point out that Sycamore Township does not offer contracted trash service to its residents, and it's up to the individual consumer to choose a trash pickup provider. Rumpke is one such private service provider that is contracted by the resident and not the Township. There are three waste haulers that serve the area and residents are free to contract with whomever they wish if Rumpke's offerings don't suite their individual needs.

I hope that this helps to clarify why the Township chose to negotiate with Rumpke and what we are trying to accomplish.  
**HAPPY RECYCLING!**

## CURBSIDE LEAF PICKUP INFORMATION

Sycamore Township is pleased to provide you with prompt and efficient leaf pickup service. Leaf collection will begin on Monday, October 15th and run through Friday, December 14th. Leaves should be raked to the public right of way beside the street. **PLEASE DO NOT PUT LEAVES IN THE STREET.** Leaves become very slippery when wet and, when parked over, dry leaves can start a car on fire when brought into contact with the catalytic converter. Sticks, grass clippings and garden debris will jam our machines and should not be mixed into leaf piles. Consequently, piles with materials other than leaves will not be collected.

Leaf crews will not pick up leaves from under, between or around parked cars. If cars are parked in front of your leaf piles, the collection equipment will be unable to maneuver to reach the leaves and they will be left for the next pickup cycle in your neighborhood.

Maintenance crews will be working from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. five days a week, rain or shine, to collect leaves in a timely manner. Many factors such as the amount of leaves to be collected and the availability of temporary laborers have an effect on collection and make it impossible to predict exact pickup times.







**Fall 2018**

Denny Connor, President  
 Tom Weidman, Vice-President  
 Jim LaBarbara, 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](http://www.sycamoretownship.org)



8540 Kenwood Road  
Sycamore Twp., Ohio 45236

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*“There’s More in Sycamore”*



**Trustees Available to  
Better Serve You**



**Denny Connor**  
President



**Tom Weidman**  
Vice President



**Jim LaBarbara**  
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.