

Mayor's Message, July 2014

Due to all the recent flooding I felt that now would be an opportune time to tell you what the City is doing to address some of those issues. The City has been working on storm water issues for several years but often what is being done is not easily seen by residents.

I have advocated regional discussions of storm water management for several years. Regardless of what we do locally, if the storm water can't exit the community it will back up. The Mayors of Avon, Avon Lake, Sheffield Village, Sheffield Lake and I have met to discuss opportunities to work together to move all of our storm water to Lake Erie as fast as possible.

Working with a local engineering firm, we have modeled a portion of the North Ridgeville drainage system, and we are currently completing the modeling that will give us a tool that we can use to identify and analyze improvements. For example, it was thought that the bridge behind St. Peter Church restricted the flow of the French Creek. We found out from the model that it doesn't. However, we did find that by adding detention on city-owned property off of Jaycox Road that it would help reduce flooding in the Highland area. This detention basin was added last year at a cost of \$150,000.

Recently, the City was able to negotiate a deal with a local developer to enlarge the West Point retention pond. The developer needed fill material and removed 8,000 cubic yards of dirt from the West Point retention pond at no cost to the City. This will allow approximately 1.6 million gallons more of water storage capacity during storm events. Another improvement underway at the West Point basin is the design of the weir/restrictor in French Creek. The modification of the restrictor will further restrict French Creek and take full advantage of the storage capacity of the West Point basin, including the additional storage created by the recent expansion.

City Council passed legislation requiring new construction to add detention that will substantially reduce run-off so that it is actually less than what would have entered the ditches and streams before construction. In most cases, as recently seen in the NorthBorough development, the new detention helps to reduce flooding. Center Ridge Road currently has no detention but the new road reconstruction plans have substantial detention. In fact, we are currently in discussions with the Ohio Department of Transportation because our requirements for detention exceed the state standards.

The Service Department has made modifications in the backyards of the Hersey Circle neighborhoods to repair/restore the integrity of the Robinson Ditch drainage basin. Under heavy rains it was possible for water from adjacent drainage basins to overflow into the Robinson Ditch drainage basin. Structures have been completed to stop this from happening. We also have two employees that work almost full-time cleaning and clearing ditches. Our ditches are on a five-year schedule to be cleaned and cleared. But, because of storm debris, branches, etc. that get into the waterways, we often are in the ditches more frequently.

We have completed a study that recommends improvements that will additionally help address flooding at a cost that exceeds \$4,000,000. We continue to work on that plan to first verify that the plan will work as recommended, identify ways we can implement phases of the plan in a

timely manner and look for ways to fund the program. City Council has been studying funding methods to address our storm water management needs, and we will soon be meeting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss flood mitigation plans.

City Council recently agreed to support an effort to institute a storm water utility fee to establish a dedicated funding source to address storm water management needs. The next step will be to retain an engineering firm to help us quantify how much the storm water fee should be to meet our needs. Currently, more than 95 communities in Ohio have storm water utility programs. Recently, Elyria enacted a similar monthly residential fee of \$4.33. Other surrounding communities that have storm water utility fees in place include City of Lorain, \$5.00; Sheffield, \$2.50; Sheffield Lake, \$4.85; and, Wellington, \$3.50.

I do want to assure you that we are and will continue to work on storm water issues. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call my office at (440) 353-0811 or the Engineering Department at (440) 353-0842.

Sincerely,
G. David Gillock, Mayor