



E-NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 81 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2022

Welcome to our new E-newsletter subscribers!

Please encourage others to join by sending an email request to:

NEWSLETTER@WILLOUGHBYHILLS-OH.GOV

MAYOR GARDNER'S REPORT:

Thanks to all of the residents who turned out for last week's Public Hearing on the City's proposed Master Plan. There were many great ideas from residents who expressed their opinion about City improvements that they would like to see. Now the Master Plan Committee will review the public comments and see how they fit into what had already been proposed. The Committee can then present a revised proposal to the City at some time in the future. The Committee has worked hard with the Lake County Planning Commission and I look forward to finalizing the Master Plan document soon.

We are looking forward to Touch A Truck on Saturday, September 17 from 10am to 2pm at the City Hall complex. This is a chance for our Police, Fire and Service Departments to showcase their vehicles, as well as other County and municipal agencies to visit the complex and allow the youngsters a first-hand experience with the equipment. This is a free event. Put it on your calendar now. The event goes on, rain or shine!

Our Rock N Roll Wrap Up meeting was held last week and it was the consensus of the committee that this successful event warrants another community event in 2023. There was discussion about taking the theme away from Rock N Roll music specifically and broadening it to include country music, rap, etc. The Recreation Commission will be reviewing the calendar for a 2023 date and then the committee will need to get started on booking food vendors, bands, etc. to make for another great event. As always, we will be looking for volunteers and sponsors as the planning begins.

Finally, this is the final newsletter authored by my Executive Assistant Gloria Majeski. She initiated this project in October 2020 and has faithfully provided City information to our subscribers every week since that time. With her retirement today, the job will now fall on my current staff and myself. I hope you have appreciated her commitment to this endeavor as I know she was happy to hear from so many who enjoyed an article, meeting notification or even the jokes. I know you will find this last edition by her a "great exit" as she reflects on various aspects of the nearly fifteen years she devoted to the City of Willoughby Hills. I understand that Council has arranged an Open House at Willoughby Hills Community Center on Saturday, September 24, 2022 from 1 to 4pm for the residents to come to say thank you and goodbye. Feel free to stop by if you are free to do so.

Enjoy your week. As we celebrate Labor Day, I offer a special "thank you" to all of our hard workers at City Hall. Thanks for all you do every day to help our residents and businesses.

CITY HALL NEWS:

Monday, September 5, 2022

LABOR DAY

Tuesday, September 6, 2022

WORKING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL & RULES AND LEGISLATION MEETING

6:00 P.M.- Council Chambers

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

7:00 P.M. - Council Chambers

Thursday, September 8, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

7:00 P.M. - Council Chambers

Friday, September 9, 2022

WILLOUGHBY HILLS QUILT GUILD RECEPTION

7:00 P.M. - Willoughby Hills Community Center Lobby

Saturday, September 10, 2022

ELECTRONICS RECYCLE DAY

9:00 A.M TO NOON - City Hall Front Parking Lot

&

FIRST COVENANT CHURCH CAR SHOW

9:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M. - 29400 Chardon Road, Willoughby Hills

Save the date (per City Council):

Saturday, September 24, 2022 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at

Willoughby Hills Community Center

As we recognize Gloria Majeski's many years of service and celebrate her retirement!

Electronics Recycle items:

Materials accepted free of charge:

PCs	Cartridges/Toner	MP3 Players	Networking Equipment
Laptops	Cell Phones	Cameras	UPS
Phones	Stereos	Keyboards	VCR/DVD Players
Scanners	Paper Shredders	Hard Drives	Game Consoles/Accessories
Routers	Servers	Wires	

Material accepted with a charge:

CRT Monitors (\$10 Fee)

Printers (\$5 Fee)

TVs (\$20 Fee)

NOPEC – IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!!

The City received an important notification from NOPEC regarding their program as it relates to our residents' electric rates. The following bullet points from the notification is provided:

- The energy markets have been experiencing unprecedented inflation due to international tension and hotter than normal weather this year.
- Unfortunately, NOPEC is not immune to this current inflationary spike.
- NOPEC is taking immediate proactive steps to put all of its customers in a position to save significant money on their electric bills during these economically challenging times.
- NOPEC will be temporarily transitioning their 550,000 electric customers enrolled in the Standard Program Price option back to the utility default service for the remainder of this year and into the Spring of 2023 so they may take advantage of significantly lower pricing until the market stabilizes. (This is the Illuminating Company's "Price to Compare" or "PTC" option that has been advertised in the last few newsletters, where residents were advised to call NOPEC to get into this plan immediately!). (Now they are automatically putting you in that plan if you are on the Standard Price Program, but if you are in one of the 12 or 24 month "fixed rate" plans, you will not be affected).
- NOPEC electric customers do not have to do anything to start getting the lower rates and will not be charged any fee to transfer. NOPEC will immediately notify the electric utilities to return its Standard Program Price accounts to the default service. Depending on each customer's meter read date, it may take one to two billing cycles for the transfer to take effect.
- Customers will receive a letter from NOPEC detailing the reason for the change and direction regarding where they can go for more information.
- Customers who are returned to the utility's default service will remain eligible for NOPEC's aggregation program in the future. By Spring 2023, NOPEC is forecasting that energy markets will normalize and its electric rates will be in line with the utilities' newly established "Price to Compare" and all eligible customers in NOPEC member communities will be notified via mail that they will be automatically re-enrolled in NOPEC at that time, unless they notify NOPEC that they wish to opt out.
- NOPEC's natural gas aggregation is unaffected and will continue uninterrupted. NOPEC's current natural gas price is still lower than other retail offers as well as the current Dominion East Ohio default service rates.

Please feel free to call Mayor Gardner's Office at 440-946-6614 if you have questions about this change and how it affects your electric bill. (Please have your electric bill handy if you call with questions).

We will continue to disseminate information as it becomes available to us.

REFLECTIONS ON SOME GREAT PROJECTS THROUGH
WILLOUGHBY HILLS ISOLATED PROGRAM FOR EVERY DAY RELIEF (WHISPER)

By Gloria Majeski

As I leave my employment with the City of Willoughby Hills, I reflect on the great things that happened through our WHISPER program to help our seniors. I decided to share just three of my favorite projects with you that I think you will enjoy and recognize the importance of this program in our community:

- 1) On a cold January morning, the Police Department was summoned for a welfare check to the home of an 82-year-old resident named Yolanda on Hayes Drive. A neighbor reported that she was living without heat in her home and her telephone had been disconnected. After assessing this sad situation, the PD contacted me to go with them to the home to offer this resident some assistance. I prepared my clipboard with paperwork on all of the programs that I thought could provide immediate relief. The PD took me to her home and we spoke with the only heat provided by a small potbelly stove. When I asked her about her income to justify the emergency heat and phone entitlements, she told me that she did not have any income. I told her that I knew she did not work anymore, but she should have something through Social Security that should be recorded. She advised me that she had never applied for Social Security or her pension through the Railroad because the office to do so was in a “dangerous area downtown,” so she lived by babysitting for people and selling her possessions. I recorded all of the information I needed and immediately went back to the office to see what I could do to expedite some income for her. I told her I would be back the next day, but if she could look for her birth certificate, we would need that to complete the one form for emergency services.

The next morning, the PD came to my office and said, “Yolanda flagged us down and said she needed to see you.” I said, “Oh, she must have found her birth certificate.” Instead, when the PD brought her to my office, she said that she could not find the birth certificate, and stated “but I did find these.” With that, she showed me a stack of uncashed paychecks from the railroad that were over twenty years old! She said she had forgotten that she put them “in a safe place!” I worked with a representative of “Unclaimed Funds” and, after explaining the dire situation that this resident was in, I was able to get all of those checks cashed and put into her bank account, allowing her to have her phone re-connected and the heat oil tank filled.

We still had the challenge of no monthly income and we worked through that (after going downtown to get a copy of her birth certificate in order to get everything processed!) and she then began to get her monthly Railroad Pension check and, equally important, healthcare was provided through Railroad Medicare.

I share Yolanda’s story because it was truly life changing and, although she no longer lives in that house on Hayes as she now enjoys the comfort of an assisted living facility, WHISPER was there at a very sad time in her life. The Police Department’s steps to get her the assistance and all of the others who worked with me to promptly get resolution to this dire situation was truly unforgettable and even a bit spiritual. When you look back at where she was and how everything evolved, this truly was one of the most incredible WHISPER tasks I had the pleasure of being a part of.

CONTINUED...

- 2) The second memorable WHISPER task occurred when a Trailard neighbor called the PD (& eventually the Mayor's Office) following a terrible flood that had occurred the night before. The flood destroyed the home of their neighbor, Ernie, who they found at the end of his driveway with his little dog in his arms, realizing he had just lost everything he owned. The wonderful neighbors took him and his dog in for the night and decided to call the PD in the morning for advice. I was able to get Ernie housing through the Red Cross for a few days, then extended housing at a local hotel until the house insurance could be processed and the property sold. I then assisted moving Ernie into a first-floor garden apartment at Pine Ridge where he was able to walk his dog and be near amenities that he needed. We were able to replace his car and got him back on track with his new life. He lived at the apartment for about three years then transitioned to a nursing home where he eventually passed away. His life was totally turned upside down, but with the help of our WHISPER program, he found a new way to live a happy life until the end. His dog is still lovingly cared for by a former employee of the Lake County Council on Aging who faithfully brought the dog to see Ernie regularly while he was confined to the nursing home. This WHISPER deed showed me the beautiful way we can make a difference when you look at the actions of the neighbors and other good people.
- 3) The third memorable WHISPER task occurred most recently, after Council provided more stringent guidelines for the WHISPER Program which included having two people do the initial assessment when a task is requested. I recruited a new WHISPER volunteer, Andrea, to go with me one morning to the home of Larry on Orchard, who needed some extensive yard work done by our WHISPER crew. When we met Larry at the garage door, he walked outside with us to show us the work he wanted to have done. It was about three minutes into our conversation when Larry became lethargic and said he felt "like he was going to pass out." While Andrea held on to him, I ran to find the easiest thing to allow him to sit down, finding a cooler in his garage. He sat on the cooler to try to feel better, but I called the rescue squad to come out to assist us. They came immediately and ended up transporting him to the hospital, but with good subsequent results. Once in the squad, Andrea and I got in the car to head back to City Hall. I turned to Andrea to assure her that this is not usually how these assessment calls go. I told her I would not blame her if this scared her to the point of not ever wanting to do another assessment. Andrea, being the great volunteer she is and still in a bit of a shock mode, assured me, "No, I want to continue to help. It is very odd that we were put in this place at this time to show up. What would have happened if we had not been here?" I know it took a while then for our goosebumps to leave us, but it was all so strange that WHISPER could change a person's life in this way, too.

So those are just three of the WHISPER tasks I chose to share with you as I leave my employment. There are so many more and so many great volunteers that I want to thank for making it all possible. I hope the Mayor will assign my replacement to facilitate the program as I have done since 2009. This program definitely sets our city apart from all others. It shows that we care about our residents and, as you can see from the three examples I provided, can be life changing. I hope you enjoyed me sharing these experiences with you.

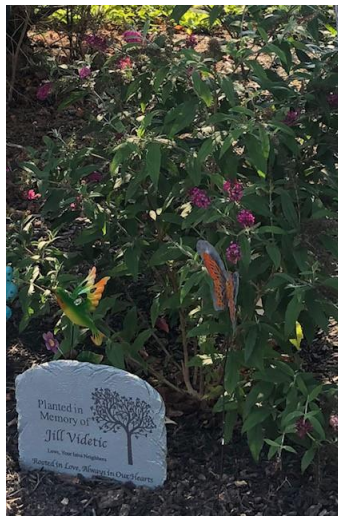
WHISPER PHOTOS:



We have a current request for a volunteer who could be a “right hand helper” for a resident who needs some assistance with yard clean up on a regular basis. If you are interested, please reach out to Mayor Gardner at 440-946-6614 who will facilitate this WHISPER task. Thank you!!!

RESIDENT NEWS:

Istra Lane had a great block party this past weekend! Here are some of the photos that the residents shared with us...They also dedicated a butterfly bush to their neighbor and friend, Jill Videtic, who passed away this spring at age 44 from a long bout of breast cancer.



PICKLE BALL MEETING – RECAP BY COUNCILMAN JOE JARMUSZKIEWICZ

A Pickle Ball Meeting was held on August 30, 2022. We talked about usage, leagues, instruction and tournaments. We also discussed some ideas for raising money to help maintain courts such as a raffles, sponsorships and tournaments. Courts will be open this year until Nov.1 We now have a group on Team Reach called Willoughby Hills Pickle Ball that will allow players to contact each other and set up playing times. This is only our first year and we hope as more residents learn about this game, we will be able to improve how we are able to facilitate the courts for use, lessons and leagues in the future. We are always welcome to any ideas or thoughts about how to improve our pickle ball program. I can't thank the resident pickle ball players enough that have stepped forward this year and put in many hours of volunteer work to help make our courts as nice as they are.

EDITOR'S FINAL NOTE:

I know many residents have lived in the City longer than I have served as the Mayor's Executive Assistant (since January 2008), but a lot sure has happened to our fine City since I have been here. In reflecting on some of those things, I created a little list that I wanted to share with you...

Real Estate:

Garfield School - I'll never forget the school district advising us that the school was closing and the building was being demolished. We then planned the biggest goodbye party with our "Goodbye to Garfield" event where former teachers and students had one last chance to say goodbye and pick up a piece of memorabilia to keep Garfield forever in our hearts.

The Grange Building - When the aging Grange members came to us and offered the building to us for \$100 because they could no longer keep up with the cost and maintenance, we were so happy to renovate the building (through grants I had written) and use it as a place for our youth to learn Scout skills. It is still being used and cared for by the Scouts today!

Classic Auto Group - It was such a pleasure working with Jim Brown Sr. to construct this beautiful dealership in our City. I always looked forward to meetings with him because he was so down to earth and had such a great sense of humor.

Willoughby Hills Senior Apartments: I remember when the Clover corporate representatives came to visit us and we just could not picture where there would be enough space for a senior apartment complex at the address they presented. Mayor Weger and I took a ride over to check it out and cannot believe that the mounds of dirt that we saw that day have become the beautiful facility to help our seniors. It just shows you how a person can have a vision and another cannot grasp the concept until it becomes a reality!

Mary Rose Estates: HUD was looking for another plot of land to try to duplicate their Willoughby building on Ridge Road. They found the perfect space on Maple Grove Road, just as you enter our city. What a beautiful facility with beautiful people that are truly like a family to each other.

Other Businesses: I always thought the story of **Produce Place (formerly Sun Plum)** was great because that business actually started as a project that two college kids had with an assignment of a business simulation that eventually took off and became a place where I shop very regularly. The owners of **Lobster Pot, The Vault and Gaetano's** were great to work with as they established their businesses in our community. It was sad to see Eaton Corporation move after so many years in Willoughby Hills, but with **Willoughby-Eastlake School of Innovation** now in its place, it is nice to see that the space was not unoccupied for long!

I remember getting a 7:30 a.m. visit from **Sam's Club** corporate officers who wanted to meet with the Mayor and Police Chief, only to find out it was because they planned to suddenly close the Shoppes of Willoughby Hills facility that day and were afraid of employee retaliation! I remember when **Huntington Bank** on SOM Center closed suddenly and, try as we may to make numerous phone calls to corporate, we never saw them re-open and the space remains vacant. But there have been so many other businesses that have come in and I have enjoyed seeing how the community welcomed them and continues to support them.

COVID Vaccine & Boosters: Nothing was more gratifying than to work with former Acting Fire Chief Tom Talcott (representing the County) to provide COVID-19 vaccine and boosters to our residents close to home. We worked to get them registered and vaccinated. It was great.

Veteran Acknowledgment: I loved working with Ted and Sue Vandemotter for veteran marker distribution, Carol Lillich for wreath donation and Commander Broadwater to bring great things to our veterans. I have a special place in my heart for veterans since my days of working at the Navy and having my dear friend Ryan Racic currently on active USAF duty!

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS – CONTINUED:

Grants:

Aside for the sponsorship grant for many of our Recreation events, I was so happy to write the grants that allowed for handicapped doors at the Community Center and City Hall Police Department entrance. For years to come, this will help the community and visitors to our city. The three-phase grant that I wrote to replace all of the windows in City Hall and the Fire Department was a methodical way to budget a much-needed improvement that would result in energy savings, as well as an aesthetic improvement. We no longer had to have tools on the window sills to help with the opening of the windows either!

Contracts:

Prior to 2010, each resident selected their own trash contractor and you would often see three different trucks make their way down the streets of Willoughby Hills. It was at that time that I helped with the bids and contract negotiation to bring Republic Services into the community, thus making the rates uniform, the ability to receive a senior discount, add a recycle component and save the wear and tear on our streets. Our five-year contract was renewed for another ten and we are currently serviced by Republic Services until 2025. When I look back at how things were and where they have come, I can tell you that it is a significant improvement in our city.

Coming from nearly thirty years in health care prior to working for the City, I always enjoyed health care contracts and billing. Over the past fifteen years, I have enjoyed negotiating great health care rates and options for our city and its employees and I enjoy helping our employees with claim processing. I have also helped in the contract negotiations with our provider for Personal Property and Liability insurance and leave the City with some great individuals who certainly work with us for the best rates and service.

Residents:

Finally, I can only tell you what a pleasure it was working as a public servant for all of our fine residents. I was always happy to hear what you had to say and hoped that I could help you in some way to make for a better day for you. Please know I take many fond memories with me and hope that every public servant you encounter will continue to assist our residents to the best of their ability. Thank you all. It has been a pleasure.



WILLOUGHBY HILLS QUILT GUILD RECEPTION INFORMATION:

On Tuesday, September 6, the Willoughby Hills Quilt Guild will be beautifying the Community Center lobby with their lovely handmade quilts. The quilts will remain in the lobby for the month of September. The library's windows will include various books on quilting that are available to its readers.

On Friday, September 9 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. the Quilt Guild will host a reception where visitors can view the quilts and speak to the quilters firsthand about their tips and techniques for their projects. In addition, several vendors will be in the O'Ryan Room to offer various patterns, fabrics and tools for sewing and quilting. A basket raffle will also be available for those wanting to take a chance on some great baskets, loaded with everything either a novice or expert sewer cannot live without. The event is free and all are welcome to attend.

The Quilt Guild generously supports the City's WHISPER Program, making beautiful lap quilts for seniors in need. Please plan to stop by on Friday, 9/9 to support this wonderful group in our community.



MY FINAL JOKES....

When Grandparents Babysit

Me: How was he?

My mom: Great!

Me: No tantrums?

My mom: None.

Me: Even when you said "no?"

My mom: Well... we
never really said that.



If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out:

City of Willoughby Hills, 35405 Chardon Road, Willoughby Hills, OH 44094

440-946-6614 Mayor Gardner's Office

It's been a pleasure...thank you for your support! Gloria Majeski