



HILLS HIGHLIGHTS

Spring 2019 #99

Mayor
Susan McCarthy

Mayor Pro Tem
William E. Hosler

City Commissioners:
Michael Coakley
Sarah H. McClure
Stuart D. Sherr

City Manager
David Hendrickson

City Hall
45 East Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
48304-2322
Telephone: 248.644.1520
Facsimile: 248.644.4813
www.bloomfieldhillsmi.net

City Office Hours:
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday – Friday

Non-Emergency:
Police and Fire: 248.644.4200

Emergency: 911

City Commission Meetings:
Second Tuesday of every
Month at 7:30 p.m.

Planning Commission Meetings:
Second Tuesday of every
Month at 4:00 p.m.

**Zoning Board of
Appeal Meetings:**
Third Tuesday of every
Month at 4:00 p.m.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS, GOALS AND BUDGET: 2019

By: Susan McCarthy, Mayor

Happy New Year! As we begin a new year most of us reflect on the past year and then think about the new year ahead of us. We do the same in our City. We look at what was accomplished in the past year and then we think about what we should budget and plan for in the coming year and beyond. Although the City budget does not run on a calendar year (rather a fiscal year from July 1st to June 30th) each year we begin the budget process well in advance and it is set before the fiscal year begins. For planning purposes, the City will set the current year budget and will also forecast for three additional years.

Let's look at some of the major accomplishments from 2018:

- The reduction of our ISO rating from a 5 to a 3. This puts the Bloomfield Hills Public Safety Department in the top 2% of the 2,025 fire departments in Michigan. This translates to a well prepared and capable department and ultimately lower insurance rates for residents and businesses in the City of Bloomfield Hills.
- Road and Infrastructure Improvements: Work was completed on the northwest section of our City, partial paving of Brady Lane and the replacement of underground infrastructure and roads in the southwest portion of the City. Some of the public infrastructure in our City is well over 70 years old. Updating and maintaining the infrastructure is essential as we continue our road improvement projects.
- The City is following state mandates regarding funding of pension and OPEB (other post employment benefits) liabilities and will continue to contribute to their funding.
- Expanded beautification projects including the Woodward Avenue median tree canopy restoration, flower beds, and the CN Bridge rehabilitation at Long Lake Road and Kensington Road.

Looking ahead to 2019 we plan to:

- Implement a balanced budget and provide a three-year budget forecast.
- Continue efforts to improve our roads and infrastructure. Work will be completed in the southwest corner of the City and we will begin partial paving of Country Club Road which connects to Vaughan Road.

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- Complete our annual review of City operations to identify where we can find efficiencies and improve processes and procedures. Every year we look at how we provide services to our residents and we set new goals to improve our service to the community.
- Expand our beautification projects. Within our City limits we have an abundance of trees, neatly manicured grass, and flowers that enhance the 2.5-mile length of our Woodward avenue median. During 2019 we will be working to beautify other similar roadways such as Kensington Road north of Long Lake. This area which parallels the CN railroad tracks is in need of trees, decorative landscaping and other visual improvements.
- Attract new businesses and new families. Over the last two years the City Commission has placed considerable effort into improving its infrastructure underneath the roadways and our road systems. We are quickly advancing on our goal of providing the best overall paved road conditions for a municipality in this county.

Of course, there are many more things we have done and will continue to accomplish for the City and our residents.

One of the things we are excited about is the continued interest in our business community. Most recently the old Kingsley Inn property was completely renovated and transformed into a DoubleTree by Hilton hotel. In addition to a complete renovation of the guest rooms, conference rooms and lobby, Zalman's Deli has recently opened within the complex, and a bar named The Duke (aka John Wayne) located in the lobby boasting a poster of this movie legend. The owners of the hotel did an exceptional job with this renovation. This property has become a great addition to our City and will benefit our residents and visitors for years to come. There are other office and business developments currently underway or in the planning stages which we are also excited about.

As always, our excellent staff is available to help our residents and businesses with any questions or issues that may arise pertaining to the City and the services we offer. In addition, we are always interested in your thoughts and recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy 2019!



Financial Update

By: Sarah H. McClure, City Commissioner

Every winter the City of Bloomfield Hills Staff and Commission begin the budget process for the new fiscal year beginning July 1st. Finance Director Keith Francis, City Manager David Hendrickson, and the rest of the Administrative team review projected revenues and the anticipated department needs and expenses. These are presented for discussion at several work sessions with the City Commission, with final budget approval later in the spring.

The largest part of City General Fund revenues (approximately 76%) come from property tax collections. You should have already received your annual Notice of Assessment and Taxable Valuation. Under state law, property taxes are capped by the lesser of 5% or the rate of inflation,

as long as there are no losses or additions to the property. The cap does not apply if there was a transfer of ownership. Other City revenue sources include monies from various permits and fees related to our building department, state revenue sharing, and other charges for services.

Our largest City General Fund expense is our Public Safety Department at about 45% of total expenses. Debt service for road and pension bonds account for 14% and our Department of Public Works is 9.7%. Other expenses include those incurred by Building and Planning, General Administration, and Building Grounds and Maintenance. The City's extensive road work and associated water/sewer improvements have been funded by a dedicated road

millage, other General Operating funds, bonding, and water and sewer fee revenues.

We do not anticipate any change to the current millage rate of 10.6 mills as the City's financial condition remains strong. The current taxes levied consist of 9.5 mills for operating purposes and 1.1 mills for roads. In addition, there is approximately .38 mills for library service at Baldwin Library. We continue to maintain our General Fund balance (rainy day fund) within the City established policy range.

Although work still needs to be done, legacy costs are under control as both the City pension and retiree health care plans met the new State funding mandates, and we have strategies to address the remaining unfunded

liabilities. In the past several years the focus of City budgets has been the repair and replacement of City roads and the infrastructure underneath them. As we complete major road projects in the next two years, and a City road bond is paid off, increasing amounts will be directed to these pension and retiree liabilities. The defined pension plan and retiree health care plan have been closed to new hires for several years so these liabilities are a finite issue.

The City of Bloomfield Hills staff and Commission continue working to provide the services our residents expect in the most efficient manner possible. We have maintained our AAA bond rating and our millage rate is one of the lowest in Southeastern Michigan.



Planning for the Future

By: David Hendrickson, City Manager

In this newsletter, you will read about the infrastructure improvements the City has been working hard to complete, and the continued attention to reducing our liabilities overall. One of the things you may not know is the considerable planning that goes into accomplishing these goals. In this article, I will talk about one of the tools we have used over the last several years to help us plan for the needed infrastructure improvements of our storm and waste water systems. The City has received an important and considerable contribution from the State of Michigan and the Department of Environmental Quality toward this work.

In 2012, the State of Michigan, through Public Acts 511, 560, and 562, allocated \$450 million dollars for grants and loans to help communities manage their storm and wastewater infrastructure. Funding from these public acts, help municipalities identify, clean, inspect, and catalogue their storm and wastewater infrastructure to develop individual plans for the improvement of these systems. This program also known as the Storm Water Management and Wastewater Program (SAW), allows each community to apply for a maximum grant of \$2 million dollars toward this endeavor. The City of Bloomfield Hills applied for, and was awarded just over \$1.5 million dollars of SAW funding. There are strict requirements in

using these monies including the requirement for each municipality to contribute 10% of the funds used from the grant. Nevertheless, the SAW grant has been well worth it for our community as we plan for the future.

The SAW grant has enabled the City to inspect, clean, and create a geographic information system (GIS). The GIS technology allows users to quickly access locations and conditions of the storm and waste water systems belonging to the municipality. This can be accomplished via a computer either in the field or from the office. We have documented the condition of each part of these systems, which helps us to plan for future work. Knowing the age and condition of each part of these systems will also help to resolve issues as the problem is occurring.

Our SAW grant expires in November of this year, and although we will not have used all \$1.5 million dollars available, we did use what was necessary to clean, inspect, and catalogue these systems in their entirety. The storm and wastewater systems overall are in very good shape, but we do have areas that will need improvement. The good news is that through this valuable tool, we can properly plan for these eventualities without additional costs to our taxpayers.



Preserving Our Investment

*By: Michael Coakley,
City Commissioner*

As part of our revised road plan we accelerated and expanded the number of roads and types of reconstruction we are doing. After an engineering reevaluation of our roads we determined that we could get to more roads more quickly if we tailored the reconstruction to the condition of each road. This meant some roads that were slated for total reconstruction, including water and sewer infrastructure, could simply be resurfaced instead. With this revision, we are able to address more roads in a single season under the new plan than under the old plan.

Of course to accomplish this we needed to and did put millions of dollars more in our road budget. The results of this have been fantastic (with one exception, which will be corrected in the spring). Our roads are coming up to the standard we rightly expect in Bloomfield Hills.

However, the story doesn't end when the construction is done. We each have a role to play in preserving this major investment, especially as we lead into spring. Nothing does more damage to our roads than the cracking that comes from the freeze-thaw cycle. A major source of water/ice under our roads is damage to the road edges and gravel shoulders. Once damaged the edge and/or shoulder permits water to seep under the roadbed where it freezes and expands causing cracks and leaves voids when it thaws leading to potholes.

That is where we come in. With so much construction going on in the City and the legions of service providers, especially with heavy equipment, our road edges and shoulders are under constant assault. The City inspectors and code enforcement do what they can to monitor and ameliorate this onslaught, but they can only do so much. As the property owners whose taxes pay for our roads, we can and should supervise our contractors and service providers to make sure that they stay off the road edge at our properties to preserve our heavy investment in our new roads.

Let's see to it that our roads last their expected life and we get the full benefit of our investment.



Public Safety Department

*By: Noel Clason,
Director of Public Safety*

Happy New Year!

2019 is upon us and your Public Safety Department is excited in the anticipation for some future staffing changes on the horizon.

We will celebrate the retirement of the current longest serving employee of the City of Bloomfield Hills. Lieutenant Scott Wilson is set to retire in March after a respected career that began in 1992. Wilson has held almost every position within the Public Safety Department over his 26+ years and has trained nearly everyone that is currently serving the Department. We wish him luck as he moves south with his family. We will be forever grateful for the years he gave to this City as he always led by example with standards Bloomfield Hills expects from their Public Safety Officers.

Wilson's retirement has led to vacancies that have trickled down the ranks. The Department is excited as we have filled a vacancy with our newest Officer, Mariah Eckel. She is a highly qualified firefighter and recent police academy graduate who will fit the Department and community just right. What makes her special is she is the first female Public Safety Officer in the history of Bloomfield Hills. To us, Mariah is another capable member of our team. You will see her on patrol soon.

The Department is also pleased to announce the promotion of a new shift Sergeant and new shift Lieutenant; these vacancies were also created by Lt. Wilson's departure. Sgt. Steve Splan and Lt. Danny Phillips will take their new posts on March 1st.

From everyone at the Bloomfield Hills Public Safety Department, stay safe and have a great 2019. Feel free to call, email or stop by the station should you have a compliment or complaint as we are always looking to improve our service to you.



Some New State Laws Affecting the Character of Bloomfield Hills

By: William E. Hosler, City Commissioner

Our legislators in Lansing have been busy! 2019 brings many new state laws which will affect property owners in Bloomfield Hills, or those doing business in the City. Many laws relate to how the City operates, like responding to Freedom of Information requests, or funding pension obligations, road improvements, or public safety. Other laws involve property ownership or use rights. Below are overviews of just a few of these new laws affecting the character of our City, most of which will become effective on March 28, 2019.

The Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marihuana Act became effective on December 6, 2018. Much has been written about this new law passed by the majority of Michiganders. Under the Act, a municipality may completely prohibit or limit the number of marihuana establishments within its boundaries. The Bloomfield Hills City Commission has considered this and preliminarily voted to prohibit such businesses by approving a draft ordinance that “opts-out” of allowing such establishments in the City. A final vote on the matter is pending more information from Lansing on how such businesses will be regulated.

Your City Commission is here to serve the citizens of Bloomfield Hills. If there is anything happening in the City you believe needs more attention, or you have ideas for ways we might improve operations, please let us know.

- **Public Act 565 of 2018** allows public utilities and cable companies to use public rights of way to erect their lines and structures as they deem necessary subject to limited local oversight. It remains to be seen whether the City will see a noticeable increase in telecommunication poles, cable boxes, or other unsightly (but necessary?) aspects of modern life adding to the clutter already within our roadways and other easements.
- **Public Act 513 of 2018** amends the Zoning Enabling Act relative to adult foster care facilities. The new act tightens the exemption from zoning for such facilities to ensure that a loophole was not created for uses outside of those receiving foster care benefits.
- **Public Acts 633-635 of 2018** (which became effective a few days before New Year’s Eve!), changes Michigan’s fireworks law, shrinking the number of days (and the hours within those days) that consumer fireworks can legally be used. The new changes also offer some local governments the ability to assess stiffer penalties for violations and additional regulations on temporary structures in some higher population communities. The Bloomfield Hills ordinance already considers these issues, but the City Commission will certainly be reviewing possible changes in light of the new law.
- **Public Act 506 of 2018** preempts any local ordinance that regulates a sign on or in a building that commemorates U.S. veterans, or any police officer, firefighter, medical first responder, or member of the U.S. Armed Forces who die in the line of duty.

Protecting the City Streets- A New Ordinance

The maintenance and rehabilitation of the roads is continually at the forefront of the City's annual list of goals. Considerable funding and staff attention is given to the preservation of the City owned infrastructure. Once roads have been improved as part of the comprehensive road program, the focus then shifts to the maintenance of these roads and the prevention of premature cracking of the roadway edges.

Due to the high volume of landscape and other heavy equipment vehicles that work in the City, it is common for these vehicles to drive over the edges of the asphalt streets without curbs, and park on the soft portion of the road rights of way. The continued traffic over these road edges, has caused many newly paved roads to prematurely crack. This can be a result of the weight of the vehicles or by the vehicles creating ruts and voids next to the roads edge, which weakens the stability of the road.

In an effort to help prevent potential road deterioration, Section 18-32 of the City Code was recently adopted, an ordinance to require all vehicle parking to be on the paved portion only of City streets. This includes parking for all vehicles, trailers, and machinery. Parking on the soft shoulder or unpaved, dirt, gravel or adjacent landscaped or grass area is prohibited.

This ordinance will be enforced through an educational approach. City staff and the Public Safety Department will communicate with contractors and residents to convey the purpose and intent of the ordinance. Ultimately, the City's investment in our infrastructure will be better protected through this process.

Household Hazardous Waste

Household products should never be poured down a sink, storm drain, or ditch. What's under our kitchen sink or in the garage can be hazardous to people and our water. **Help keep our rivers, lakes, and beaches clean by knowing how to handle your household waste.**

Which products are hazardous?

- Automotive: Oil, transmission fluid, gasoline/diesel fuel
- Home improvement: Oil-based products, glue, rust remover, paints and furniture strippers
- Pesticides/weed killers
- Cleaning Products: Tub and tile, oven
- Medical Items: Old medication, syringes/needles
- Other: nail polish, hair relaxer, mercury thermometer, alcohol-based lotion, prescription medication, aerosol cans

How do I dispose of my products?

- Never dump household hazardous waste down storm drains, sinks, or on the ground. Take them to a recycling location.
- A map of disposal sites can be found on Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) website: <https://bit.ly/2IsZUAX>

How do I store my products?

- Keep unused products in their original containers with their label intact.
- Keep all lids and caps on and tightly closed. Store products inside dry, cool areas, away from kids and pets.
- Only buy what you need and maintain a small inventory.

Private Property Drainage

Every year the City receives numerous inquiries about storm drainage responsibilities on private property. In most instances, it is the responsibility of the private property owner to address drainage issues on their own property, even along natural watercourses and the Rouge River. If the drainage inquiry is regarding a City owned and operated system, such as a storm drain within a City road, then the City may investigate the inquiry further. Any drainage disputes between neighboring properties should be solved privately between property owners.

Drainage tips to keep in mind:

- Always follow City ordinances, County regulations, and State laws
- Know your property boundary lines and respect them
- Keep drainage easements and storm drains free of litter and debris
- Never dump any yard debris or materials down storm drains
- Always pick up after your pet
- Use earth-friendly fertilizers
- Remember stormwater from your lawns, roofs, and driveways flow through storm drains and end up discharging to the Rouge River and the Great Lakes without treatment.

Maintaining the Beauty of our City

This time of year sparks thoughts of spring and planning for warm weather projects on your property such as clean up, renovation, and landscaping. With that in mind, there are some City ordinances to be aware of that can provide guidance for such improvements. This will ensure a smooth project, while maintaining the appeal of our streets and properties that we all expect and enjoy. This is a general overview of the most common ordinances relating to property maintenance and improvement. Please keep in mind many projects require permits before work can begin. Feel free to contact City Hall and our code enforcement officer for any clarification or additional information.



The exterior of all buildings shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound, and kept in sanitary condition. This includes accessory structures, which include detached garages, fences, and walls.



Exterior surfaces including doors, window and door frames, cornices, balconies, and decks shall be maintained in good condition. Peeling and chipped paint must be removed and repainted or sealed.



Exterior property must remain free from accumulation or storage of construction materials, unless these materials are related to and necessary for construction activities on the premises. These materials include lumber, block, brick, roofing, pipe, wires, and fixtures, and should be stored neatly and orderly during the limited time necessary to complete the project.



All premises should be maintained to prevent soil erosion and standing water.



There are ordinance restrictions for tree removal and replacement. Please contact City Hall prior to commencing a tree or landscape project.



All property and premises shall be free from any accumulation of rubbish and garbage.



Property shall be free of brush piles and noxious weeds. Additionally, grass, weeds and other rank vegetation over seven inches tall must be cut.



Compost material includes yard and grass clippings, vegetable or other garden debris, and shrubbery or brush trimmings that are less than four feet in length and two inches in diameter. Compost shouldn't include stumps, agricultural and animal waste, roots, or garbage.



Recyclable materials are those that are separated and presorted from solid waste before collection and include: paper, glass, metal, plastic, aluminum, newspaper, and yard clippings. Contact City Hall for information on approved containers and pick up.

Bloomfield Hills has always been a community of beautiful properties and proud residents. By keeping our neighbors in mind, and using the City ordinances to assist with all of the change the season brings, Bloomfield Hills will continue to be the best of places to call home.



City of Bloomfield Hills
45 E. Long Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-2322

Upcoming Important Dates

Good Friday Holiday City Hall Closed – April 19, 2019

2019 Bloomfield Hills City Commission:

Susan McCarthy, Mayor
William E. Hosler, Mayor Pro Tem
Michael Coakley, Commissioner
Sarah H. McClure, Commissioner
Stuart D. Sherr, Commissioner

CITY STAFF:

David Hendrickson, City Manager
Amy L. Burton, City Clerk
Keith Francis, Finance Director, Treasurer
Noel Clason, Director of Public Safety
Brian Vargason, Building Official
Jamie Spivy, DPW Foreman
John Rogers, Code Enforcement Officer

EMERGENCY:

Police, Fire, Medical – dial 911
After hours (non-emergency) (248)644-4200

CITY GOVERNMENT:

Manager's Office – (248)530-1404
Building Official – (248)530-1408
Clerk's Office – (248)530-1403
Finance & Treasurer – (248)530-1402
Police / Public Safety Dept. – (248)644-4200
Public Works – (248)530-1412

Where to Get Answers

CITY SERVICES:

Animal Control – (248) 644-4200
Building & Permit Info. – (248) 530-1409
Building Inspection Line (248) 593-9350
Code Enforcement – (248) 530-1410
Fire Marshall – (248) 644-4200
Library Service – (248) 647-1700
(Baldwin Public Library)
Police Services (Non-emerg.) (248) 644-4200
Property / Assessing Info. – (248) 858-0084
(Oakland County)
Sanitary Sewer Service & Billing – (248) 858-1110
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission)
Street Maintenance – (248) 530-1404
Trash & Waste Pick Up – GFL
(586) 772-8900 or (888) 877-4996
Voting Information – (248) 530-1403
Water Service & Billing – (248) 858-1110
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission
hours – 7:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)
Water and Sewer Line Repair – (248) 858-0487
(Oakland County Water Resources Commission
hours – 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

OTHER SERVICES

AT&T Repair Service – (800) 515-7272
Amtrak (Info / Reservations) – (800) 872-7245
Baldwin Public Library – (248) 647-1700
Birmingham (City) – (248) 530-1800
Birmingham Public Schools – (248) 203-3000
Birmingham / Bloomfield Chamber – (248) 644-1700

Bloomfield Hills Country Club – (248) 644-6262
Bloomfield Hills Schools – (248) 341-5400
Bloomfield Township – (248) 433-7700
Bloomfield Township Police Dept. – (248) 433-7755
Bloomfield Township Senior Services – (248) 723-3500
Bloomfield Open Hunt – (248) 644-9411
Comcast Customer Service – (800) 934-6489
Customer Advocate – (734) 254-1557
Consumers Power (Service, Billing & Emergencies) –
(800) 477-5050
Cranbrook Educational Community – (248) 645-3000
DTE Energy – (Customer Services & Emergencies) –
(800) 477-4747
Haven (Domestic Violence Counseling) – (248) 334-1274 or
(877) 922-1274
Oakland County – (248) 858-1000
Oakland County Assessor – (248) 858-0776
or (248) 858-0740
Oakland County Health Dept. – (248) 858-1280
Oakland County Clerk / Register of Deeds – (248) 858-0581
Oakland County Treasurer – (248) 858-0611
Oakland Water Resources Commission –
main: (248) 356-6299 emergencies: (248) 624-6366
Road Commission for Oakland County – (877) 858-4808
weekday hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.
After hours & weekends call – (248) 858-4895
U.S. Postal Service – 2050 South Blvd. (248) 332-3981
Village Club – (248) 644-3450
West Bloomfield Township – (248) 451-4800
48th District Court – information & probation:
(248) 433-9373 criminal: (248) 647-1141