

From the Mayor's Desk

An Incredible Journey



Mayor
Judy
Cook

As I complete twenty years as a member of the Oakwood City Council, including the privilege of serving eight years as Mayor, I do so with great appreciation for the city I have served. Many things have changed in the past 20 years but the core strengths of Oakwood have not. We remain a beautiful residential community with unique homes that proclaim pride of ownership and responsibility to neighbors. Our streets and sidewalks are safe, conscientiously maintained and well used. Our respect and concern for green space continues. We are a "front porch" community that enjoys friendly dialogue and communication with our neighbors. There is a distinct ambience of

welcome that is often mentioned by visitors. The extent of city services goes beyond mere labels and includes the manner in which services are delivered. For instance, to speak about "trash collection" addresses a lengthy menu of year round services not routinely included elsewhere. Our school system is the envy of most. Along with academic excellence is the inclusion of programs focused on the development of positive human qualities so essential for successful adults.

There is considerable advantage of size for Oakwood. We are small enough to give individual attention when called for and do not have growth and sprawl to compete for our resources. Our government is transparent, approachable, involved, citizen-controlled and mostly volunteer in nature. City council works as a team to establish policies that serve as guidelines for staff operating decisions. There is a myriad of opportunities established to enlist citizen participation.

The goal is to be in touch with the concerns and priorities of the community at all times and in all areas of interest. We have a quality staff of talented, skilled, and experienced people. The work environment encourages long tenure which is of great advantage to the community. We have enjoyed a history of superior city managers which continues to this day. This chief administrator is essential to continuing our success.

As I look to the future, I see all the options in place for continuing our strength and appeal. Oakwood is a mosaic of multiple pieces creating an appealing picture. Individuals reviewing our offerings may focus on different parts of the picture according to their personal priorities, but at the end of the day, it will be the whole picture that leads them to decide; "This is where I want live." Because of this, it is important that we keep all the pieces in place and well polished. It is tempting to blank out some of the pieces

as a way to reduce costs, but in so doing we would change the picture along with its total appeal. Our founding City Manager Dave Foell believed fervently that Oakwood citizens would support the cost of maintaining our community as long as they received a dollar's value for a dollar given. I believe that philosophy applies still today. Our attractive identity is unique and must stay that way in the future.

I have enjoyed great support from City Manager Norbert Klopsch and all the city staff in my years as Mayor of Oakwood. I am deeply grateful and will miss "my family" immensely. I offer great praise for their expertise and performance. City council has provided sound advice and direction as we together chartered the path for our community. Each council member brings unique skills and leadership to the discussion and debate that directs our city. Their dedication to the best interest of our citizens is the hallmark of their tenure. It has

been a privilege to be part of their team.

I end, as I always have, with our citizens - our amazing citizens. I recall so many occasions when I despaired that our community could find the common wisdom to arrive at prudent decisions. I have never been disappointed. A combination of citizen awareness, educated consideration and common sense seems always to provide the judgment to "sort things out" and come to beneficial decisions. This explains why the voice of our citizens is perpetually sought as we explore new endeavors and challenges. The strength of our community is grounded in this "bottom up" flow of authority. It belongs at the top of our list of resources. I am most appreciative of the trust and support given to me by the citizens of Oakwood - our greatest asset. It has been a privilege to serve you.

Mayor Judy Cook
City of Oakwood

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