



The Creek

January 2018

BUILDING ON A SUCCESSFUL 2017

by Village President John L. Swisher and Village Administrator Kyle Ellefson



2017 was an eventful year in Johnson Creek, and 2018 is shaping up to be equally exciting. Last year there were personnel changes, several projects completed, major projects planned, new residential and commercial construction, new businesses that joined our community, a successful budget process, and one major planning project was completed while another strategic planning process was ramped up.

Since every property owner should have received their property tax bill already, you may have noticed that the Village was able to keep the mil rate flat, which is the third consecutive year that the mil rate has either decreased or stayed the same. We have been fortunate to experience steady growth and modest expense increases over the past several years, but there are of course no



guarantees that we will be able to continue the trend of decreasing or unchanged tax rates. What you can expect is that we will continue to work diligently to provide quality service to residents and visitors, addressing issues and challenges with thoughtful consideration, all while being mindful of our taxpayers and the burden excessive tax increases can place on homeowners and business owners alike.

Over the course of several months during the spring and summer of 2017, the Village conducted an extensive Comprehensive Planning process, with multiple sessions and opportunities to interact with residents, taxpayers, and business leaders to create a unique vision for the future of our community. The Village Board also embarked on an effort to identify specific projects coming up in the next several years, develop a timeline for their completion, and plan how the projects will be paid for.

Personnel changes have been a steady theme throughout 2017, and we have been fortunate to find several excellent employees to fill the gaps left when existing employees retired or left for other opportunities. Early in 2017, long-time Village Clerk-Treasurer Joan Dykstra retired, and Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Trebatoski stepped up into the Clerk-Treasurer role. To fill the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer position, we were fortunate to hire Sam Bell, who was working as the Deputy Treasurer in Fort Atkinson at the time.

More recently, long-time Library Director Luci Bledsoe retired after more than 25 years with the Village, and Clerk-Treasurer Lisa Trebatoski left to pursue other opportunities. After an extensive recruitment effort, Abby Armour was selected as the Library Director, leaving her position as Librarian with the Johnson Creek School District. I think there is a real sense of excitement as we begin to see how Abby will build upon the legacy of quality and service that Luci created in the library, and Abby has the opportunity to leave her impression on the Library and our community. On the Village side of the Municipal Building, we were able to recruit Heather Rupnow as the new Village Clerk-Treasurer, who had previously served the Village of Sullivan in a similar capacity for several years. As another example of our good fortune in the past year, former Clerk-Treasurer Joan Dykstra agreed to temporarily rejoin the Village for a short time to provide information and assistance during the Village's busiest season, recognizing that the Administrator has been here about a year and a half, the Deputy Clerk-Treasurer has been here less than a year, and Heather has been our Clerk-Treasurer for just a few months.

While we often focus on staff changes, it is important to also note the importance of the volunteer committee and commission members who make important contributions to the community. One such volunteer, Les Gray, recently retired from Library Board after serving for more than 17 years, and we are grateful for his service, and the service of all of the committee and commission members. Don't forget to contact Village Hall if you are interested in volunteering for these opportunities!

The Village also expanded our capabilities by creating the Tourism, Promotion & Economic Development Department and hiring Katie Newcomb as the Village's first Director of Tourism, Promotion and Economic Development. Katie has extensive experience with tourism, promotion and marketing, spending time with the Milwaukee Brewers, Betty Brinn Children's Museum, Milwaukee Public Museum, and two Harley Davidson dealerships. Katie started mid-January, working an average of 23 hours a week, and has already made great strides in developing her tourism and promotion strategies and making important connections in the community. For several years the Johnson Creek Chamber of Commerce provided part-time tourism services to the Village, and Executive Director Tammi Vetrano has done an excellent job increasing Chamber membership and provided quality services to the business community in the Village. We are thankful for their work in the past, and look forward to finding new opportunities to collaborate!

The Village of Johnson Creek tackled several public works projects in 2017, improving our wastewater system and making our roadways safer. First, the intersections of Hwy Y and River Drive and Hwy Y and Resort Drive were reconstructed to allow semis to move through the area in a safer manner, allowing wider areas for turning and removing obstacles that made it difficult to enter Resort Drive with larger commercial vehicles. Nearly 3,000 feet of Aztalan Street was also milled and resurfaced during the summer, which when paired with the sidewalk improvements installed along Aztalan Street by the School District created a smooth, safe stretch of roadway that should serve the community for years to come. Finally, one component of our wastewater system upgrade was completed this year as a new interceptor was installed near the intersection of Aztalan, Union, and Milwaukee Streets, and larger pipe was installed from the interceptor to the wastewater treatment plant. These projects end up many feet below ground and often go unnoticed after the initial construction, but maintaining our collection system is critical to providing an effective, efficient wastewater treatment system for the community in the long run.

As we have experienced for many years now, our community has seen the construction of several new homes and businesses. During 2017, we issued permits for 11 new single-family homes, and two 2-family homes. That number is down slightly from other years, but we also recognize that there are fewer buildable lots right now than there have been in a decade or more. On the commercial side of new construction, a new manufacturing building is nearly complete at the far western end of Resort Drive, and Jeremy Kastner (operating as Hoof Health) will be starting operations there in February. Perhaps the most visible addition to the community is the commercial building that is being constructed at the intersection of Hartwig Boulevard and State Highway 26. Construction appears to be moving along well despite the cold winter weather, and in spring we expect the building to open with several tenants, including a Qdoba restaurant and a Starbucks.

In addition to the new construction, several businesses have sprung up in existing locations, adding to our vibrant business community. Early in 2017, Dr. James Milford and his team opened Three Oaks Health, bringing a unique style of healthcare to our community. Three Oaks has already grown, adding additional office space and staff members. In the heart of our downtown, Angela Caminata opened Unique Reflections hair studio, and it has been growing by leaps and bounds. Since Angela opened, she has added several partner businesses, including Kayla with R.O.C.K.S. Studio Salon, Tammy with Shear Love, and Pamela who runs Waxing Girl. Just down the block from Unique Reflections, the Milwaukee Street Roadhouse also opened in 2017, adding to the number of businesses that have found their place in downtown Johnson Creek. These businesses are off to a great start in Johnson Creek, and we look forward to seeing their success for years to come!



Village of Johnson Creek

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IMPORTANT DATES AND EVENTS

MEETINGS: The Plan Commission (if needed) and Committee of the Whole will meet at 5:00 pm and 5:30 pm respectively on Monday, February 12, 2018. The next Village Board meeting is Monday, February 26, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

Elections:

- Spring Primary—February 20, 2018
- Spring Election—April 3, 2018
- Partisan Primary—August 14, 2018
- General Election—November 6, 2018

WHAT'S INSIDE? Building on a Successful 2017

DOG LICENSE

The 2018 dog tags are available for licensing. Applications can be found on our website or at Village Hall. The fee is \$10 spayed/neutered or \$15 if unaltered. If a dog is not licensed by March 31, a \$25 late fee will be charged. The Village also sells the Jefferson County Dog Park tags until March 31, 2018.