

MAYOR'S MEMO

News of Interest to Southfield Residents from Mayor Ken Siver



The Southfield High School for Arts & Technology Band warms up the crowd as Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in Southfield to kick off the holiday season. The city's holiday celebrations began on Dec. 2nd.

Southfield kicks off holiday season with tree lighting; Hanukkah, Kwanzaa observances follow

The holiday season officially arrived in Southfield on Tuesday, December 2nd with the annual tree lighting ceremony at City Hall and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a vintage fire truck.

Festivities included vendors, a petting zoo, crafts, performances by the high school band and a string quartet, refreshments, and photo ops with Santa.

The annual menorah lighting and Hanukkah parade took place on December 16th. Meanwhile, Parks & Rec offered classes in making gingerbread houses and the Soulful Santa Workshop & Holiday Market.



Southfield boys and girls let Santa and Mrs. Claus know what they want for Christmas.



Newly opened Dog Park at Lahser Woods Park has runs for large and small dogs

Looking for a holiday gift for your pooch?

We suggest a membership to the Dog Park at Lahser Woods

The Dog Park at Lahser Woods is now open at 27577 Lahser Road. It is designed with separate safe play areas for large and small dogs in a secure fenced-in environment. Lahser Woods includes solar-lit paths, and space to connect with neighbors, and an expanded parking lot.

This project was made possible by a Community Park & Trail Capital Grant from Oakland County Parks.

To become a member at the Dog Park at Lahser Woods, residents may apply on-line or in person at the Southfield Parks & Recreation Department. Membership requires the following:

- Each dog must have a valid City of Southfield dog license obtainable through the Southfield Police Department Record Bureau at (248) 796-5588
- Completed Dog Membership form (available on the city's website under Parks & Recreation)
- Current vaccination records. Required vaccines are Rabies, DHLPP/DAPPL, and Bordetella.
- Present or upload a copy of the Southfield dog license showing tag number, expiration date, pet's name, and owner's name.
- Watch the Dog Park orientation video

Dog Park at Lahser Woods Access & Safety Rules

- Valid key fob required.
- Dogs must be leashed entering/exiting. Owners must carry a leash inside.

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- Small Dog Area is for dogs under 25 lbs.

Dog Behavior

- Dogs that are aggressive or bark excessively cannot remain.
- No dogs in heat, under 4 months, sick, or with parasites not allowed.

Supervision & Age

- Adults 18+ only. Kids 6–17 may enter with a parent/guardian.
- No children under 6 inside the fenced area.
- Dogs must be supervised at all times.

Not Allowed

- Toys, food (dog or human), smoking, alcohol, glass, bicycles, strollers, professional trainers, or animals other than dogs.
- No pinch, prong, spike, chain collars, or harnesses inside the park.

Membership Fees

\$45 for a year's membership.

\$10 for and additional household dog

Hours of Operation

May to August

M-F 8am to 9pm
S & S 10am to 9pm

November to February

M-F 8am to 6pm
S & S 10am to 6pm

March, April, September, October

M-F 8am to 8pm
S & S 10am to 8pm

Mayor Siver maps out city direction in inaugural address

Mayor Kenyon Siver delivered inaugural remarks outlining where the city is headed in the new term after he and newly elected and re-elected officials were sworn in on November 17th.

Re-elected officials are Councilmen Ari Mandelbaum & Daniel Brightwell and City Treasurer Irv Lowenberg & newly elected officials are Councilwomen Yolanda C. Haynes & Ashanti Bland & City Clerk Gabi Grossbard.



The following is an abridged version of his remarks.

The City Council, city administration, and I will need to continue to pivot from the past, to address the current challenges that we face due to the external forces that are beyond the city's control. These challenges include the post-COVID pandemic workplace realities, the major shift in retailing from brick & mortar to on-line, the crippling impact of inflation, high interest rates, supply chain issues, climate change, and so forth.

For decades, we in Southfield have prided ourselves on being a premiere Midwest office hub. We now find ourselves with too much office space. We are doubling down on business retention and recruitment. In the past nine months we have experienced a great influx of new businesses. We will continue to support our business accelerator and review zoning regulations to allow for a greater variety of uses of existing spaces. We will continue to look for adaptive reuses of existing structures. As examples, the Big Lots! store in the Southfield Plaza went out of business. An Aldi supermarket has been secured for that space. As you know, Kroger departed the Cornerstone Plaza and that space, sitting vacant for several years and threatening the viability of the center, has been filled with retailers Five Below, Ross for Less, and Burlington.

I am pleased to announce that Southfield in the near future will see a reduction of one million square feet of office space. Two towers at 11 Mile & Inkster in the former Blue Cross/Blue Shield complex will be converted to 307 apartments and two towers of the Galleria Office Center on Northwestern and 12 Mile will be demolished to make way for a full-service COSTCO.

It is my goal, with City Council support, to grow Southfield's population and thus its tax base by 2030 through the addition of at least 2,500 new housing units. The housing market is tight. Supply and demand tells us that we can stabilize rents and housing costs by increasing supply. The difficult challenge for us as a city is the time it takes to fund housing. For the Wellspring apartments and town homes that are presently under construction at Berg Road and Hooper Street, it has taken seven years to secure the \$33 million for this 72-unit project.

The John Grace Arms subsidized senior housing project with 60 units is about to start construction. Financing this \$21 million project has taken over five years. The McKinley School conversion to 40 market rate condos is now in its fifth year. The privately developed Deer Brook condos at Lahser & Duns Scotus is also in its fifth year. The Middlepointe Development with 577 units planned on Evergreen Road is in its fourth year and getting closer to becoming a reality thanks to a \$131.8 million Transformational Brownfield Grant that the city and developer worked collaboratively on to secure from the state of Michigan.

The 120-acre Northland City Center project is entering its fifth year of construction, following a five-year search for a developer who would build Southfield's vision for the site and not the factories and logistics centers pitched to us by real estate developers. In the near future, City Council will be reviewing changes to the Northland development plan to allow for a large sports facility, the adaptive reuse of the Hudson's building for a boutique hotel, and an additional major retailer adjoining the COSTCO Business Center.

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These challenges aside, we will continue to support affordable housing through our partnership with Habitat for Humanity Oakland County and by other means. Over 50 units of medium-priced housing is planned for 12 vacant acres on Garner Street.

We welcome and look forward to creating a strong partnership with Henry Ford Health System as it completes a study of the Providence Hospital Campus and the services provided. We are confident that a new era has arrived for the city's largest employer and for the people the hospital serves.

Our town/gown relationship with Lawrence Technological University has grown exponentially over the years. We will continue to foster and grow this relationship. We are indeed fortunate to have a university of this caliber in our city.

Our Council-approved Parks & Recreation Master Plan has guided renewal of our parks & rec facilities. Many of our facilities were built through a bond program 50 years ago. We have embarked on the replacement of the municipal swimming pool. Funds have been set aside, and an architect has been retained by City Council. We will be gathering community input on what the new aquatic facility should have after the holidays. The five-year Parks & Rec Master Plan expires a year from now. Additional improvements are slated in the year ahead and for the creation of activity centers for senior adult programming.

We all have heard Governor Gretchen Whitmer's oft repeated cry, "Fix the damn roads." And we have been fixing our *damn* roads but fixing them is very *damn* expensive. Southfield has expended \$330 million over the past decade and repaired or replaced 151 miles of streets. We will continue working on securing funding for the 95 miles we have yet to replace. We call on our state and federal representatives to earmark funds for local roads and appreciate those dollars that they have secured for us in recent years.

Grant funding is in place for the next two miles of our portion of the 30-mile Nine Line pathway on Nine Mile Road. We will continue our progress in making our city more pedestrian and bike friendly while improving our streetscapes with pedestrian amenities and public art.

We have received many complaints about group homes in our neighborhoods. Just as the City Council addressed Air B&Bs, we need legislative assistance in setting limits on the number of group homes licensed per city. Southfield is over saturated. I am told that our state senator and representative are working on this issue. We understand the necessity of group homes, but they place a strain on our public safety staff. Violent incidents and missing persons that need police or fire intervention are common. There is

an incompatibility with the number of group homes and the quiet enjoyment of our homes.

Another matter that needs a legislative fix are the illegal marijuana grow operations that pop up from time to time. I call on the State Legislature to increase the penalties for these unlicensed and illegal operators. Currently, when caught, they receive a slap on the wrist. Why Michigan is lax with illegal operators mystifies me. Their "product" is untaxed, untested, and supports a black market that undercuts the licensed and regulated businesses.

During this election season we heard many residents' concerns over property taxes. New homeowners face the uncapping of the taxable value when a home changes ownership. 30-year-old Proposal A has created an inequity in funding local government and home ownership. In a recent report from our City Assessor, I learned that because we have many long-time homeowners, one third of our housing stock would see a 100 to 150 percent increase in property taxes when transferred to new owners. I find this statistic shocking. I know that I speak for the Council, that the legislature needs to address this as well.

In the meantime, by growing our tax base with new housing and developments, such as the new COSTCO and other projects will help to mitigate the rising costs of operating city government.

For several years now we have been expanding our efforts to be a more sustainable community. We are heavily promoting energy efficiency and waste reduction. The city is presently piloting a food waste recycling program. We expect to expand this effort. Hand-in-hand with sustainability, we must be more aggressive with tree replacements. Thousands of trees were planted in our neighborhoods 60-70 years ago. Many have scummed to age and various diseases. Powerful storms have knocked down hundreds of trees in the past few years. Consequently, we have tree-less blocks in our neighborhoods. We need to step up our reforestation efforts as we address global warming.

And finally, we will need to continue to assess the long-term impacts on our community of the COVID 19 pandemic, climate change, and an aging population. Life as we knew it prior to 2020 has changed. We have to continue to pivot to keep moving the city forward. We will seek solutions to the new issues that arise in community life, family life, recreation, education, health care, mental health, retail & commerce, public safety, and in our office market.

While many challenges lay ahead. I believe that we ... the City Council, administration and I ... are up to the task of taking them on. We are committed to maintaining Southfield as a vibrant community known for great city services, safe streets, and a high quality of life. I look forward to working on your behalf over the next four years. Once again, I thank the voters for placing their trust in me for another term as your mayor. Thank you very much.

Council approves appointment of new leadership for 2 key departments

The Southfield City Council recently filled two key vacant positions in the city administration. Kelley Regal has been appointed Deputy City Treasurer and Janell Hearn as Community Relations Director.

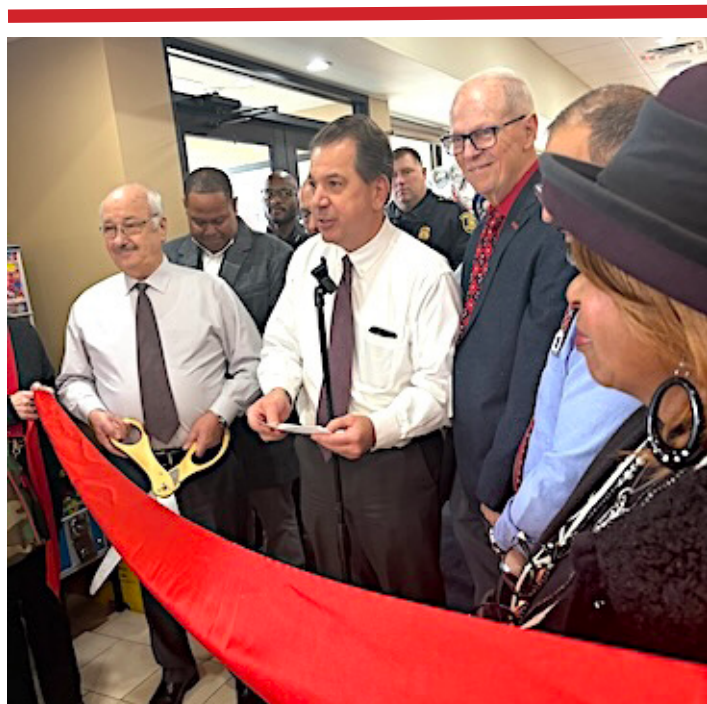
Ms. Regal has extensive experience in private business and government for nearly 20 years, including general accounting, payroll, accounts payable, etc. She worked for the City of Warren for eight years in the collection and processing of taxes and payments and managing the city's daily ledger. Ms. Regal comes to Southfield from the City of Roseville where she served as Deputy Treasurer for four years. She holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in accounting.

Ms. Hearn grew up in Southfield. She comes to the Community Relations position in Southfield with vast experience in public relations, marketing, social media, event planning, branding, community engagement, video production, and project management. She has held positions with Lighthouse of Oakland County, WDIV Local 4 News (associate producer), VVK PR + Creative (producer), Legendary Movement Media Group, and Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (visual design & outreach manager).

Ms. Hearn holds a Bachelor's degree in advertising & public relations from Oakland University and a digital media arts diploma from Specs Howard School of Media Arts.



Newly elected City Clerk Gabi Grossbard administers the oath of office to Kelley Regal (left) and Janell Hearn (right).



Owners Ven & Terry Keros at Grand Reopening ceremony

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The Mayor's Memo is an occasional newsletter produced by Mayor Ken Siver and not done at city expense. The Memo provides city news & updates to residents. To subscribe, send an email to bastrop@cityof-southfield.com. Feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.

Kerby's Coney Island, favorite Southfield eatery, returns

Long time favorite Southfield restaurant, Kerby's Coney Island, has reopened after a kitchen fire two years ago. The mainstay at Ten Mile & Northwestern Highway recently celebrated the completion of the remodeled facility and its return to operation.

Kerby's dates back to the 1980s and prior to that it was a Howard Johnson's.