

the Voice

SUMMER 2016

A PUBLICATION OF COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP



Playscape project adds quality of life to Madison Place area

A collaborative project building a creative Natural Playscape where children run and play freely in a natural environment will be completed this summer in Columbia Township.

The innovative public-private partnership between Columbia Township and Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori that began two years ago on the school's bucolic 13 acres will soon be completed.

Columbia Township received a \$55,000 Ohio State Capital Budget Grant this year to help complete the project. While the Playscape has been open since

last summer's completion of Phase I, a grand opening ceremony is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sunday, August 21, to recognize the completion of the project. The total cost is estimated to be \$115,000.

During the school year, the Natural Playscape is open after school, evenings and weekends. During the summer the space is open daily from around June 1 to August 25.

Features of the natural playground include special areas designed for exploration and manipulation. Circuitous paths lead children to small gathering spaces, shaded gardens and quiet spots

for thought. Through abundant loose materials such as gravel, water, sand and shaped pieces of tree limbs that can be stacked and moved, children explore the world around them.

In the Playscape, children are encouraged to use their imagination by playing in a log fort, on a hillside slide, in an enchanted forest, and on logs and in tunnels. The Playscape is also adjacent to the school's more traditional playground including swings and climbing apparatuses.

Administrator Mike Lemon said the Playscape adds a "de facto park" for neighborhood residents in a densely populated section of Columbia Township where there is little natural space for children and families to gather and explore.

"We're tremendously proud of the community's new Playscape," said Administrator Mike Lemon. "The public-private collaboration with Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori is a great example for other organizations and institutions on how to achieve high caliber goals by partnering with others."

Dan Teller, executive director of Good Shepherd Catholic Montessori School, said in its first year, the Playscape has already been heavily utilized by the community.

This summer's project adds a hillside slide with stone steps, a trellis tunnel, a small water feature, further work on the fort, construction access points and stairs, and work on a small shed that includes a play porch for children. Also assisting in projects at the space have been six Dan Beard Boy Scout Council Eagle Scouts, landscape architect Rachel Robinson, the J.K. Meurer Corporation and other groups and volunteers.

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Welcome!



David Kubicki
President of Trustees

Welcome to the first edition **The Voice, a new publication from Columbia Township.** Through these pages and future editions we hope to expand your knowledge about your township, share important township news, and provide you

with information about programs and services that will be useful to your experience as a resident of Columbia Township.

Columbia Township has a long history in Hamilton County, established in 1791 on the Ohio River near Lunken Airport. In its current form it is nine "islands" separated by a "sea of municipalities." Our community is not one contiguous land form like Madeira or Mariemont. While neighborhoods within our boundaries are proud and strong, we as a community often may not know where one portion of Columbia Township begins and ends. We hope this publication helps to connects us into a more unified community.

Let us know how we can meet your needs as a resident and taxpayer as we work, play and grow together.

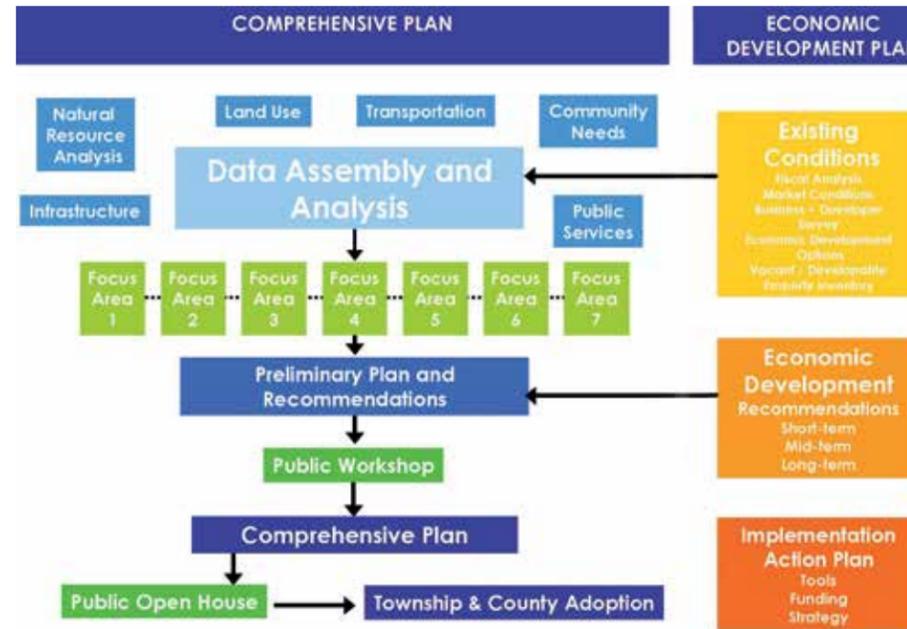
5 Reasons to Live in Columbia Township

Columbia Township is a great place to live! Here are a few reasons to recommend our community to your friends:

- 01 High levels of service**
Trash, recycling, brush and leaves picked up by the township for no extra charge, paid for by a levy. Bi-monthly street cleaning, bi-annual street tree trimming, limited wood chippings and leaf compost delivered at no charge.
- 02 Affordable living, diverse neighborhoods**
- 03 Named one of the Top 25 Ohio Communities***
*per Niche website statistics 2016
- 04 Convenience to downtown and major Cincinnati amenities**
- 05 Excellent and efficient snow removal services**

Comprehensive Plan Update on 2016 Agenda for Columbia Township

Updated plan will focus on economic development, neighborhoods, sense of community



"We have developed a more useful website, joined *OhioCheckbook.com* for more transparency in our financial operation; and re-established a newsletter for better connections to residents and businesses."

Lemon said that new areas to be addressed in the update include how contracted services are provided by other communities and innovative and advanced transportation needs. "We will also need to identify funding sources for these services in the future.," Lemon said.

State and county revenue will likely continue to decrease and mandated laws will increase expenses, he said. Thus, Columbia Township will need to examine the impact of these issues on the future.

A committee of residents and business owners will soon be forming to give suggestions and provide perspective about shaping the future of Columbia Township. Major areas under discussion besides economic growth include infrastructure, neighborhood connections, joint service districts, recreation, beautification and identification, and transportation.

To get involved in planning Columbia Township's future, call 513-561-6046 to express your interest in participating. You will be asked to provide your specific interest and background or experience.

Columbia Township is at the beginning stage of a six-month project to update its major planning document, the **Comprehensive Plan**. This plan is used to provide a long range vision, which is updated every five years, for the township and a road map to guided growth that will bring progress to the community.

This is the second update to Columbia Township's 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

The last update was made in 2011. According to Administrator Mike Lemon, many things have changed in the township since that update, especially in the area of economic development.

"Since our last update we have implemented a new Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) to spur more economic development, improved or reconstructed streets, and established a new park in Madison Place," he said.

We've updated our look!

New township website now online

Have you checked out Columbia Township's website lately?

We've recently updated our site and can be found on the web at ColumbiaTwp.org. The new Columbia Township website is much friendly, easier to navigate and contains a wealth of practical information that could be helpful to you as a resident. Besides traditional government-related information, the township website shares local news affecting the township, economic development information, upcoming events, history, road closures, demographics and more.

There's also a helpful list of important phone numbers and contact information for township and Hamilton County services.

We hope you'll find the new site easy to use, more interesting and useful in learning more about Columbia Township.



Township Logo Represents Connection to Diversity, Township History

A new representation of Columbia Township is drawing attention to the many great qualities of this historic community. Built on a base of the (blue) Little Miami River, the arching icons in orange and red are graphic representation of the strong voice of its citizens and business owners. The icon represents a metamorphosis from its fragmented identity of the past to its unified, progressive plan for the future.

Nine people are on this logo, each representing one of the nine communities found within the boundaries of Columbia Township, recognizing the diversity of the community. The bridge structure symbolizes connection of one community to the next and to businesses communities within the township borders. The river runs under this bridge, and while the river plays less of an important role in the township than it did hundreds of years ago, it is a source of heritage and pride for those who live near it.

Ridge Fire District residents to see November fire levy on ballot

Ridge Fire District residents will see a 3.4 mill fire levy on the November ballot this year, affecting homeowners in the Ridge Road-Highland Avenue area.

This section of Columbia Township is covered by the Golf Manor Fire Department, which is in the first year of a three year-contract paying \$355,000 for services in 2016.

Administrator Mike Lemon said he projects a more than \$120,000 shortfall per year in the Ridge Fire District if there is no increase in revenue. The Ridge Fire District is the only fire district in Columbia Township to be affected by the levy. Other portions of the township are served by either the Deer Park-Silverton Joint Fire District or the Little Miami Joint Fire & Rescue Department.

"We have had great service and



partnerships with Golf Manor for safety services, but before we look to a levy, we always reach out to the market to make sure we there are no other lower cost solutions," said Trustee President David Kubicki. "We reached out to other nearby

fire departments to give us estimates for service to Ridgewood. It was clear that Ridgewood was more comfortable with their fire service continuing with Golf Manor even if it meant they had to pay a little bit more for it," he noted.

(continued from page 1)

Why build a Natural Playscape?

The Natural Playscape provides a new framework for playground parks. With its emphasis on discovering how things work and creativity, children enjoy a natural space that inspires curiosity, creativity and a sense of freedom. Sensory experiences positively impact children's physical and cognitive development and provide healthy interactions.

"Playscapes are designed with the intent of bringing children and back to nature,"

"Playscapes are designed with the intent of bringing children and people back to nature," said Dan Teller, executive director of Good Shepherd Montessori. "Without clear boundaries, but through an intentional shaping of the landscape, children foster creativity through unstructured play."

"So often we provide children with fancy play equipment, when in reality, movable natural objects [such as sticks, rocks, and log sections], a hillside for climbing, water on a hot day, and leafy places to hide and explore are so much more satisfying for the child's outdoor experience," said Teller. "We have seen children transform our space into a variety of play experiences already, and look forward to years of many children and families enjoying this oasis of peace and beauty in Madison Place."



CBT Co. Brings New Jobs, Revenue to Township

Vacant Kmart site becoming a thriving business center with move of headquarters

CBT, formerly known as Cincinnati Belting & Transmission, plans to open the doors of its new Columbia Township location this summer.

The new CBT headquarters, located at the former Kmart site at 5500 Ridge Ave., moves at least 120 jobs from its previous Cincinnati site. The new facility's grand opening was in late July; a ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for September 9.

Administrator Mike Lemon notes that the headquarters move will also be a significant financial gain for Columbia Township, bringing in about \$100,000

"Columbia Township is eager to add more businesses like CBT to our growing business community."

annually in earnings taxes from the jobs. "CBT is helping to diversify the Ridge and Highland business area and will be a great partner with the township. CBT will replace a police car or other need every two years for 10 years, demonstrating its commitment to its new home. We are overjoyed with its choice of Columbia Township as its new headquarters."

CBT supplies power transmission, automation, electrical, belting and pneumatics products and services. The new 95,000 sq. ft. building will offer state-of-the-art training facilities demonstration and application testing areas, plus an expanded customer service area. Its former headquarters was located on West Sixth Street in Cincinnati.

"Columbia Township is eager to add more businesses like CBT to our growing business community," said Lemon. "We are poised for further growth and redevelopment in the future and encourage interested businesses to contact us about opportunities in the area."



Madison Place Drainage Under Discussion

Ongoing drainage problems on a number of Madison Place streets are the topic of a special trustee meeting this summer.

This spring, the township commissioned a drainage study that identified causes of the recurring drainage problems in Madison Place and provided recommendations for dealing with the issue.

Recurring water runoff problems that damage property, flood back yards and drain into basements have been an issue on Madison Place streets for many years. The area is located within a flood plain that was mostly developed in the 1940s, when consideration for cumulative drainage issues was not part of development plans.

Administrator Mike Lemon said he will gather township trustees late this summer to discuss the findings of the study and what steps the township could take moving forward to mitigate future water runoff issues.

Understandably, Lemon says the project is massive and involves help from multiple agencies, as well involving proactive actions homeowners could take to mitigate water runoff. "We will incorporate some of the recommendations as part of our program of road improvements over time," Lemon said. "However, this is an extremely expensive project and we can't do it all at one time."

Lemon says he will ask trustees to consider hiring a consultant to meet with residents and go door to door talking about making home improvements that would help eliminate drainage issues on their property.

"It is not going to be cheap to hire a consultant to go from home to home to do individual home surveys and discuss how homeowners can help mitigate the issue, but I'd like to see if the trustees will support the idea."

"We want to develop a program that is helpful to residents impacted by the drainage," Lemon said.

Hopefully, he said, affected areas will see a process of continual improvement involving not only residents, but the township and other agencies.

The drainage problem has intensified over the last 10-20 years because of global warming, Lemon said, which has produced more intense and more frequent rains that cannot be managed by the current curb and gutter runoff systems.

Streets included in the study were Vinewood Avenue, Hurd Avenue, Buckingham Place, Roe Street, Windward Avenue, Bramble Avenue, Grace Avenue, Cambridge Avenue, Murray Avenue, Grove Avenue, Berwick Avenue, Kenmore Avenue, Edith Avenue and Blaney Avenue.





Open Checkbook Program Operational

Want to learn more about Columbia Township's budget? The 2016 budget is available for viewing online through the state Treasurer's Transparency Program.

and data comparisons on the site and learn exactly how taxpayer money is spent.

"We are pleased to announce our partnership with the State Treasurer's Office on *OhioCheckbook.com*," said Trustee Chris Kritkos. "We share the state treasurer's vision that people deserve to know where the tax dollars are being spent and believe that this initiative will continue our transparency efforts in Columbia Township."

By accessing *OhioCheckbook.com*, visitors can view yearly expenditures and search for information broken down into categories or time periods. Visitors can view graphs, charts

Sign up for Vacation Watch List

Leaving for vacation?

Take peace of mind with you by participating in the Vacation Watch List program.

Columbia Township residents can be placed on a free service for the days they will be away from their home provided by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. During your absence a deputy will make a daily home physical check.

Participants should call District 4, which provides service to Columbia Township and Silverton, at 936-6220 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. An officer will take the information needed to sign up for this free service.

Follow Crime Prevention Tips when Leaving for Vacation

Enjoy your time away, but consider the following crime prevention tips when leaving your home for several days:

1. Have good locks on all doors and windows, and use them!
2. Engrave your valuables with your driver's license number (preceded by "OH").
3. Never leave your house key hidden outside under a doormat, in a flower pot, or on the ledge of a door.
4. Make your house appear "lived in." Use timers for lights and radios. Have a neighbor or a friend pick up mail, packages and newspapers, and keep the lawns mowed and watered.
5. Leave your trip plans and an emergency phone number with trusted neighbors or friends.

Information provided by the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office District 4.

Roadwork Update

Roadwork is mostly finished this summer in Columbia Township on three projects: CBT Co. development, work on Edith and Blaney avenues, and Ridgewood Avenue water main replacement and repaving.



RECYCLE RIGHT

Reduce contamination in residential recycling.

Know what you can include in curbside bins, carts and drop-offs in Hamilton County, Ohio.

RESIDENTIAL RECYCLING CAN INCLUDE:

PLASTIC BOTTLES AND JUGS



PAPER PRODUCTS



GLASS CONTAINERS



METAL CONTAINERS



When in doubt
X
throw it out



Learn more on the "What Can I Recycle" page at HamiltonCountyRecycles.org.

Produced October 2015 by Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District 513-946-7766

Check your facts!

What do you know of Columbia Township history?

The first election in Columbia Township took place in 1803. Elijah and Hezekiah Stites were elected “Fence Viewers.” Hezekiah was named a Petit Juror and Benjamin Stites a Grand Juror. A Fence Viewer was a township office to assure fences were on their own property.

WHICH TOWNSHIP WAS NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP?

1. Sycamore Township
2. Spencer Township
3. Symmes Township
4. Anderson Township

WHICH VILLAGE OR CITY WAS NOT PART OF THE ORIGINAL COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP?

1. Fairfax
2. Indian Hill Madeira
3. Mariemont
4. Wyoming

(Answers: 4 and 4)

Important Phone Numbers in Columbia Township



Trustee President
David Kubicki
 272-7870
 dkubicki@columbiatwp.org



Trustee
Chris Kritikos
 272-7871
 ckritikos@columbiatwp.org



Trustee Vice President
Susan Hughes
 272-7872
 shughes@columbiatwp.org



Fiscal Officer
Paul Davis
 272-7867
 pdavis@columbiatwp.org

Township Administration

Administrator
C. Michael Lemon
 561-6046
 MLemon@columbiatwp.org

Administrative Assistant
Kimberly Gray
 272.7877
 kgray@columbiatwp.org

JEDZ Tax Administrator
Jane Fette
 272.9954
 JFette@fairfaxoh.org

Property Maintenance Code Enforcement
 792.7256
 columbia@sycamoretownship.org

POLICE PROTECTION—Emergency- 911

Columbia Township—Non-Emergency
 825-2280

City of Cincinnati—Non-Emergency
 765-1212
www.cincinnati-oh.gov/cpd

Hamilton County- Non-Emergency
 825.1500
www.hcso.org

FIRE PROTECTION—Emergency- 911

The Little Miami
 Joint Fire & Rescue District-
 271-3636
<http://lmfr.org>

Deer Park—Silverton Joint Fire District
 791-2500
www.dpsjfd.org

Village of Golf Manor Fire Department

531-2022
www.golfmanor.org