



Know **OUR** AVON LAKE

Mark Your Calendar

For details on these and other events in Avon Lake, please visit www.AvonLake.org/Events.

September 16, 10:00 a.m.

Big Trucks and Community Services
Open House

September 21, 7:00 p.m.

Eclipse Community Forum - Avon Lake
High School, Performing Arts Center

September 23, 10:30 a.m.

Homecoming Parade

October 6-7

Boo by the Woods

October 14, 11:30 a.m.

Partial Annular Solar Eclipse Party with
kids crafts and safe telescope viewing

April 8, 2024

Total Solar Eclipse - More Details to Come

"Environmentally Speaking" Community Education

Avon Lake's Environmental Affairs Advisory Board has partnered with the Avon Lake Public Library to present the upcoming programs:

October 10, 7:00 p.m.*

The Erie Situation Screening

November 14, 7:00 p.m.

Small Changes, Big Impact

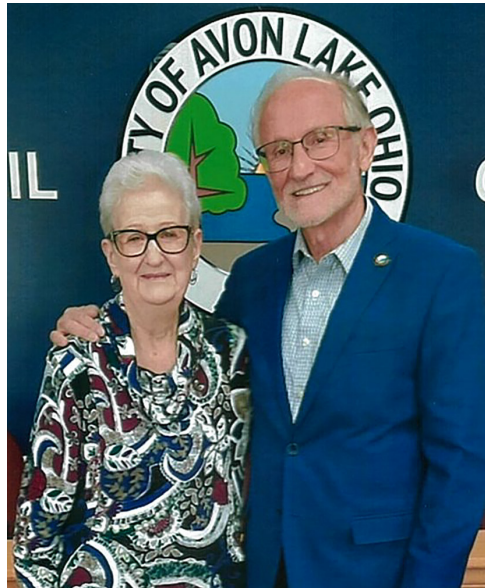
December 12, 7:00 p.m.

Spotted Lanternfly & Poison Hemlock

Register at www.ALPL.org

*More info on back panel of newsletter.

It Has Been an Honor



Patricia and Greg Zilka

As we move closer to the end of the year and the leaves begin their beautiful fall display, we also move closer to the end of my tenure as Mayor of this wonderful community. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the residents and businesses of Avon Lake for the past 12 years. During this time, the community has seen tremendous change.

Over 600 single family dwellings have been built since 2012, adding more than 3,000 residents to the community. Not only did the City see an increase in population, but economic development in the area experienced growth as well. It's hard to believe that in 2011, Ford employed just 400 workers at the Ohio Assembly Plant, and there were rumors it would be closing. But thanks to the commitment of Ford, the leadership of the UAW, and state and local governments, the number of employees has grown steadily

over the years as new vehicle lines were introduced. In the summer of 2022, Ford announced a \$1.5 billion expansion, which would add an additional 1,800 workers to the 1,771 currently employed there.

With time comes change. In March 2022, the GenOn power plant closed. The behemoth that dominated the Avon Lake skyline for almost 100 years is currently undergoing demolition. The City doesn't own the property, but our goal is to help steer its future and increase access to Lake Erie as this rare lakefront site undergoes transformation.

In 2018, Avon Lake commemorated its bicentennial with a year-long celebration filled with festivities to help residents of all ages learn about the City's extraordinary past, while making a few memories of their own. It was truly an event worthy of such a monumental achievement!

As my final months as Mayor wind down, I would like to thank everyone who has made my time here so rewarding. I leave with 38 years of fond memories of working with City Council, who have helped the City grow in a responsible manner. I would also like to thank all the individuals who have served on Boards and Commissions over the years and worked diligently to shape Avon Lake into the vibrant community it is today. And finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of city employees who work tirelessly to make Avon Lake a wonderful place to live and work.

It has been an honor to have served you all. Without the encouragement and advice of my wife and children, it would not have been possible. I am blessed.

Gregory J. Zilka

City Holds Its 11th Charter Review

As a thriving community of more than 25,000, there is always something happening in Avon Lake. Behind the scenes, the Charter plays an important role in city government. Like the U.S. Constitution, the City's Charter guides our purpose and structure, establishing how we operate as a municipality, and detailing different roles and responsibilities within our government.

In that spirit, the Charter, which has been around since the 1950s and has been assessed every five years since 1973, is once again getting the attention it requires via the City's official Charter Review Commission.

The Charter Review Commission consists of nine resident members. The Mayor appoints five members and City Council appoints four (one from each ward). These appointments took place on December 19, 2022.

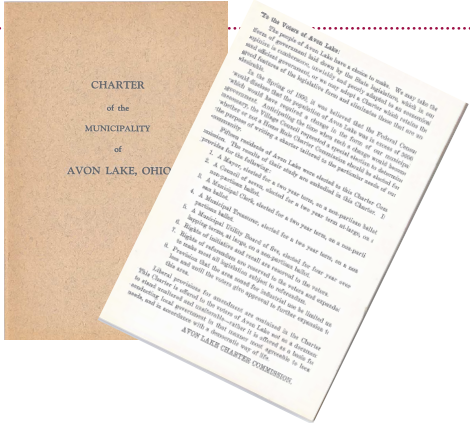
The commission held its first meeting on January 17, 2023, and met every other week until the end of May. These meetings were systematic in their scope and goals. Every elected official in the municipality, including the Mayor, City Council, and the Board of Municipal Utilities, every department head, and every municipal board and commission were invited to individual meetings to present their thoughts on the current charter. In addition, at every meeting, the commission invited the public to speak. Finally, commission members were encouraged to meet directly with any elected official, department head, or board or commission to collect additional input. Simultaneously, the commission reviewed each section of the commission on their own.

"The entire process is very extensive and methodical. Revising the Charter is not something we take lightly, and it requires considerable research," said Rob James, Chair of the Charter Review Commission and former Ward 1 council member. "We looked at what nearby communities are doing as well as the needs of our City."

Based on this exhaustive review, one amendment will be on the ballot this November. If approved by the voters, the amendment would change the way the Mayor is compensated, specifically addressing how his or her salary is set. "Today, the salary hasn't been modified in eight years, and it can only be modified at certain times and only if Council brings it up," James explained. "For this reason, it often doesn't happen. With the new amendment, the review will be mandated the first year following a general election of the Mayor. The amendment will encourage an open, honest debate on the compensation – and whether it should remain the same, go up, or go down."

Outside of this specific section, the commission determined that other sections of the commission did not require revision or amendment.

"The Charter Review Commission helps us assure a robust democracy," said James. "Whether we change a section or it stays the same, the voters ultimately decide what's best for their City." ■



The History of the City's Charter

Why does the City of Avon Lake hold a Charter Review every five years? In the Spring of 1950, the Avon Lake Village Council anticipated that the recent Federal Census would boost the population considerably to more than 5,000. The increase would require a change in the form of the village's government to one that met its growing needs. Anticipating this change, Council requested a special election to determine whether a Charter Commission should be held, where elected members would meet to write a charter tailored to the future of Avon Lake. The voters agreed, and later the first Charter Commission met and proposed a charter to govern the growing city.

Once written, the Charter was mailed to all households in Avon Lake for review and was ultimately passed by the voters. Later, in 1973, the City decided that city government would be improved if the Charter was reviewed regularly, and an amendment mandating that Charter Review Commission meet every five years was added. The Charter Review Commission has met every five years since!

Power Plant Updates

The 40-acre plant that sits on the shores of Lake Erie is currently undergoing demolition, which is slated to be completed by the end of 2024. The Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) monthly meetings are open to the public and recapped on the City's website. The meetings are listed on the City calendar at www.AvonLake.org.

Welcome to Avon Lake

This summer, the City hosted several ribbon cutting ceremonies at local businesses:

Edacious Kitchen + Bar at 33451 Lake Road – A new restaurant with a focus on American rustic dishes.

Impressive Creations 4U in the Drug Mart Plaza – A new craft store that houses 70 independent vendors.

Lake Erie Aesthetics & Wellness at 33399 Walker Road – A med-spa offering facials, cosmetic fillers, body treatments, and more.

Shop Local Program Returns

This holiday season, the City will once again host our Shop Local Program, where residents have the chance to win gift cards to local businesses. Visit the City of Avon Lake Facebook page, starting November 23rd to learn more and find out who wins the daily drawings!

We're Ready for Leaf Pickup



This year, Avon Lake received \$200,000 to purchase a new composter machine and a tractor as part of an Ohio EPA Community Recycling Grant. The Ohio EPA introduced the grant to encourage recycling and litter prevention throughout the state. Only five cities in Cuyahoga and Lorain County received funds through the grant.

The City will use the new machine to boost leaf and yard waste composting – an especially important need during the fall season. More information on how residents can take advantage of the composted materials, which include free leaf humus and wood chips, can be found on the City website under “City Services.” ■



Safety First! Sign Up for NEW Alert Avon Lake System

The 411 on Leaf Pickup

There are TWO ways to dispose of your leaves this fall.

1 Free City Leaf Pickup

- Rake leaves to your tree lawn. ***Please do not rake the leaves into the street.***
- Leaves must be unbagged and in piles without sticks and branches.
- City crews follow a route through Avon Lake and there is no specific day for pick up. Depending on the volume of leaves being collected, it can take the crews as long as two to three weeks to complete a full route. Updated routes will be posted at www.AvonLake.org/News.

2 Kimble Refuse Pickup

- March through December, leaves can be put in paper refuse bags or personal containers that are 33 gallons or less.
- Personal containers should be labeled “yard waste” and placed at curbside on the regularly scheduled day for garbage pickup by Kimble.

From dangerous weather reports to City-wide emergencies and public service announcements – you can make sure you know what’s happening with texts, phone calls or an email from Alert Avon Lake.

We recently updated our software provider for alerts, so you **MUST** make sure you’re signed up for the new system. Here’s how:

- Online Form: www.AvonLake.org/Alert
- Call City Hall: 440-933-6141
- Paper Form: Available at City Hall or Avon Lake Public Library

This is a free service provided by the City (normal messaging fees may apply), and is different than any national, regional, or local alerts conducted by your cellphone provider.

Trash Pickup Reminder

The City’s scheduled neighborhood trash pickups keep our community clean. You can help by following City ordinances set in place to assure pickup days go smoothly:

- Cans must be on the curb by 7:00 a.m. on pickup day. You can place them out the night before your collection day as early as 5:00 p.m.
- Cans must be removed from the curb 24 hours after pickup.

Trash Survey Report Results

The resident feedback received at the April 26, 2023, Trash Contract Roundtable Forum assisted in tailoring a community-wide survey. The results of this survey helped the City understand what is most important to the majority of residents, and will be taken into account as the City reviews bids for a new contract in 2024. The results of the survey can be found on the City website.

Unique Avon Lake Program Rewards Businesses for Job Growth

Once a year, select businesses in Avon Lake receive a special check, recognizing the role they play in making our community stronger. The City’s Job Growth Incentive Award program rewards businesses based on how much their payroll taxes increased year-over-year. For businesses, the program is easy to take advantage of since there’s no application or paperwork to complete. Instead, the City reviews RITA taxes for each business, and calculates job growth accordingly. “No other City offers something like this program,” said Community Development Director Ted Esborn. “Not only is there no application, but it rewards both new business and existing ones, so it recognizes and benefits everyone. We have so many businesses that are woven into the community. This rewards them for their commitment.” New for 2023, Council approved an extra reward for businesses that earn consecutive years of growth.

The program is open to for-profit businesses operating out of a commercial or industrial zone. According to Esborn, about one-third of businesses receive a reward that is paid out in May, which he tries to personally deliver when possible. “Every business usually has the same sentiment: ‘this is great!’ It’s somewhat unexpected, but it’s always appreciated. I know many businesses utilize the extra money to reward their employees as well with a party or bonus.” ■

Are You Thinking About Planting a New Tree? Follow These Tips

With cooler temperatures and wet weather, fall is a great time to freshen up your yard with a new tree. Follow these tips to get the most out of your investment:

- Choose the right tree species for your site. Is there space for the tree to grow to its anticipated mature size? Is the soil adequate? Will the tree get the right amount of sun?
- Pay attention to the condition of the trees at the nursery. Are there wounds and blemishes on the trunk? Does the tree look nice overall or is it a bit shabby? Is there one, strong center leader? Avoid trees with multiple trunks or trunks that are misshapen.
- Take your time planting. Dig a good hole that is two to three times the diameter of the root mass and only as deep as the container. Make sure the root collar is just above the surface of the soil when planting is complete. Mulch to a depth of two to three inches, being careful not to put mulch up against the trunk.
- Invest in early tree care to ensure your tree gets off to a good start. This may include watering, deer protection, and young tree training, but avoid fertilizer. Young tree training is something you may want to leave to experts (certified arborists). Mature trees need TLC too. It's a wise investment to have your trees checked out by a certified arborist periodically to detect potential problems before they become severe.

Getting trees off to the best start possible maximizes your investment and helps our City maintain it's healthy tree canopy. ■

A Must-See Documentary: The Erie Situation



Join us on October 10, 7:00 p.m., in Avon Lake Public Library's Waugaman Gallery to learn more about the causes and negative impact of toxic algal blooms in

Lake Erie in the award-winning documentary, *The Erie Situation*.

In 2014, the citizens of Toledo, Ohio, had to go without running water for three days when a bloom of highly toxic algae entered the drinking water plant from Lake Erie. This is an alarming wake-up call for all, concerning our freshwater resources.

Join us as we view *The Erie Situation*, which explores the confluence of science, public sentiment, politics, and the powerful farming lobby as Ohio wrestles with how to confront the drivers of toxic algae in one of the Great Lakes.

What's at stake? Who's at risk? And will volunteer measures be enough to confront this growing crisis, both in Ohio and beyond? Time permitting, there will be discussion following the documentary to discuss what is being done to alleviate the causes.

Register at www.ALPL.org. ■

Stay in Touch



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Human Resources
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Police
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