



# CITY OF OSAWATOMIE

"Rural matters because people choose to live and love here. Rural matters because even if it's the middle of nowhere, it actually might be the middle of it all."

## MUNICIPAL NEWSLETTER

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### DEAR OSAWATOMIE,

**BY BRET GLENDENING**  
DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

I am honored to return to the City of Osawatomie to serve as your Deputy City Manager. The city has a lot of irons in the fire and the amount of work that it is going to require to get everything done, and done correctly, is immense. The workload is not going to be decreasing anytime in the near future; we have a water distribution system that needs upgraded, the water treatment plant is in dire need of replacement, our street maintenance plan ("Paving the Way") will help us upgrade our streets, and Oz Commons is designed to modernize our downtown corridor. The successful execution of each of these projects is critical to Osawatomie's vitality and its ability to manage the growth that is inevitably coming our way.

When I was here as City Manager from 2006 to 2011, the city had financial issues to overcome and we dealt with an historic flood. We rebuilt the 500 block of Main Street, had a massive upgrade of our wastewater collection system, rebuilt 25-30 blocks of streets (which included new storm sewer, curbs, gutters, and sidewalks), and developed a capital improvement plan which included the replacement of Main Street from 1st Street to 12th. In the intervening years, the next city manager saw to it that the CIP plan was adhered to; Main Street was rebuilt and City Hall received a much-needed facelift.

That brings us to the present. In hindsight, I am proud of what we as a community accomplished when I was here as City Manager, especially in light of the fact that we had the flood of 2007. I will NEVER forget that flood and the pain it caused so many people for as long as I live. Do I wish I would have done some things differently? Absolutely. I think most people who serve in roles such as this self-assess their performance from time to time. That being said, as I mentioned at the open of this letter, we have MUCH to accomplish and we have little time to do so. I want to thank our City Manager and the Governing Body for this opportunity, and I commit to working every day to not disappoint anyone. I hope the citizens of Osawatomie embrace what we are doing and see it as a positive move in the right direction.

As was the case when I first arrived in Osawatomie 15+ years ago to serve as city manager, my door is always open.



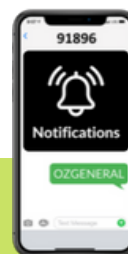
The 2021 Spook Parade, hosted by the Osawatomie Chamber of Commerce, had a great turnout despite chilly weather. (Photo by Mark Govea)

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Looking Ahead to 2022: Goals for Osawatomie Street Repair

What's Happening Next: Oz Commons Downtown Redevelopment Phase II

Community Spotlight: The Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund



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# OZ COMMONS - NOW WHAT?

Our "Planning Sustainable Places" planning grant, which we know as the Oz Commons Downtown Redevelopment Planning Project, has exited Phase I and is entering Phase II.

On October 14th our professional consultant team, made up of members of Architect One, Alta Planning, and Shockey Consulting, presented a final report of recommendations to City Council. The 98-page report features feedback from over 500 Osawatomi residents and visitors on what they wanted to see in our next generation of growth and included digital renderings of reimagined spaces and an enormous amount of data related to our sustainability, strengths and challenges, infrastructure, ease of mobility, and other areas of community concern. Using that data, and the feedback received, the consultants then produced an array of areas or projects that were identified as being integral to economic development and community connection (*the full report is available on our website at [www.osawatomieks.org/ozcommons](http://www.osawatomieks.org/ozcommons)*).

As we work to prioritize the recommendations made by the consultant team, we'll host another series of feedback activities to identify core projects that are important to us as a community. Simultaneously, staff has begun laying the groundwork on the next phase of purchasing, grant preparation, and planning so our community will be ready to apply for an implementation grant through the Mid-America Regional Council. These implementation grants are the next step for communities that were awarded Planning Sustainable Places grants and are designed to help develop the projects that come out of the planning process.

Some of the "first wave" of revitalization projects in our downtown corridor include the installation of a large-scale mural thanks to a \$15,000 grant from the Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, an interactive steel bike rack constructed by Doherty Steel in honor of our status as a trailhead for the nationally recognized Flint Hills Trail, and the creation of more community spaces (*like the pocket parks shown to the right*) in underutilized or City-owned properties along the corridor.

We hope to have most of these initial projects completed by Spring of 2022!

## REMINDERS

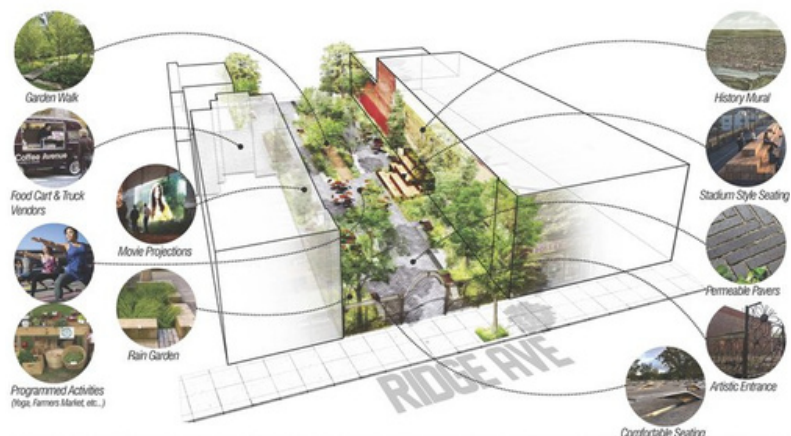
**City Newsletter** We distribute a digital newsletter every Friday. Subscribe at [osawatomieks.org/newsletter](http://osawatomieks.org/newsletter).

**City Council** Meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Agendas are available on our website and in the lobby of City Hall.

**Winter Energy Tip** Stay WARM, not HOT! Reduce your energy consumption and save on winter heating bills by keeping your thermostat on a more moderate setting. Layer up with a blanket or a favorite sweatshirt instead of turning up the heat by a few degrees.



Our "Pinterest" boards look a lot like this these days! Pocket parks and other community green spaces are great ways to reinvent underutilized parcels with a blend of lower-cost and higher-impact design. These plans from other communities are great inspiration!



# PAVING THE WAY FOR STREET REPAIR

In the fall of 2021, the governing body approved two resolutions focused on dedicated revenues for street repairs, replacement, and maintenance. One established an increase in the mill rate for the General Fund from the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR) of 27.669 to 44.433 and the second approved a one-half of one percent sales tax increase to be added to the November 2021 ballot. The increase in mill rate will generate \$450,000 and the voter approved sales tax increase will add an estimated \$125,000 to the street repair fund each year.

These two initiatives, when coupled with the \$1,000,000 we will receive over the next ten years from the Miami County Sales Tax and another estimated \$2,000,000 in grants from the state and federal level, allows us to generate \$8,750,000 dedicated solely to streets over the next 10 years.



We plan to condense 10 years of street projects in just three to five years. Because of our need to also replace both our water distribution and wastewater collection systems, we can use “economies of scale” and get much more done in a shorter amount of time. Administration estimates that we could get an additional 20% done if we then bundle this into a bond issue and cut down the cost of construction inflation in future years.

Additionally, an influx of available grant dollars coming down from the state and federal level from recently passed infrastructure bills means there has never been a better time to do utility projects than now. Since many of our utility lines are underneath sidewalks and streets, we will be able to combine utility projects and street repairs into single projects.

## 2022 Total Replacement

- Main Street Terrace from 18th St to 16th St
- Walnut Avenue from 6th St to 4th St
- 18th Street from Main St to Brown Ave
- Brown Avenue from 18th St to 16th St

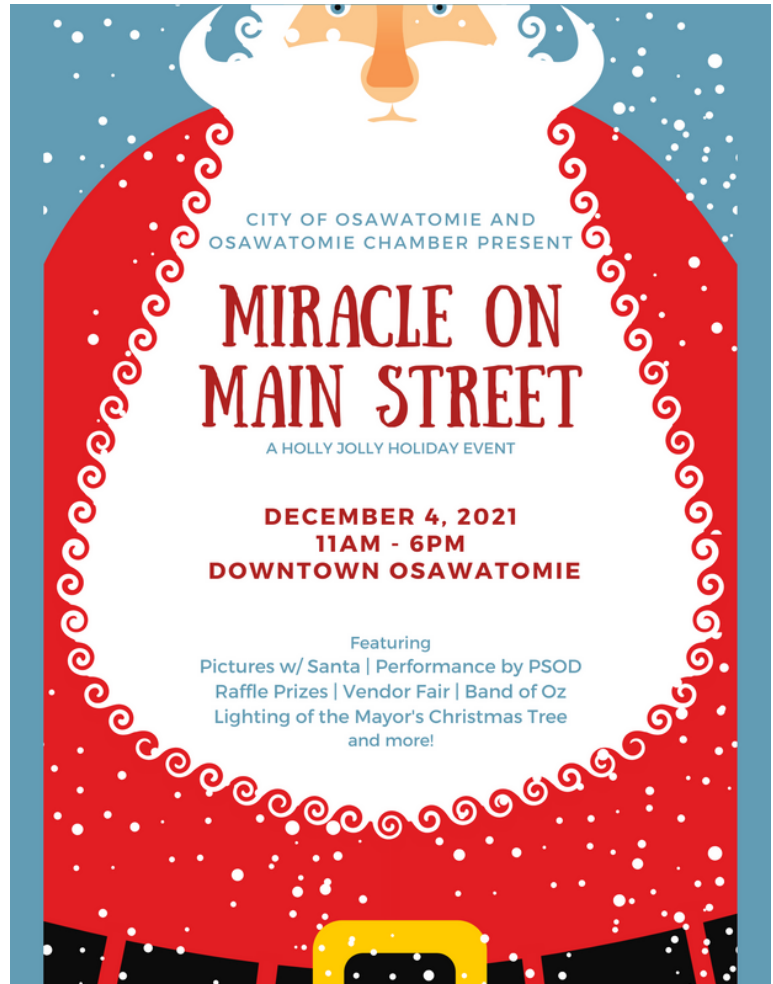
## 2023 Total Replacement

- Brown Avenue from 12th St to 7th St
- 6th Street from the northern city limits to the southern city limits

Engineering is already complete for Brown Avenue from 16th to 18th, and engineering will soon begin on the other three streets set for 2022 replacement as well as the two streets slated for 2023.

Find more information on our website at [www.osawatomieks.org/paving-the-way](http://www.osawatomieks.org/paving-the-way).

# SANTA CLAUS IS COMIN' TO TOWN!



Find more information on our holiday event at [www.osawatomieks.org](http://www.osawatomieks.org) or visit us on Facebook!

## SPOTLIGHT | Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund

Did you know that the Mayor of the City of Osawatomi has a Christmas Tree Fund that benefits a number of local charities? Keep reading to learn more about this great opportunity to give back to the community!



### When (and why) did the Christmas Tree Fund get started?

The Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund was started in the fall of 2020 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We noticed many of our local organizations were cancelling fundraisers and programming, and we were very interested in what sort of solutions other communities had found to bridge the gap. Many of the cities we reached out to said a Christmas Tree Fund helped supplement their community's efforts even in "normal" times. We thought we'd give it a try and see if we could encourage a new way of giving back -- we never dreamed it would be this successful!

### Who has benefitted from this fund so far?

In 2021, using the money that was raised in 2020, the Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund assisted two local organizations, the Ministerial Association and the Friends of the Mentally Ill Foundation, and donated to the Palmer Swafford Medical Fund.

### How are the recipients chosen? Is there an application?

The Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund does not accept applications or other requests. The Mayor of Osawatomi works with members of City staff to identify organizations or individuals that could benefit from a Christmas Tree Fund donation. We look at online fundraising campaigns, locally held in-person events like Walks or Crawls, and pay attention to the activities of other groups that help those in need in the community.

### How is money raised for the Christmas Tree Fund?

The Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund is 100% donation based! The City of Osawatomi assists in the management of the fund, but does not contribute to it with money from our annual budget. People or organizations interested in donating can send checks (no cash, please!) to Osawatomi City Hall at PO Box 37 here in Osawatomi, or drop off at our offices. We've also had some corporate donations and sponsorships get involved, which has been a great blessing. We would love to be able to assist even more people and groups in 2021/2022, so we ask that you please consider making a gift this holiday season!

## City of Osawatomi

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## A NEW WAY TO COMMUNICATE: TEXTMYGOV!

The City of Osawatomi is launching a new communication tool this fall: TextMyGov! This text-based software allows residents to search information, ask questions, or report issues in the community directly from their phone's regular messaging app. **No internet connection required!** Over the next few weeks we'll also be debuting emergency alert and general alert subscription options. **Text the words "Hi," "Hello," or "Hey" to 913-557-8777 to check out the program.** We'll be making continuous updates to the prompts and flows as we learn more about the community's needs and preferences, so **don't be discouraged if something isn't in place just yet -- we're working on it!**

## and coming soon in 2022... a NEW website!

In mid-2021, the City of Osawatomi entered into contract with CivicPlus to rebuild and redesign our municipal website, plus build a brand new Osawatomi Public Library subsite. We're just a few weeks away from debuting all our hard work -- check back soon!