

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 7/24/2018

### "Sister City Commissions Meet"

Our Sister City relationship with Woodstock, Ontario has been renewed and strengthened with a recent joint planning meeting held in St. Clair, Michigan. Sister City Commission members from both communities met on Sunday, July 22 at a midway point between our two cities near the Blue Water Bridge to plan and grow our continuing international relationship.

Formed in 1992, our friendship with Woodstock has broadened our horizons and lead to a much better understanding of our neighbors to the north. We share many of the same goals and challenges in our communities, and benefit from an open exchange of ideas and solutions.

Woodstock is a very successful community four hours away, about an hour this side of Toronto. In the late 1990's, they competed for and won a new Toyota RAV5 assembly plant, and have successfully grown their community to about 45,000 residents.

We have met and worked with their leadership, including five different mayors who all came to value our Sister City relationship. We have had many cultural exchanges including Boy Scouts, school interactions, annual vintage base ball games and participated in each other's parades and community activities. Many individual friendships have been formed over the years. We even adopted their tradition of having a town crier.

One of my strongest memories of our Woodstock friendship came on September 11, 2001. We had shut down Sylvania City Hall and the Courthouse due to telephone bomb threats received following the 911 attacks in New York and Washington, DC. We had called all police officers to duty to guard vital community services, not knowing what to expect next.

During that period of uncertainty, I received a call from Woodstock Mayor John Geoghegan offering to send Woodstock firefighters and police officers here to Sylvania if needed to supplement our own. Woodstock later began a Book of Condolences signed by many in Woodstock expressing their sympathy and support to Sylvania and to the United States.

Both Woodstock and Sylvania recently updated their official relationship with new legislation. My thanks to Sylvania City Council member Mark Luetke and all of our Commission members for their time and energy serving on our Sylvania Sister City Commission.

Last fall we had a 25 year celebration with the Canadians here in Sylvania during our Fall Festival and again in Woodstock during their Santa Claus Parade weekend. I look forward to growing our international sister city relationship with them in the coming years!



Woodstock Mayor Trever Birtch and Sylvania Mayor Craig Stough



Woodstock and Sylvania Sister City Commissions met in St. Clair, Michigan



Woodstock City Counselor Jerry Acchione, Mayor Trever Birtch, Sylvania Mayor Craig Stough and City Council Member Mark Luetke