

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 4/24/2019

### "Downtown Sylvania Update"

Thanks to the efforts of many individuals, organizations and businesses, downtown Sylvania is continuing to evolve into a lively center for our community, attracting new businesses, providing new jobs and offering more popular events and activities. This evolution has been ongoing for several years, but two recent events will continue this downtown development.

First, ground was broken on April 17<sup>th</sup> for SOMO Flats, a 206 luxury apartment complex that will bring many more people to live in our downtown. The \$35 Million project will be three stories high and have underground parking. The residents will shop at downtown restaurants and businesses, and will also add to our tax base for providing city services all around town.

The city of Sylvania acquired, cleared and assembled this 5.5 acres of land east the hotel over the past decade. Many will remember the old Nelms Building on the site, a two story wood frame office building. There was also a Bible Store along Monroe Street just west of the North Branch, and small apartments relocated to the rear of the site decades ago to make room for US 23 construction.

Located at the confluence of Ten Mile Creek and the North Branch forming into the Ottawa River, and overlooking Harroun Park, this site is truly one of the most desirable development locations in northwest Ohio. City Council reviewed several proposed uses, but ultimately chose this joint proposal from Republic Development of Sylvania Township and JC Hart of Indianapolis.



The second recent step for downtown Sylvania was City Council's April 15<sup>th</sup> approval of a DORA, or Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area permitting outside consumption of alcohol along portions of Main Street in the downtown. DORA's have proven popular in other communities and was proposed for Sylvania by our downtown merchants.

After almost a year of studying DORA's in similar sized downtowns, and with the help of a special Ad Hoc committee of downtown business owners, nearby residents and city council members, consensus was reached and unanimously approved by City Council to begin May 1<sup>st</sup>. Three principal decisions were made to establish the DORA: the area to be included, a calendar of effective times and dates, and a set of rules for operation.

First, the Ad Hoc Committee proposed an area that included both Main Street and Summit Street from Monroe Street to Erie Street. Responding to concerns expressed at a Public Hearing on March 18<sup>th</sup>, City Council reduced the area to only Main Street from Monroe Street to Haymarket Square.

Also in response to input at the Public Hearing, the proposed effective hours were reduced from 10:00 a.m. - 2:30 a.m. to 12:00 Noon - 12:00 Midnight. After much discussion, City Council agreed to that schedule seven days a week.

Third, rules were established for operating the DORA. Alcohol must be in marked cups sold only by the five participating alcohol vendors downtown. Signs must be posted that clearly delineate the extent of the DORA district. Trash receptacles and cleanup will be the responsibility of the downtown merchants.

Parkettes are also being considered to provide seasonal outside seating areas in a few downtown parking spaces. The installation and maintenance of these parkettes will also be the responsibility of the downtown merchants.

