



February 21, 2023

MAYOR'S UPDATE

Coming up in Bexley:

February 25:	Sugar Maple Tapping in Jeffrey Woods
February 26, 3:00 - 4:30 pm:	New Residents Welcome Event at Jeffrey Mansion
March 1, 5:30 pm:	Recreation Board
March 4, 8:00 am and on:	Jeffrey Woods Festival
March 6, 6:00 - 7:30 pm:	Commonwealth Park Plaza Public Workshop
March 7, 6:00 pm:	City Council
March 8, 5:30 pm:	Chamber of Commerce
March 8, 6:00 pm:	Board of Education
March 9, 6:00 pm:	Architectural Review Board
March 14, 6:30 pm:	State of the Community Address
March 20 - March 24:	Bexley City Schools Spring Break
March 28, 6:00 pm:	City Council

Some of What I've Been Up To:

- Weekly departmental meetings
- Routine staff and cabinet touch-base meetings
- Extensive work on Strategic Plan Refresh
- Prep work and presentation for City Council Strategic Meeting
- Met with multiple potential developers and residents regarding Trinity Apartments site
- Work for displaced resident to secure housing
- Met with BCF regarding existing grants
- MORPC Commission/Transportation Meeting
- Met with reporter from Columbus Business First
- Extensive work on training, assessment, and strategy for City communication work
- Meetings and research on Land Use Strategy 2.0
- Meetings and calls regarding plans for community education on racism
- Planning and work for Maple Syrup and Jeffrey Woods festival
- Extensive work on Year of the Parks including meetings, calls, research on easements, a tour of Alum Creek, and work on skate park plans
- Alley of the Future site walk
- COMMA Executive Committee Meeting
- Work and meetings on electrical aggregation RFP
- Work and posting of RFP for Universal Recycling
- Interview with Bexley Torch on Commonwealth
- Tree and Garden Commission Meeting
- Traffic Calming for Bike Traffic Meeting
- Livingston Avenue next steps Meeting
- Meeting with Christ Lutheran leadership team
- Attended police physical fitness test
- Year of Parks Presentation at Bexley Lions
- Reception for Sam's last day
- Hosted two Boy Scout troops for City Hall tour and discussion of local government

Keep in touch! To sign up for weekly email updates from the City of Bexley, including information on community events and timely notifications and reminders, visit: www.bexley.org/blast



A Statement from Mayor Kessler and Council President Troy Markham

FRIDAY, FEB 10, 2023 AT 5:30 PM

CATEGORIES: [MAYOR'S JOURNAL](#)

This past week our Bexley community has been rocked by a series of racist incidents that have caused a tremendous amount of pain and hurt. For many of us, this week has been marked by profound sadness and dismay, and for others it has only reaffirmed a truth that has been felt within our families for generations. Whatever our lived experience or perspective, we must do all we can so every resident feels safe and welcomed as an integral part of our community.

The roots of racism run deep in America, and as much as we self-identify as being open and welcoming to all, historically blue-lined communities such as Bexley carry a substantial historic weight that must be acknowledged, understood, and reckoned with. The stories of Black visitors and residents being made to feel unwelcome in Bexley over the decades are so painful and real because they're true. It's hard to acknowledge the depth and weight of generational trauma created by a legacy of systemic segregation and the explicit racism that underpinned it. If we do not allow ourselves to understand our history and its implications, then we will never be able to move forward and overcome it.

We have come a long way as a community, but we still have much further to go to become a Bexley that is firmly and consistently rooted in anti-racist resolve... one that creates a secure and caring environment for all of our households, places of work, and centers of learning. One that models allyship with a singular sense of purpose and shared trajectory. One where our Black neighbors feel safe and secure. One where we fully transition from a we-don't-talk-about-it community to a we-must-talk-about-it-and-do-something-about-it community. One Bexley, authentically welcoming to all and for all.

The leadership of Bexley is earnestly and universally committed to this cause. We wholeheartedly believe that Bexley is capable of this journey and that it's essential that we take it. This will entail new types of conversations taking place, new vulnerabilities, and new paths to forge as a community. We are determined to re-double our efforts today so that we can share a better tomorrow. We need you to join us.

Mayor Ben Kessler



Council President Troy Markham



Year of the Parks Update

Work and meetings for Year of the Parks continues with substantial progress on the skate park location and design, easement research, design services for the pedestrian bridge, and continued approvals on the Outdoor Reading Garden. The Invitation to Bid for the Commonwealth Park Pond is publicized and available on our website as well.



Meetings and Progress Over Past Couple Weeks:

- Invitation to Bid publicized for Commonwealth Pond
- Proposal signed for pedestrian bridge design services
- Skate park research and input meetings
- Surveys being collected on Outdoor Reading Garden and Schneider Park (regarding possible wheel park)
- Continued progress on dog park and Schneider Park trails
- Tree and Garden Commission approval of Outdoor Reading Garden

Next Steps Coming Up Soon:

- Invitation to Bid to be posted for Commonwealth Park Follies
- Commonwealth Park Public Workshop - March 6th
- Assessment of survey data

Community Anti-Racism Programming

Dismantling patterns of racism and injustice is a critically important priority for our community. We must embrace opportunities to implement positive change, and education is a vital component in driving this process. I've spent time meeting with community stakeholders and leaders and am working in partnership with Dr. Jason Fine at Bexley City Schools and Ben Heckman at Bexley Public Library to determine how we can support this education in our community, and create a consistent and powerful culture of allyship. We are in the process of researching robust educational resources that will deepen understanding of the history and impact of racism with the goal of providing all community members with the information and resources to support critical thinking, and to champion change, healing, and racial equality. More to come soon.

Livingston Avenue Funding Update

The Columbus/Bexley Joint Livingston Avenue Plan lays out a bold new vision for Livingston Avenue, and the re-configured lanes on Livingston that took place this past fall is a first (albeit meaningful) interim step along the way. We've jointly applied with Columbus for federal funding to help bring the full plan to reality, including the medians, multi-use paths, tree lawns, and pedestrian crossing components of the plan, and we were the top scorer for our category in the regional funding matrix. This means a very high probability that funding comes through - something we'll know for sure in the coming months. This week our team met with our counterparts in Columbus to start planning the project launch, and I can't tell you how excited we are to see this substantial investment moving forward. Just to keep expectations realistic, know that federally funded projects take many years to complete, with rigorous and detailed planning processes, so this would be a 7+ year project from start to finish.

Let's Talk Calm Corridors*

We've been meeting with resident bike/ped/safety advocates for awhile now, and after some productive brainstorming sessions we met last week with our City Engineering team to discuss creating a "Calm Corridor" infrastructure campaign around Cassingham Road throughout the entire city.

Some concepts being explored:

- Tabled intersections to slow traffic and elevate pedestrians
- Bump outs at intersections and mid-block alleys - either paint, paint/bollard, or curb-based
- Dedicated bike lanes on Cassingham between Main and Fair
- "Scramble" intersections at Elm/Cassingham and Maryland/Cassingham

Because of our work on the South Drexel plan, as well as devices installed in the past year on South Roosevelt and on Bellwood we have experience with most of these concepts. This would take what we've learned from recent calming efforts and apply them in a concerted, cohesive fashion along the primary north/south school route that connects north/central/south Bexley.

At that same meeting we discussed speed concerns on Roosevelt between Main and Fair. Our traffic engineer is going to study speed and traffic patterns to determine what speed mitigation devices might be appropriate.

**Fun Fact: a quick Google search suggests that the term "Calm Corridor" doesn't seem to be a thing. It's a great idea, and naming attributes go to Mark Subel and Erik Bjornard.*



Electrical Aggregation RFQ

With electrical rates due to increase significantly this summer, it looks like a good time to explore a 2-3 year aggregation concept based on renewable energy credits. More to come soon!

A Fond Sendoff to Sam

Sam Metcalf, our Communications and Community Affairs Manager, came to my office as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed intern, and after six years of awesomeness and professional growth he's flying the nest. Sam has been editing and getting these Blasts out for over five years, and let me tell you it's been such a gift to have him help out and lead communications efforts (if you ever read a dud Blast, it's probably a Friday when he's been on vacation and you've been stuck with me - ha!). Sam has schlepped alongside me during COVID communications, a tornado, floods, countless community events, and all manner of excitement in between. I always knew this day would come, but it's so very bitter sweet to send him off with all of the best wishes in the world. Thank you, Sam, for all you've done for our City and our community! #LifeInBex

Capital University - Trinity Apartments Site

As you may have seen in the news, Capital University has offered up its Trinity Apartments site for sale, with a Request for Proposals out to the development community. We've fielded a lot of calls from developers and residents interested in the future of the site. We're hoping to see a quality new development that brings exciting new energy to Main Street. Keep your eyes peeled for an announcement from Capital in the coming months, as they consider proposals they receive.

Jeffrey Woods Festival is March 4th
(In Case You Didn't Get the Message)

SAVE THE DATE

**THE 10TH JEFFREY WOODS
FESTIVAL
MARCH 4 2023**



Mayor's Office Major Goals for 2023

Mega Meta Goal

Finalize and complete the Year of the Parks projects

Safety and Community Health

Continue to study and pursue the cleanup of unsafe environmental sites

Complete and institute Youth Interaction Working Group recommendations

Enact income-based fines for minor misdemeanors

Craft and institute community mental health and social services support model

Support and encourage police department community policing expansion

Help facilitate new, positive programs with police and schools around traffic and student safety and relationship development

Help facilitate police department command structure updates

Launch bike boulevard network and signage

Institute trail town recommendations

Environment and Sustainability

Work with Council to advance zero emissions landscaping incentive ordinance

Complete Climate Action Plan for Council adoption

Pass and institute universal recycling

Identify and install on-street EV charging infrastructure

Monitor electrical aggregation options

Stormwater onsite treatment code

Zoning and Development

Facilitate unsafe environmental site remediation and redevelopment

Launch Land Use Strategy Commission update process

Continue to encourage development of the Gateway South site

Work with the property owner of Chelsea and Main to remove all site improvements, remediate the site, and make it available for development

Update Livingston Avenue Zoning Code to conform with Joint Livingston Avenue Plan recommendations

Parks and Recreation

Work with Council and Rec Board on modernizing park rules and rec board ordinance

Work with Recreation Department to launch Jeffrey Park Plan process

Service and Infrastructure

Leverage ARP funds to fast-track sewer infrastructure improvements

Work with Council to implement rigorous onsite stormwater treatment requirements for additive impermeable surface

Plan and install "Alley of the Future" project

Finalize Columbia Place proposal

Complete Drexel Avenue road diet

Plan and execute 2023 street program

Communications and Strategy

Complete 2023 Strategic Plan Update (early 2023)

Draft and circulate Annual Report to the Community

Re-launch New Resident Welcome events

Revamp internal communications

Institute HR audit recommendations





**ALLEY OF THE
FUTURE
ONSITE VISIT**

Mayor's Update to City Council

