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CITY OF PARKVILLE • 8880 Clark Avenue • Parkville, MO 64152 • (816) 741-7676 • FAX (816) 741-0013

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Parkville State of the City Address  
Mayor Nan Johnston  
February 11, 2019

Good afternoon everyone. I would like to thank the Parkville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Platte County Community Center for the opportunity to provide our community this update on the many things happening in Parkville.

For many years, Parkville has been the best-kept secret in the region. Our presence along the Missouri River offers natural beauty – bluffs and trees provide the perfect setting for quality neighborhoods. Our residents enjoy an excellent quality of life with a beautiful parks system and open spaces, a charming historic downtown; and superior educational opportunities with the nationally recognized Park Hill School District and Park University providing higher learning opportunities. We are also blessed with proud and involved residents. While some have been here their entire lives and will never leave, many others have discovered this best kept secret and are drawn here for the attributes I just mentioned. Regardless of how long they have lived here, hundreds of citizens each year volunteer in the community making this an even more wonderful place to live. I am honored to serve as Parkville’s Mayor and pleased to deliver this State of Our City.

Parkville continues to be a City on the Rise! The community is growing with new residential and commercial development drawn by our quality of life and attractiveness of the city. While much of the attention this past year has been on growth, your elected officials have not forgotten our historic past and have established new practices this past year to encourage the preservation of our historic buildings and our rich heritage. The City’s efforts to improve our parks, trails, and streets enhances the livability of Parkville. Our institutions are strong. Our neighborhoods are strong. The State of our City is Strong.

I would like to begin by presenting some of the recent achievements and then outline the things we look forward to in the coming year.

The City has been extremely busy over the past year making improvements to the city’s infrastructure, passing a Park Improvement Sales Tax, managing brisk new development activity, and doing some of the things I believe we do best, providing superior city services and public safety protection for our residents.

The annual investment in street maintenance, sanitary sewer improvements, and storm water improvements is part of a long-term strategy to maintain and upgrade the city’s infrastructure. The initiation of the Highway 9 Project follows the completion of the widening of the westernmost section of Highway 45 in providing greatly improved transportation in the community. The passage of Proposition P has provided the city with a dedicated funding source to make improvements to our parks.

Public Safety for our residents continues to be our highest priority. Our Police Department is amongst the finest in the region. Parkville is routinely rated as one of the safest communities in the state. Our officers go beyond the call of duties, in not only protecting our residents, but also integrating itself in the community.

A lot of new private investment is occurring in Parkville. Residential areas continue to be built creating quality neighborhoods for our residents to live and raise their families. Commercial development continues to flourish in the community. New developments in downtown Parkville, on Highway 45, and near Interstate 435 demonstrate the desirability of the city. These developments strengthen our tax base that is needed to provide services to residents.

Other notable achievements over the past year include:

- Parkville received several recognitions in 2019. We were named one of the top 20 Best Places to Live in Missouri, continuing a long string of similar recognitions that shows Parkville is a safe community, and a great place to visit and live. Our Nature Sanctuary was named one of the Best-Kept Secrets by Kansas City Parent Magazine. The City also became a Purple Heart City, paying special recognition to our veterans who are Purple Heart Medal Recipients.
- The City government was recognized as a Tree City USA for the 29<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and for the fourth consecutive year, the city received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award by the Government Finance Officers Association. We were also greatly honored when Police Chief Kevin Chrisman received the Clarence M. Kelley Award from the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission for the Outstanding Law Enforcement Administrator in the Metropolitan area.
- The City Budget ended the year in excellent financial shape. We have made significant progress on the challenges presented during the latest economic downturn and we are now in the best overall financial condition in decades, with sufficient reserves. The City continues to enjoy an excellent AA Credit Rating.
- For the second year in a row, the City broke records for building permits with this 2019 permit revenue exceeding 2018 by 23%. Our total assessed value has risen from \$222,921,721 (\$223 million) in 2017 to \$254,326,100 (\$254 million) in 2019. Three major projects greatly contributed to this achievement:
  - Six at Park, a 54,000 square foot office project that will provide an open lobby, collaborative office spaces, executive offices and conferences spaces;
  - Park University's Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center, a three-story, approximately 7,810 square foot facility that will be home of the School of Business and the Park Global Warrior Center; and,
  - The first phases of the Creekside development, a Master Planned Mixed Use Project that includes single and multi-family homes, retail, a town center, and public and private open spaces that includes a tournament quality baseball complex.
- Downtown Parkville is the heart of the community. The City has made investments in new lighting and soon to be installed themed directional signage. The Board approved a Chapter 353 Redevelopment Plan that will encourage owners to invest in property. We will continue to work with the Main Street Parkville Association and downtown businesses to find ways to continue to improve our charming historic Downtown district.
- In April, voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition P authorizing a half-cent sales tax for park improvements. Planning is underway for park projects spanning the next ten years. We look forward to providing our residents these upgrades to our parks inventory which includes our

riverfront and neighborhood parks, expanding our trails system, developing new sports fields, and improving other park amenities.

- A new bridge over White Alloe Creek was completed in English Landing Park, replacing the old Low Water Crossing. The bridge will allow the park to remain open during periods of high river levels that backs up the creek.

The Creekside Development began construction in 2019. Creekside is a \$330 million master planned mixed-use development located on three corners at Highway 45 and Interstate 435. As I mentioned earlier, Phase I of the development includes single- and multi-family homes, retail, a town center and public and private open spaces including six tournament quality baseball fields. Not only is the development a welcome investment in our community, solves the city's Neighborhood Improvement District Debt problem. Our taxpayers are no longer on the hook for millions of dollars in debt for sewer and street improvements after a failed development many years ago on the same property. This will provide relief for the city's budget, which was being strained by the annual subsidy of approximately \$425,000 for debt payments, and strengthen our ability to keep the city safe and make other needed investments and improvements in the community.

Some of the exciting things about the Creekside Development include:

Tournament quality baseball fields, which will bring hundreds of high school aged teams and their families to Parkville for tournaments, held from March through October. The teams and families will stay in nearby hotels, some of which will be built in Creekside, and shop and eat at our local businesses. The economic activity from this not only will provide increased sales for our businesses but will also provide revenue to the City to pay for vital services. Jackson Brett, son of Kansas City Royals' baseball legend George Brett, will be managing the complex.

Creekside will also provide for a broader range of housing choices, some of which are presently limited in Parkville. Community development experts consider, and we believe, that a variety of housing types is healthy for a community. At different points of people's lives, they have different housing needs. Whether it be a young family starting out and needing an affordable home, a growing family in need of more space or for our empty-nester residents who have raised a family and wish to downsize, housing options are desired. One size does not fit all and Creekside will provide a wider range of housing choices for our residents.

The year 2019 did have some challenges. Two events, the first in March, and again in late May, saw the Missouri River crest at its highest level since the flood of 1993, flooding English Landing and Platte Landing parks. While our parks are designed to withstand normal flooding events, an unprecedented and enormous amount of sand and silt was left behind after flood waters receded, damaging park amenities. Between the two floods, the annual Microbrew Fest and Northland Law Enforcement Appreciation Day events were able to go on with a few adjustments to the layout. We were devastated and greatly disappointed that most other events – charity runs, family and company picnics, ball games and practices were cancelled. City crews have worked diligently to reconstruct the park back to its pre-flood condition. With the exception of the dog park, which is expected to reopen this spring, most of the facilities have been restored and are being enjoyed again by the many people who are attracted to these wonderful parks.

I would also like to preview some of the things to look forward to in 2020:

- Your Board of Aldermen set goals for fiscal year 2020 to prioritize and allocate financial and staff resources, and to guide decision-making in our pursuit of providing strong city services and improving the community. The city's Vision Statement of, *"Parkville will offer an exceptional quality of life for residents and visitors by embracing opportunities to enhance commerce and economic activity, while preserving the community's historic charm, attractive character, and unique natural environments,"* was supported by critical success factors related to Basic Services, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, and Financial Stability. City staff is busy implementing specific action plans that address these goals. This vision and these priorities are the foundation of how we serve our residents.
- We look forward to the completion of major projects, including the first phases of the Route 9 Street Improvements from Highway 45 to Lakeview Drive. The project will not only improve the street, but will provide an enhanced streetscape that includes lighting, sidewalks, and a trail.
- The Wetlands Project in Platte Landing Park is expected to be completed. The project is funded by a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The cornerstone project will restore wetlands and the riparian corridor along Rush Creek and significantly improving wildlife habitat. The project will include trails, enhancing the current trail system and complement existing recreational features in the riverfront parks. It will further enhance the aesthetic value of the parks, drawing visitors from across the region and bring more people to downtown Parkville.
- We will begin implementing projects in the Parks funded with revenue from Proposition P. The focus for this year's projects includes the first phases of the Ballfield Development, new pickle ball courts, neighborhood park improvements, improved trail connectivity and other improvements outlined in the Parks Master Plan.
- We believe the long-standing impediment with the railroad will finally be resolved and the final connection on the riverfront trail between Parkville and Riverside will advance, greatly enhancing the overall regional trail system.
- Major developments will continue to progress and hopefully new opportunities will come along. Baseball tournaments will begin at Creekside in April. Apartments, townhomes, and single-family dwellings are under construction. Commercial developments are under construction and the Developer has already announced tenants that include a Johnny's Tavern, Scooters Coffee, and Anytime Fitness.
- Apex Plaza's new building will include a Verizon Wireless Store and a Domino's Pizza. A retail strip building and a fast food or fast casual restaurant are planned but not started.
- We will continue to support quality development in the community as it provides amenities desired by our residents and provides economic vitality to the city that will help secure our future. We resolve to do so in a manner that will treasure the past and preserve our community in a way that maintains Parkville's charm. We can do this by managing and encouraging the kind of growth that adds value for our residents without limiting our future or sacrificing our quality of life.
- We are also excited in 2020 to update the Parkville Master Plan that will help us plan for responsible well-planned growth and improvement to the community. Confluence Consulting

was hired to help us develop this new plan and will be conducted using an extensive public engagement process that will aid in updating the Plan's vision, community goals and objectives, data, maps and future land use projections.

- In 2020, the Board also has prioritized better communications with our citizens and continue to look for new ways of connecting with our residents. The city currently records and live streams our Board of Aldermen, Planning and Zoning Commission and Community Land and Recreation Board meetings and videos of past meeting are available for viewing via our website. We keep residents up to date on what is happening in the community using social media, newsletters, and other communication channels, to allow citizens to see what is happening in their community and encourage residents to participate in public discussions. In 2020, you will see the city expand these efforts and include citizen surveys to more effectively communicate with and increase engagement from our residents.

We are pleased with the progress the City has made over the past year and excited about the year ahead of us. The promise and anticipation of the opportunities will continue to overcome challenges. We appreciate the support of our residents, our business partners, nonprofit organizations, and dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly toward making Parkville an even better place to live, work, worship and raise a family. The Parkville Area Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Parkville Association, Parkville Rotary, Parkville Economic Development Council, and Park University and other supportive organizations are vital partners to our successful community.

I thank the Board of Aldermen and staff. I am most grateful for a unified Board comprised of dedicated and community-oriented individuals with a variety of backgrounds and experience who work together toward common goals and betterment of the community. Along with a hard-working and professional city staff, we are united in the commitment to provide superior city services and make decisions that best benefit our residents.

Most of all, I thank our citizens for their support and confidence. It has been a privilege to be your Mayor for the past six years. The Board of Aldermen and I greatly appreciate your trust in allowing us to serve this great community.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nan Johnston". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mayor Nan Johnston