

2023 State of the City of Brighton Address

Prepared by Councilmember & Mayor Kristoffer Tobbe

- Council Members, City Staff, Residents and fellow members of our Greater Brighton Community.
- Today, I am here to report on the State of our Beloved City of Brighton.

- But before I do, I would be remiss if I did not take the time to thank all those who have helped our community, our city council members and our staff to get to this wonderful place we call the City of Brighton.

- I would like to thank my wife Courtney, our daughters, Gabriella, Gwen, Genevieve, & Gillan My Father James, Stepmother Jamie and my in laws Diana & Jim for the support structure to keep me and our family going.
- I would also like to thank Kate & Larry Lawrence along with the Great Mo and so many others on this special occasion.
- I would also like to express an enormous amount of appreciation and thanks to our City Staff
- Council Members moment of Thanks
 - Mayor Pro Tem Jim Bohn
 - Council Member Renee Pettengill
 - Council Member Susan Gardner
 - Council Member Jon Emaus
 - Council Member Bill Albert
 - Council Member Paul Gipson
 - City Staff

- We all owe a great deal to all of you Thank you.

- I am reminded a great slogan we have in our community "Brighton builds Community and Community Builds Brighton."

- This slogan is emblematic of who we are as a community, and what we do for our community & it is forever driving us into a future that is unknown, but we always have the best of intent as we go forward into whatever the future may have in store for the City of Brighton.

- While preparing for this address I took time to go through the Brighton community history book.

- I look at where we started with humble origins of homesteads & farms, then a mill was built, and our community changed.

- **After the mill came stores, a main street, small boarding rooms and a hotel and our community changed.**
- **A railroad, more homes and families, a school for the children, Brighton grew, prospered and our community changed.**
- **Brighton became known for its many lakes, City folks bought land and created vacation cottages and fond memories of Brighton, and our community changed.**
- **Over the years more people visited and learned to love Brighton. In the late 1960's many more people came to Brighton to live from the cities, Brighton grew and prospered, and our community changed.**
- **Today, our community is still growing and changing, as it will continue to do so for many years to come. People love Brighton, not just for the lakes, rivers and stores but it is the people in the community that truly make our community great, it is our City Staff, starting with the City Manager Gretchen, Our Police, Water, wastewater, Streets, Human resources, Finance, Community Development Departments our City staff go above and beyond expectations consistently and I can only hope that each and every one of them know how important they are to Brighton.**
- **Just this past Saturday Shane from our DPW team took the extra effort to blow all the leaves out of the Amp plaza for the Veterans Day celebration. Making the ole Sgt 1st class a very happy fellow.**
- **It is the fact that people from Brighton will still stop to say hi or welcome new visitors, that is the secret to the success of Brighton.**
- **So, Ladies and gentlemen, citizens of our beloved community I sit before you today as an equally elected member of our City Council and as the Mayor of our City of Brighton, to provide a comprehensive update on the state of our beloved city, highlighting the remarkable progress and achievements that have shaped our collective journey.**
- **From the emergence of innovative initiatives to the steady growth of our local businesses, the following are key points that underscore the dynamic and thriving nature of the City of Brighton.**
- **This journey has not been without some discomfort along the way.**

- **But the truth is, that Businesses continues to Flourish in Brighton:**
 - We have welcomed a plethora of new businesses, including Sidecar Slider Bar, 120 West, Brass & Oak, Coast on Main, Captains on Main, Coral Sash, Forest and Fillies, Jezebels, Canopy Lounge, Label Kitchen & Bar, Acapulco grill, Casa Tequilla, DogWatch, Grace and Wimsey, Full Circle Brews and Wall Flowers Mercantile– all a testament to our city's economic resilience of being in the City of Brighton.

- **Public Safety is still a Prioritization:**
 - Our Voters Successfully renewed and increased the Police Millage to bolster our commitment to public safety and our officers on watch.
 - this police millage will fund & equip the police department with much needed safety equipment and capital resources like police cruisers.

- **Community Engagement continues to be a core element in building our community.**
 - The Launch of the New My Brighton MI app, fostering enhanced connectivity and engagement among residents.
 - Ongoing support for local Boy and Eagle Scouts along with other outstanding civic groups like the Historical Society, the Art Guild, Rotary Clubs, Masons and Optimists clubs just to name a few continue to focus on our community and we regularly recognize their achievements.
 - Engaging in the New Plow Truck naming contest and the expanded Social District, fostering community spirit.
 - Thank you, Clerk Tara Brown, We truly appreciate all, that you do.
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- **We continue to govern with Efficient and Proactive Governance:**
 - with the adoption of budgets prioritizing the reduction of outstanding liabilities, including pension funding and essential infrastructure.
 - Restructuring of City Council meetings and incorporation of new ideas from staff and citizens, facilitating comprehensive discussions that shape our community.
 - Successful negotiation of union contracts, demonstrating fiscal responsibility.
 - Establishment of a new process for appointments to various boards and commissions, ensuring diversity and best possible expertise.
 - Thank you Council Member Albert
 - Seamless transition to a new IT provider, ensuring streamlined technological support.
 - Adoption of new Vision and Goals, guiding our city towards a future of sustainable growth.
 - Introduction of new and revised ordinances and policies, including Banner Policy, Sign Ordinance, Leaf Burning, Transit Ordinance, Zoning Ordinance amendments, and Raise the Age – Police ordinance.
- **Infrastructure Enhancements continue to be made in big ways:**
 - With the Replacement of a tornado siren, enhancing our emergency preparedness.
 - The reconditioning of both Water Towers, prolonging their lifespans.
 - Implementation of the Sidewalk Gap Program and Annual Sidewalk Maintenance, ensuring the safety and aesthetics of our public spaces.
 - Significant progress in the Streetscape project, encompassing a bond issue, watermain upgrades, Thank you Tim, Pam, Jon Mike, Robbie, Marcel & DDA Board
 - The streetscape project was complimented by an unprecedented and a strong collaborative effort between city staff and local merchants, **exemplified by initiatives like Believe in Brighton, a Fashion Show, and combined sales events.**
 - **These combined efforts helped to support and assist our Brighton merchants during Streetscape challenges, helping to fostering a sense of community resilience.**
 - Thank you, Gretchen, Ken, Todd, Mark, Barb, Nick, Lindsay, and the many others believe in Brighton merchants, staff and participants, you made

something meaningful, historical and impactful and helped many navigate a difficult time.

- **Capital Enhancements:**

- Including but not limited to:
- Summit Booster Station, The Brighton Coves Lift Station, the Brighton Coves Sanitary Sewer Force Main, Improving the Aesthetics of the Nelson Booster Station, Sewer Lining, Crack sealing and parking lot resurfacing, the
- New DPS Storage Building, Vacuum Street Sweeper, Salt/Dump Truck, Claricone Clarifiers and Flow Meters– Wastewater Plant repairs reconditioning and replacements, Sidewalk Gap Program Flint, Williamsen, Completed Wastewater Treatment Plant Evaluation
- Extensive road work on
 - Rickett Road
 - Grand River Mill and Fill
 - Northwest Neighborhoods
 - Main Street
- Police Capital Equipment
 - Vehicles, cameras, equipment, etc.
- Grant Awards
 - Utilization of \$805,000 for critical upgrades in the Water and Sewer system, addressing vital needs.
 - Awarded Tap Grant for sidewalks at Flint, Williamsen in the amount of \$329K.
 - DWAM Grant (Drinking Water Asset Management Grant) \$218,564

- **Personnel Additions:**

- Onboarding of new council members (Albert, Gipson & Council Member elect Schmenk), a City Manager Gretchen Gomolka, Police Chief Brent Pirochta, and Finance Director Elizabeth Gaines, for strengthening our administrative team and the many other new team members we welcome to the City of Brighton

- **Legal Transition:**

- A Transition to a new law firm, Bodman PLC, with City Attorney Sarah Gabis, ensuring legal expertise and guidance.

- Thank you, Sara, for your strong attention to all City Legal matters we know you have Brighton in your heart.

- **Civic Events:**
 - Hosted a full slate of events in 2022, including children's series at AMP, with additional highlights in 2023, such as Street Warming and Full Harvest Moon parties.
- **City Expansion & developments like the:**
 - Exciting new Vistas at Uptown Development (DTN by Meijer), Conely Square, Springhill, Lindbom, and renovations of existing homes, contributing to the city's growth and vitality.
 - Adoption of a Brownfield at Lindbom, marking a significant step toward revitalizing a vacant building that had seen graffiti and trespassing.
- In conclusion, the state of our city is robust, dynamic, and poised for continued success. We have a strong fiscally responsible budget and plan to continue that trend well into the future.
- Together, we have overcome challenges, celebrated victories, and embraced a future defined by progress and unity. Let us forge ahead, inspired by the resilience and spirit that define Brighton.
- **As the Mayor of the City of Brighton, I can say this one thing for certain, that while our community may continue to evolve and change over time,**
- **I pray to the Almighty that this one thing stays the same.**
- **Brighton Builds Community and the Community will continue to Build Brighton.**
- **I Thank you all for this time to present the state of the City of Brighton Michigan on this 13th day of November 2023.**