



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

lakecountyohio.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 27, 2022

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Lake County Receives two Ohio APA Great Places in Ohio Awards

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, October 27, 2022– The Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Ohio) recently announced the winners of the 2022 Ohio APA Great Places Awards. The biennial awards program honors outstanding physical spaces that planners have made permanent through careful planning and unbridled imagination in Ohio.

APA Ohio presented the Great Places in Ohio Awards at the 2022 Cleveland Planning and Zoning Workshop on October 12, 2022.

Lake County, Ohio was recognized by the Ohio Chapter of the American Planning Association with two Great Places in Ohio Awards for Downtown Willoughby and Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve. Downtown Willoughby is a beautiful, charming, historical neighborhood that goes by the nickname of the “Courtesy City.” The Mentor Marsh is home to many different local plant and animal species. Today, Mentor Marsh is one of the largest natural marshes that still remains along the shores of Lake Erie.

“Alanna Ciancibello did an incredible job on getting this honor for us” said Lake County Planning Director, Dave Radachy.

One of the planning initiatives taking place at the Mentor Marsh are the restoration efforts being led by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The first major step of the restoration process was to reduce the amount of phragmites in the marsh. Using an aquatic-safe herbicide, the invasive plants were sprayed from helicopters. More than 19,000 plants of 23 native species have been planted. Due to these efforts, native plants are sprouting, rare birds are returning, frog habitats thrive, fish are utilizing the water as a nursery and the marsh is becoming a stopover habitat for many animals, such as otters, beavers, waterfowl and shorebirds.

The City of Willoughby follows strict planning initiatives to protect the historic integrity of Downtown Willoughby. The City of Willoughby provides detailed guidelines that must be followed in the historic downtown district. These guidelines include everything from rehabilitating windows, walls, paint, foundations to demolition and new construction. Willoughby’s distinctive character and charm help attract events, businesses and visitors from all over Northeast Ohio.

“Both Downtown Willoughby and Mentor Marsh are beautiful and well deserving of this award,” said Commissioner John Hamercheck.

Applications for the award were reviewed and scored by members of the Awards Committee of the Ohio APA Board that have representation throughout the state. They evaluated the nominations based on character and personality, uniqueness, special history, how the space is used, planning initiative, and visual attributes through photos.

“It is such an honor for Lake County to be recognized by the Ohio APA not only once, but twice,” said Commissioner John Plecnik. “The residents of our county are lucky to have such wonderful places to visit so close to home.”

“Planning is a huge factor in a community,” said Commissioner Mark Tyler. “The Commissioners thank those individuals and teams that make Lake County so great.”

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