

Biography/Resume

David E. Anderson

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Mayor and Safety Director, City of Willoughby, OH (1992 - 2018)

Elected Mayor in November of 1991 on a platform of Leadership, Planning and Economic Development. Re-elected eight times over the next 26 years (4 two-year terms and 4 four-year terms.) Retired in January of 2018. Highlights while in office include:

Planning and Zoning

Crafted and adopted the City's first Comprehensive Plan in 1994, allowing developers to understand the city's needs and desires and to move quickly through the planning, zoning and permitting processes. The Plan was awarded Best in Ohio in 1995 by the American Institute of Architects and the State of Ohio. Subsequent updates have allowed for the orderly development of industrial, commercial, residential and downtown properties. Controversy has been almost non-existent during this time.

Public Partnerships

Tax Abatement. During the 1990s tax abatement was extremely controversial and strongly opposed by school systems throughout NE Ohio. During this time Willoughby entered into new property tax abatement agreements with manufacturers moving to Willoughby, with no opposition from the Willoughby-Eastlake School System. This was accomplished by crafting an agreement with the school system to share income tax revenues from these new companies for the term of the abatement. This win-win situation resulted in over a dozen new manufacturer's opening in Willoughby with significant new tax dollars to the city and school system.

Riverside Commons Development/Federal Lawsuit. The Riverside Commons property (the south side of SR2 between Lost Nation Road and SR306) has been the subject of a federal lawsuit for approximately 15 years. Proposed a settlement creating a Joint Economic Development District between Willoughby and Mentor which would preserve significant wooded wetlands while allowing industrial development of property in Willoughby and Mentor, with access (traffic) from Willoughby's side. This proposed settlement broke a "log jam" in the process that had lasted for many years and the lawsuit is now in the final stages of settlement.

Transfer of Lost Nation Airport to LCPEDA. In 1986 the City of Willoughby acquired Lost Nation Airport, saving the airport from sale and residential development. Recognizing the long term difficulties of one city providing this asset for the entire region, successfully conducted studies which demonstrated the airport's value to the county and negotiated a transfer of the airport to the County and LCPEDA. The airport is once again accepting federal aid which will allow future development and long term viability.

Willoughby Union Village. Successfully negotiated with the Willoughby-Eastlake School Board and Lake County YMCA to fund and operate the new Field House at Willoughby Union Village, saving significant tax dollars and increasing opportunities and effectiveness for the Senior Center, YMCA and South High School. Opened in Fall of 2019.

Public/Private Partnerships

Development of Willoughby Commons Shopping Center. While the Comprehensive Plan allowed the developers to quickly re-zone the property and gain approval of their plans, a significant problem emerged as a result of traffic studies. Euclid Avenue between SR91 and the new Center (approximately one mile) was not wide enough to accommodate the increased traffic being projected. Widening the road through normal government channels was an eight to ten-year process. Needing to move immediately, proposed a partnership with the developers in which they would construct the road widening at their expense, with the city contributing engineering expenses, acquiring the necessary right-of-way and allowing purchasing through the city, saving sales taxes. The proposal was accepted by the developer and the road improvements were successfully accomplished.

Downtown Willoughby Revitalization. In 1992 Downtown Willoughby was experiencing almost 50% vacancy of its storefront properties. Crafted a revitalization plan based on restaurant development. Successfully attracted a new upscale restaurant (Gavi's) into a city-owned property and steered Brewing Company developers into an old manufacturing plant. Worked with the State of Ohio Board of Liquor Control to utilize a little-known program to acquire the necessary liquor licenses (Willoughby was the first city in the state to utilize this program.) As an added incentive the city leased space between these properties to provide the necessary public parking. The city also invested \$1 million dollars during this time into a streetscape project. As a result of these efforts Willoughby is now an attractive area to new businesses and residents, with no long-term vacancies.

Lakeshore Facade Improvement Program. In an effort to spur facade improvements in North Willoughby, proposed a program to provide matching funds (up to \$10,000) for such improvements. The funds came from Willoughby's annual capital program. To date, \$100,000 has been reimbursed on projects totaling \$300,000 in actual facade improvements and spurring \$1 million in total building improvements.

Task Force on Fiscal Strategy. After taking office in January of 1992, discovered Willoughby's fund balance had decreased from \$3 million to \$1 million in the previous two years. On June 4th, with the support of Council, created the Task Force on Fiscal Strategy. This group, made up of 11 private citizens, conducted a performance audit on every city department to assess the city's financial position and to recommend ways and means by which Willoughby might avoid a fiscal crisis. On November 9th the Task Force issued a report detailing 80 suggestions on ways the city could operate more efficiently and effectively. In March of 1994 the city reported back to the Task Force

members that the city had implemented 58 of their suggestions, resulting in a balanced budget for 1994 and increasing fund balances. Willoughby's fund balance continued to rise in subsequent years and the city's bond rating from Moody's Financial Services was increased three times, from A1 to AA1 (the second highest rating given by Moody's).

Workforce Development

Previous history and experience. Prior to being elected mayor, served as the Executive Director of two proprietary electronics training schools (North Royalton, OH and San Jose, CA), training adult students for careers in electronics servicing and manufacturing. Worked with over 100 businesses in Greater Cleveland placing graduates in positions and designing courses to accommodate the needs of employers. Subsequently served in a consulting capacity to private colleges and schools providing training to their Admissions Officers. Authored and marketed a training manual for Admissions Officers that was used in over 200 private colleges across the country,

Willoughby-Eastlake Schools Technical Center. As mayor, with a strong commitment to technical education, worked with the Principals of the W-E Tech Center to support their efforts to encourage students to pursue a technical education. Hosted monthly breakfasts and lunches with the students to bolster their decision and encourage excellence in their performance.

Heisler Tool - Precision Machining Institute. Due to the difficulty in finding qualified machinists, the owners of Heisler Tool Company contacted the city regarding starting a training facility. Utilizing previous experience, was able to provide contact information and help guide the owners through the process of licensing and establishing the Institute. Today, Precision Machining Institute has partnered with the National Tooling and Machining Association to provide the most comprehensive 16 week precision machining course in the country. Graduates can attain an entry level/class "C" machinist position.

Public Involvement

Served on numerous public boards including:

- NOACA (Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency), regional transportation and environmental planning for Cleveland and five surrounding counties. Served as Chairman of the Transportation Advisory Committee and subsequently as Board President.
- Leadership Lake County, graduate and board member.
- Lake County United Way
- Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council, board member representing Lake County.
- Lakeland Foundation Board
- Residential Construction Advisory Committee for the Ohio Board of Building Standards
- Lake County Narcotics Agency, 15 years, Chairman.
- Laketran Board of Trustees

Awards and Recognition

During time in office the city received numerous awards, including:

- Cleveland Restoration Society, Founders Award for historical renovation (Downtown)
- American Institute of Architects, revitalization efforts in the historic downtown.
- Greater Cleveland Growth Association, "Business Friendly Community" designation
- Willoughby Area Chamber of Commerce, "Business of the Year". Also received the CEO of the Year Award the first year it was presented.
- Ohio State Auditor, "Award of Distinction" for six consecutive years, an award for fiscal management given to just 4% of governmental agencies.

Previous History and Experience

Life-long resident of Lake County. Graduated from Willoughby South High School in 1970 and attended Cleveland State University. Left college at age 19 to start Anderson Music, Inc., a boutique music store in Willoughby specializing in guitar instruction and sales. Operated the store while also performing as a professional musician for the next six years.

In 1977, at age 25, entered the Life Insurance business with the Robert E. Coode Agency in Euclid, OH. Over the next four years gained valuable sales and sales management experience, winning numerous sales awards from Midwestern United Life Insurance Company.

In 1981, hired as Admissions Director of Total Technical Institute, an electronics and computer programming school owned by Total Technical Services, a major third party company servicing IBM mainframe computers. Six months later was promoted to Executive Director. As outlined previously, served four years in North Royalton, OH and San Jose, CA before starting Anderson Consulting Services, acting as a consultant to the proprietary school industry in the areas of admissions training, business planning and strategic planning. Travelled extensively giving training seminars and workshops across the country. Continued as a self-employed consultant until being elected Mayor in 1991.

Married 47 years (Donna), two grown children and six grandchildren.