



HEADLINES IN THE HEIGHTS

VILLAGE OF PEORIA HEIGHTS | QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2020

VILLAGE CALENDAR

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 7, 6:00–7:00 PM

Village Hall Closed for Martin Luther King Day
Monday, Jan. 20

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 21, 6:00–7:00 PM

Neighborhood Watch
Monday, Jan. 27, 6:30–7:30 PM

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 28, 6:00–7:00 PM

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6:00–7:00 PM

Coffee with the Mayor
Monday, Feb. 17, 9:00 AM

Zoning Board of Appeals
Monday, Feb. 17, 5:30–6:30 PM

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 18, 6:00–7:00 PM

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 25, 6:00–7:00 PM

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Mar. 3, 6:00–7:00 PM

Zoning Board of Appeals
Monday, Mar. 16, 5:30–6:30 PM

Board of Trustees Meeting
Tuesday, Mar. 17, 6:00–7:00 PM

Departmental Meeting
Tuesday, Mar. 24, 6:00–7:00 PM

MAYOR'S CORNER

It has been a very eventful three months since last we chatted in this space.

We've held three community meetings in which our residents questioned us about everything from code enforcement to marijuana dispensaries to enhanced police protection. We've welcomed new developments, and we're excited to see serious work begin this coming spring on a boutique hotel, on two significant residential projects, and on a riverfront nature park. We worked hard to lay the groundwork for all of that, and now we're seeing the fruits of those labors. Peoria Heights is a hot commodity in central Illinois.

And now, with our economy growing in unprecedented fashion, we can turn our full attention to what has always been our highest priority—our residents and the neighborhoods in which they live and raise their families.

To that end, your Village Board recently approved a contract with Chicago-based consulting firm

Houseal Lavigne and with local architects Farnsworth Group to help us conduct a study about the needs of our neighborhoods. Their work will provide us with an overall comprehensive plan—a blueprint—on how to address neighborhood concerns, along with other priorities for transportation, parks, and open space, our commercial districts and overall land use.

Thanks to citizen input we've already identified several goals: more and brighter lighting along Lake Avenue, new and better maintained infrastructure such as curbs and sidewalks, an emphasis on family-friendly recreational activities within walking distance of our homes, and perhaps a community garden.

Keep the ideas coming. I cannot urge our residents strongly enough to participate in this study by providing their input as to what they want their community to be. There will be multiple opportunities to do so. You don't have to wait to be asked. Drop us a line at Village Hall. Don't be shy.



We know the Heights has a housing shortage. We know we need more middle-class families. We know we want those who have already chosen the Heights to have good reasons to stay and flourish here.

A community is only as strong as its neighborhoods are healthy. Here's to 2020 being the Year of the Neighborhood—your neighborhood—in your Peoria Heights.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community meetings and Coffee with the Mayor will be back in 2020! For residents interested in some face-to-face interaction with their local decision makers, Mayor Michael Phelan will host a coffee at 9 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 17 at the Centennial Building locat-

ed at the intersection of Euclid and Kingman behind Tower Park. Please feel free to stop by for some lively conversation and a cup of joe.

On Thursday, April 9 at 7 p.m., the Mayor and Village staff will host another community meeting at

the new St. Thomas Community Center at the corner of Monroe and Lake avenues. Residents are free to talk about whatever they wish, but housing and neighborhood issues are likely to be front and center with the development of a new comprehensive plan.

Hope to see you there!

WORD ON THE STREET

AVOID FROZEN PIPES

💧 Become familiar with the areas of your home where pipes are located such as basements and crawl spaces. Also be aware that unheated rooms and outside walls are particularly vulnerable to freezing.

💧 Eliminate sources of cold air near water lines by insulating walls, fixing broken windows, closing off crawl spaces, and eliminating drafts near doors.

💧 Locate your main water shut-off valve. If a pipe freezes or bursts, you need to shut the water off immediately.

💧 Protect your pipes and water meter by wrapping exposed pipes with insulation or an electrical pipe heater. Newspaper and fabric may be used as well.

💧 Turn on sinks to allow a small trickle of water to continually run to keep the pipes from freezing. The extra cost of the water is minimal compared to the cost to repair a broken pipe.

💧 Open cabinet doors and allow the pipes to be exposed to the warmer room temperatures.

💧 Keep interior temperatures at or above 55°F.

💧 If a pipe is frozen, shut off the water immediately. Do not attempt to thaw frozen pipes unless the water is shut off. Freezing can often cause unseen cracks in pipes or joints.

💧 Apply heat to a frozen pipe by warming the air around it, or by applying heat directly to the pipe. Use a hair dryer, space heater, or hot water.

MAKE SURE PEORIA HEIGHTS COUNTS!

In 2020, the United States will be conducting a census to determine each state's number of seats in the House of Representatives. But the census means so much more than that.

Why is the census important to Peoria Heights?

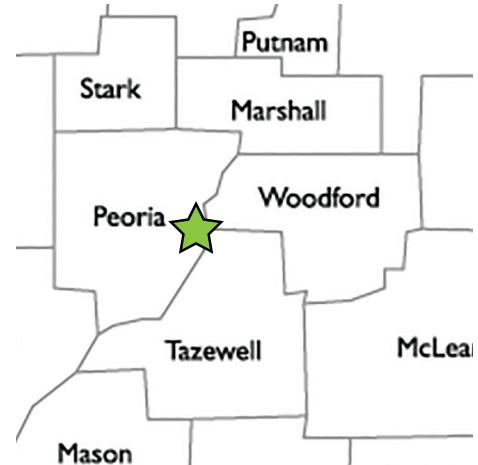
The census will determine Peoria Heights' funding levels for the next 10 years. Population counts are used at the state and federal level to determine how much and what kind of funding Peoria Heights receives. Certain taxes paid to the State of Illinois, like income tax, motor fuel tax, and use tax, are shared with municipalities based on population counts from the census. This means the 2020 census is a big deal for Peoria Heights!

How can I make sure Peoria Heights counts?

For the first time, you can submit your response to the census online. The Census Bureau will be sending out letters to most households with a link to complete the questionnaire online. If you prefer to respond by paper, or you don't get a letter with a link, don't worry. Just wait and the Census Bureau will send out reminders with a paper copy of the questionnaire or a phone number you can call. These reminders are also helpful if you forget to respond the first time around. However you choose to answer the 2020 census, just make sure to participate so Peoria Heights counts.

What does the census mean for me?

The census gathers a variety of data as well as taking a basic head count. This data is then used to qualify for funding, decide allocation of funding, and determine the effectiveness of funding. Mathematicians estimated that in 2015 more than 130 federal programs used census data to allocate more than \$675 billion in funds. By returning your census questionnaire, you're making sure that you count in this community. And you're making sure that some of the money you pay in state and federal taxes will make its way back to Peoria Heights so the Village has money for sidewalks, road repairs, and police and fire protection. So in the coming year, please make sure to respond to the census questionnaire and help make sure Peoria Heights counts!

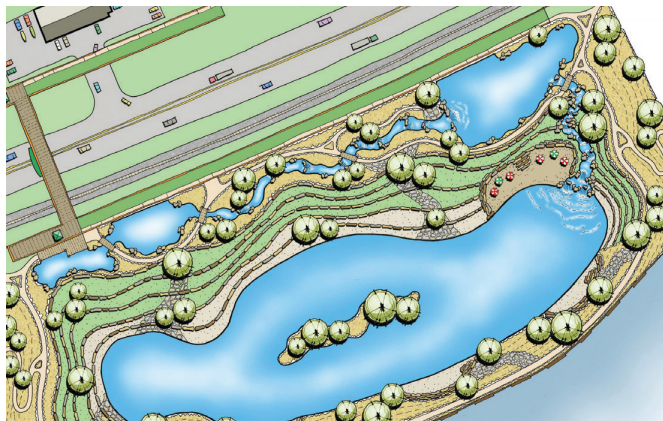


KNOW THE NUMBERS

DID YOU KNOW...

The Village finished the first half of its fiscal year with a surplus?!

The Village's fiscal year spans May through April. At the halfway point in October, we reviewed the finances, and we're proud to report we're doing very well. The Village has a surplus, but the cause was surprising. We found that sales tax revenues were down due to a harsh winter and a delay in receiving payments, but other budget lines have done better than expected. In particular, income tax and local use tax have been helping to offset the decrease in sales tax. Both income tax and local use tax are per capita taxes which are taxes that are paid to the State of Illinois and then shared with municipalities based on population. These per capita taxes, money from the sale of vacant lots, and other locally administered revenues when combined mean the Village is still likely to meet its total budgeted revenue. While this is good news, the decrease in sales tax funds is still a concern. Sales taxes are a large and important part of the Village's budget making up about 49% of the Village's revenues. The decrease is a reminder of the importance of continuing to diversify the Village's revenue sources. Revenues from waste disposal, landlord registration, fines, and interest will ultimately help the Village meet its budget. They're especially important as they're collected locally and stay local meaning that these revenues can be counted on even if the State of Illinois is experiencing problems or delays in payments. At the end of the first half of our year, the Village is projected to end the year with a surplus which it can use to start saving and investing in community initiatives like a curb and sidewalk program for the next budget year.



BLICKENSTAFF BRINGING BACK AL FRESCO PARK ...WITH A TWIST

After decades of inattention, Peoria Heights' waterfront is about to get a ton of buzz with developer Kim Blickenstaff's plans to bring back a re-imagined Al Fresco Park.

Along Galena Road in Peoria Heights once sat a popular amusement park featuring a roller coaster, Ferris wheel, Japanese garden, and movie house. It attracted thousands starting in 1906, reaching its heyday in the Roaring '20s before closing near the end of World War II. The narrow, village-owned, 10-acre strip just south of the IVY Club is where Blickenstaff would fashion a new Al Fresco, albeit one that is more nature park than amusement park.

Two spring-fed lakes will dominate the property, which will offer fishing, boating, scuba diving, snorkeling, zip-lines, and other recreational opportunities. A special wildlife habitat—for river otters, trout, various bird species, etc.—where such creatures can flourish also will be created providing learning opportunities for those who have rarely, if ever, seen them in their natural environment.

And that's just the beginning! Blickenstaff envisions one long, recreational, educational, environmentally progressive and safe link along the Illinois Route 29/Galena Road corridor between the McCluggage Bridge and Poplar Park—and possibly beyond. Ideas include a river loop bikeway, kayak and canoe launch area, ice skating, a boat dock large enough to accommodate the Spirit of Peoria, a waterworks park, bird-watching sites, and perhaps even a museum featuring original Al Fresco memorabilia and other river artifacts.

"Absolutely, it could be a true eco-tourism destination without equal in the Midwest," said Blickenstaff. The impetus, in part, was the recent announcement of a \$68.5 million grant through the state's capital construction bill to widen and upgrade Galena Road. Also a factor is the construction already underway on the south span of the McCluggage Bridge which includes a dedicated, protected bike and pedestrian lane.

The Peoria Heights Village Board has approved a long-term lease with Blickenstaff's KDB Group for 20 years. The lease terms include a discount on any entrance fees for Peoria Heights residents.

"This could really be something we all can be very proud of," said Peoria Heights Mayor Michael Phelan.

PUBLIC SAFETY

LANDLORD REGISTRATION PROGRAM

The Landlord Registration Program was adopted by the Village of Peoria Heights in 2018 to promote public safety and residential rental home condition in the community.

Who enforces the program and what qualifications do they have?

Shane Murphy is a licensed and certified Home Inspector through the State of Illinois and an Associate Member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI). Certification requires a minimum of 60 hours of training and an internship with a licensed inspector. Inspectors must also pass the National Home Inspector Examination. Inspectors are tested again every other year and must submit proof of continuing education to maintain their certifications. As a member of ASHI, Shane is additionally required to comply with their Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics. Membership in ASHI has additional testing and continuing education requirements.

What's the inspection process like?

The property owner is contacted to schedule an appointment for the inspection. The property owner should then notify the tenant of the inspection. The property owner, tenant, or both are welcome to attend the inspection but at least one must be present. The inspection will consist of a check of the structure and a check of the electrical and plumbing systems that could adversely affect the health and safety of the residents. After the inspection, any findings are reviewed with the owner and/or tenant. A formal inspection report of the findings for each rental unit is then mailed to the owner.

What happens if the house isn't up to code?

Very few properties are in perfect condition. It's rare that an inspection is completed without some recommended updates or corrections. In most cases, a well-maintained property will pass the standards required in Peoria Heights. If a property does not pass, a follow-up inspection will be scheduled within 60 days to correct any reported issues.

What is the benefit of this program?

Peoria Heights has always been an outstanding place to live and raise a family. The goal is to maintain the same quality of living and offer more options for families to reside in this community through excellent rental properties. Since the start of this program, owners are renovating their rental properties, and some owners are starting to sell the properties to their tenants. The program is helping to improve quality of life for residents of Peoria Heights.

CONGRATULATIONS RETIREES!

Join the Village in congratulating three longtime employees on their retirement. Sergeant Glen Neal, Officer William Switzer, and Public Works Laborer Mark Gauf collectively devoted 69 years serving the residents of Peoria Heights. Thank you for your hard work, and best wishes for your future endeavors.

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Ameren/Cilco
Electric, gas
(888) 789-2477

G & O Disposal
Garbage, yard waste, recycling
(309) 742-4177

Greater Peoria Sanitary Dist.
Sewer
(309) 637-3511

Peoria Heights Fire Dept.
(309) 682-4217
(Non-Emergency)

Peoria Heights Police Dept.
(309) 688-3461
(Non-Emergency)

Peoria Heights Public Library
(309) 682-5578

Peoria Heights Schools Dist.
(309) 686-8800

Peoria Heights Village Hall
Administration
(309) 686-2385

Peoria Post Office
(309) 692-9816

Richwoods Township
(309) 688-2822

Xfinity/Comcast Cable
(866) 886-6838

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustee Sherryl Carter
309-657-5689

Trustee Sarah DeVore
309-712-7332

Trustee Jeff Goett
309-472-7114

Trustee Beth Khazzam
309-868-0976

Trustee Diane Mariscal
309-635-4949

Trustee Brandon Wisenburg
309-453-8191

CONNECT WITH THE VILLAGE & YOUR NEIGHBORS

In November, the Peoria Heights Village Board signed a contract with Chicago-based urban planning consultant Houseal Lavigne and Peoria architects Farnsworth Group to begin collecting information for the development of a comprehensive plan. The plan will address neighborhood preservation and housing, transportation, parks and open space, community facilities, and infrastructure along with the establishment of employment and entertainment areas and land use in general.

A plan is only as effective and as visionary as the quantity and quality of the input that goes into it from the stakeholders who have the most to gain. With that in mind, residents are urged to participate. There will be an interactive project website created as part of the process. Visitors to the website will find an online community questionnaire, as well as a map-based engagement platform that permits users to identify and comment on specific geographic areas with their likes and dislikes. Webinars showing how to use the site will be produced for residents to follow along.

Beyond that, a business focus group will be convened, along with a community visioning meeting and an open house. Besides those come-one, come-all gatherings, various stakeholders will be interviewed in one-on-one or small-group settings. Out of all that will come a vision statement, goals and pragmatic policy direction, land use recommendations, a village staff review, and advisory panel working sessions toward an ultimate framework for implementation. The process will take nine to twelve months to complete.

Fundamentally, it's all about the development of the community into the best place it can be—for businesses, which produce the tax revenues necessary to operate our schools and make our neighborhoods safe and plow the streets that get folks to work, and ultimately for the people who call the Heights home.

"We understand that a one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement is ineffective, and that the Village of Peoria Heights places great value on an extensive and authentic outreach process," said Nik Davis, principal at Houseal Lavigne, which has drawn up working plans for some 300 communities.

"This comprehensive plan will establish a strong vision for what the community wants to accomplish in the next 10, 15, 20 years," said Davis. The consulting firm has a long history in the Heights—previous efforts include determining the feasibility of a boutique hotel, which is now coming to fruition—and "this is what we've been working toward. This will be like their playbook."

SNOW SENSE!

With plowing season upon us, here are a few helpful tips to keep things running smooth!

If possible, move vehicles into driveways and off of emergency snow routes.

Shovel in the same direction as traffic to reduce the amount of snow that might be plowed back into your driveway.

Main roadways are plowed first, followed by secondary roads, and alleys. Plow backs are done last to remove excess snow.

Give Public Works a friendly wave as they pass by!

