

# HEADLINES IN THE HEIGHTS



VILLAGE OF PEORIA HEIGHTS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 4

## VILLAGE CALENDAR

**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
Tuesday, Dec. 15, 6:00 PM

**Village Hall Closed**  
Friday, Dec. 25 & Friday, Jan. 1

**Departmental Meeting**  
Tuesday, Jan. 5, 6:00 PM

**Village Hall Closed for Martin Luther King Day**  
Monday, Jan. 18

**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
Tuesday, Jan. 19, 6:00 PM

**Neighborhood Watch**  
Monday, Jan. 25, 6:30 PM

**Departmental Meeting**  
Tuesday, Jan. 26, 6:00 PM

**Departmental Meeting**  
Tuesday, Feb. 2, 6:00 PM

**Zoning Board of Appeal**  
Monday, Feb. 15, 5:30 PM

**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
Tuesday, Feb. 16, 6:00 PM

**Departmental Meeting**  
Tuesday, Feb. 23, 6:00 PM

## MAYOR'S CORNER

In countless ways, this is a good time for Peoria Heights.

We have taken the punches from the pandemic better than most, and our Village budget largely reflects that. We are finishing up a comprehensive plan that will allow us to hit the ground running when the economy emerges from its COVID-induced slump. Major local investments are coming, not least of which is a nearly \$70 million reinvention of Galena Road on our waterfront.

But we are not immune to what's happening in the world around us. With coronavirus infections again on the rise, the state has reauthorized mitigation efforts that will limit and could close, for a time, some of our locally owned businesses.

In response, the Village has partnered with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity on a relief program that will provide up to \$5,000 to local business owners for lease, mortgage and utility obligations.

Meanwhile, we have made significant donations to food pantries at St. Thomas Catholic Church and Peoria Heights Congregational Church.

We want to help in whatever ways we can. It's simple: What should be temporary, as we hone in on a vaccine, must not become permanent.

Meanwhile, I marvel at the ingenuity of our merchants. Dustin Allen, chef and owner at Edge, not only opened his rooftop Twelve Bar Lounge during this pandemic but now has started the market spin-off Provisions.

He had two choices, he told the Journal Star: "Sit back and do nothing and wait for the crisis to pass. Or take it head on and search for ways to be a better version of your old self. We've never stopped planning how to be better."

It's that attitude that gives me such confidence about the future of Peoria Heights.



2020 has been hard on many of us, but if you can, please support the mom-and-pop businesses for which the Heights is known. It's especially critical now as we approach the holiday season, a traditionally busy time that our businesses count on to make ends meet.

We're almost there. We want everyone in our business community to still be standing when we reach the light at the end of this long tunnel, and they will be if the rest of us can chip in where we can.

## VILLAGE HALL TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO PUBLIC

For the safety and protection of residents and staff, Village Hall has temporarily closed to the public to help fight the spread of COVID-19. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Village business will continue during this closure, and Peoria Heights staff will be working regular business hours—Mon-

day through Friday, 8am-5pm. We encourage you to reach out to us with problems and questions by phone or email.

Water payments can be made in the silver drop box in the parking lot, the foyer drop box during business hours, on our website at [www.peoriaheights.org](http://www.peoriaheights.org), or by mail. Please call with any questions.

### Administration

Licenses, permits, questions  
309-686-2385 Ext 3  
[administration@peoriaheights.org](mailto:administration@peoriaheights.org)

### Waterworks/Public Works

Water utility, billing, streets  
309-686-2375 Ext 1  
[water@peoriaheights.org](mailto:water@peoriaheights.org)

Thank you for your patience.

THE VILLAGE OF PEORIA HEIGHTS  
**TOWER TALK**

▶ **TOWER TALK**  
Tune in to Tower Talk webcasts at [www.peoriaheights.org/tower-talk-webcast](http://www.peoriaheights.org/tower-talk-webcast)

## 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.



## HOLIDAYS IN THE HEIGHTS





# HEIGHTS BUSINESSES ELIGIBLE FOR COVID AID

Peoria Heights business owners whose bottom lines have suffered because of the pandemic will be eligible for a one-time grant up to \$5,000 to help reimburse them for lease, mortgage and utility obligations incurred over the last eight months.

The Peoria Heights Commercial Expense Reimbursement Grant Program is made possible by \$250,000 in funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

To qualify, local businesses must be able to show that their monthly revenues between March 1 and Oct. 31 of this year have decreased by at least 25 percent compared to the same period in 2019.

Applications are available on the Village's website or at Village Hall at 4901 N. Prospect Road. The dollars will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis until the fund is exhausted. Documentation must be provided for all expenses.

The Village offered a grant program last May out of locally generated dollars from the community's two Business Development Districts. For that, local businesses received up to \$1,500 to help cover mortgage and lease payments. All in all, 82 Heights businesses received more than \$110,000.

Again, this latest relief program comes just in the nick of time for Heights businesses, which have just entered a second phase of COVID mitigation restrictions or closures.

"The Village is doing everything in its power to help keep local businesses afloat," said Village Administrator Dustin Sutton. With the expectation that this winter could be a lean one until a COVID vaccine comes along, "we want to soften the blow."

For more information about the program, please contact Village Administrator Sutton at (309) 686-2385 or dsutton@heightspd.com.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### POLICE CONTRACT APPROVED

The Peoria Heights Village Board has unanimously approved a three-year contract with its police union.

The 12 officers in Peoria Heights Police Benevolent Association Unit 76 will receive a 3 percent annual increase over the life of the contract, basically a cost-of-living adjustment, said Village Administrator and Police Chief Dustin Sutton.

"This is a good contract for both parties," said Sutton. "It is something that we can afford."

The Village also updated its longevity pay structure, which rewards veteran officers. "We've been very lucky to retain the officers we have for many years during my administration," said Sutton. "I think this is a good gesture ... to show them our appreciation."

Otherwise, benefits remained much the same.

The union had unanimously ratified the contract prior to the Village Board vote. Both sides had agreed to postpone negotiations during the early stages of the pandemic.

"I know I speak for the entire police department when I say thank you for your continued support," Sutton added. "You should be very proud of the men and women of this police department, because they represent us very well."



### ACCEPTING FIRE CHIEF APPLICATIONS

The Village of Peoria Heights is accepting applications for fire chief to succeed retiring Chief Greg Walters.

Applications can be downloaded from the Village's website or emailed upon request. Potential applicants may also contact the Village at 309-286-2385 for more information. Interviews are to begin in December.

The chief in Peoria Heights runs a volunteer fire department and is responsible for all aspects of fire protection and other emergency response, budgeting and other administrative matters, and the recruitment of manpower. More information on the duties and responsibilities of the position can be found on the Village's web page at [www.peoriaheights.org](http://www.peoriaheights.org)

The Village is seeking someone with at least 15 years of fire-fighting or risk management experience, as well as at least five years in a higher command position.

## COMMUNITY CONTACTS

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

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

**Greater Peoria San. 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 Pub. 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

# TRAILHEAD A STEP CLOSER TO REALITY

The Peoria Heights Village Board has taken an important step toward the construction of a trailhead along the Kellar Branch/Rock Island Greenway Trail with a resolution of support for a grant application that would largely fund it.

The Heights' resolution is non-binding but says that "if the grant is approved for us, we will make every effort to match the 20 percent that's required for the money that we've been requesting," said Heights Trustee Elizabeth Khazzam.

Bruce Brown, co-owner of Pappazzi restaurant in the Heights and a long-time trail supporter, spoke in favor of the resolution, reminding the board of a meeting 10 years ago when the conversion of a little-used railroad track into a recreational trail was very much in question.

It was "the final battle ... Are we going to have a trail or not?" said Brown, who recalled the railroad owner's offer of a free trolley

that would operate between the Heights downtown and Junction City.

"What it was really about was throwing a shiv into the Rock Island Trail," said Brown. The choice before the board was accepting this gift or "should we wait a little bit and vote for the community?"

"The vote was unanimous for the community. I remember walking out of there thinking, 'They get it.'"

Peoria Heights and surrounding central Illinois have been reaping the benefits of the path, which closed a critical gap in the Rock Island Trail system, ever since. The trail gets significant use and has become an important part of the Village's marketing and ongoing economic development efforts.

"I want to thank this Village Board, once again, for getting it," said Brown.

No location for the trailhead has yet been chosen but several sites are under consideration.



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN FINAL SPRINT

The creation of Peoria Heights' long-term comprehensive plan has entered its home stretch.

Initial recommendations from Chicago-based consultant Houseal Lavigne will be ready for local review in December. The Village Board is expected to take up the matter for adoption shortly after the turn of the new year.

The information-gathering process began in early March just before the pandemic hit full stride but never missed a beat, with the plan proceeding according to schedule.

The consultants, including Farnsworth Group here in Peoria, have tackled issues of basic land use, public infrastructure, neighborhood needs, and parks and open space.

Three specific corridors received special emphasis, those being the Heights Downtown along

Prospect Avenue and surrounding neighborhoods, War Memorial Drive, and Galena Road along the riverfront.

Many ideas have emerged. They include:

- Tapping into the enormous potential of the Heights waterfront as an ecotourism draw with compatible commercial and residential development, with the centerpiece being the reinvention of Galena Road through a nearly \$70 million state construction grant.
- Exploring recreational opportunities on and up the bluff as the Heights seeks to link its vibrant Downtown with its previously neglected riverfront.
- Meeting what has become a strong demand for middle-class housing.

- Developing the former Pabst property into a regional jewel; enhancing the use and enjoyment of the trail through the Village center and beyond.

- Narrowing Prospect through Downtown and dressing it up with bike lanes and attractive landscaping
- Various other signature or statement projects, including more prominent signage at village gateways.

Through it all, the Heights hopes to retain its cozy character and unique identity as it completes its transformation into a real asset for greater central Illinois.

Once completed, the document will serve as a blueprint for development in the Heights for the next 20 years. It's an exciting time, and it's great to see so many locals sharing in that enthusiasm.