



Spring 2016

Mayor's Message

Happy spring season to all! The Village of Indian Head Park Board of Trustees wishes each of you a happy spring. We hope you are ready for the warmer weather.

It is almost a year since the new Village Board was seated. In this time, many good things have happened. The state of the Village is improving and we are headed in the right direction. The news I am happiest to share is that our budget year is almost complete and we anticipate finishing the year with over \$350,000 in surplus. The surplus is due to many cost-cutting initiatives implemented by John DuRocher, Village Administrator, in partnership with the Board of Trustees, along with some increases in revenue. The main areas for expense savings are;

- reduced negotiated rates for new professional services
- reduced staff overtime and unnecessary compensation
- no compensation for any village board member
- better budget management and competitive bidding

We did see increased revenues for licenses, permits, franchise fees, state payment, and shared revenues without raising any of these rates or fees. In the next year the Board will discuss what to do with the surplus, but one of the first priorities is to build up our cash reserves.

The Village Board initiated discussions of the needs of the Village infrastructure in the fall of 2013. We created a capital plan with a list of what roads would be improved, along with other capital projects. This plan was key to gaining approval from the Village residents for road improvements.

Attending to the water systems is the next step. In January 2016 the Board increased water rates to the approximate 85% of residents who receive water supplied by Indian Head Park (this change did not affect residents served by the LaGrange Highlands Sanitary District). We have about 14 miles (or 86 percent) of water mains that are more than 40 years old-- typical water mains are expected to last about 50 years. Anticipating the need to replace water mains at a cost of about \$1,000,000 a mile, water fee increases were a necessity. The first water system capital project will include replacing all water meters at a total cost of \$300,000 for the Village. The replacement water meters will be installed this spring and summer. Two other priority projects will be the replacement of water mains on Blackhawk Trail and Shabbona Road. Our Village website contains a map detailing the history of water main leaks and patches, and it is easy to see why the water mains need to be replaced. Each water main break costs the Village between \$3,000 and \$10,000. We had eight water main breaks this past winter.

We are also proud to announce that a newly redesigned, much improved website will be launched soon. The new website will be much easier to use and to navigate and will allow residents to report problems, request service, view Village ordinances, receive emails about Village news and updates. It will feature a more robust search function, and will be mobile friendly. Thanks to Heidi Lopez and her team for all of their efforts.

Thanks go to Brenda O'Laughlin for working with the village of McCook to secure a reasonable library partnership for Indian Head Park. This partnership allows our residents who wish to subscribe for just \$100 per year to access all 76 libraries in the System Wide Automated Network (SWAN).

The Village Board conducted an open search, took applications, and filled the positions of Trustee, Treasurer and Finance Committee members. If you have an interest in serving the Village on the Planning and Zoning, Communications, or Finance Committee please contact me. I am also thinking of assembling a mayor's advisory group and I am looking for people interested in making the Village a better place to live and to operate a business.

The Indian Head Park Board of Trustees and I continue to strive to improve our community. I am excited to serve as mayor on behalf of our residents. I invite you to participate in the process, whether through attendance at Village meetings or participation on Village committees, and to call or email me anytime. The Village Board of Trustees and I want to hear from you!

Tom Hinshaw, Mayor



Trustees Amy Wittenberg and Brenda O'Laughlin welcome the Easter Bunny at the Village's Easter Egg hunt in Blackhawk Park.

ATTENTION IHP TOWNHOME OWNERS!

Groot Waste Management has offered to provide free 35-gallon refuse containers to any interested townhome owner in the Village. A sample container is available for inspection at the Village Hall. Interested residents can contact Groot at 1-800-244-1977 or notify the Groot representative who picks up the refuse at their home.

Indian Head Park Website Project Update

The website project team convened in January to begin the process of developing a more aesthetically pleasing, robust, and informative website for our Village. Residents Mary Uhrina, Linn Meyer, Kristin Klimas, Craig Fisher, and Rob Clinite stepped forward to offer their expertise and input for the project. Trustee Heidi Lopez is the Project Manager with significant support provided by our Village Administrator, John DuRocher.

Our chosen website vendor, Civic Plus, is currently designing our new website based on the project team's input. We have supplied potential photographs for the new website, input forms, and feedback on the proposed design. If you have been on the Indian Head Park website recently you will notice that significantly more information has been added for our residents. We are working to improve our transparency as a municipal government and add all necessary content to the current website by the end of April.

Starting in May, Civic Plus will take the supplied photographs, forms, and content and incorporate it into the new Indian Head Park website, now under construction. Training is scheduled for early June for anyone responsible for updating the new website. This will include select Village employees and Trustees. We are considering website orientation sessions for interested residents looking to understand the new website capabilities and navigation. *Please contact Heidi Lopez at hlopez@indianheadpark-il.gov if you are interested in attending a website orientation session.*

The new website is scheduled to be rolled out to the public on July 18. Residents will access the same website link at www.indianheadpark-il.gov and they will be directed to the new website. In addition to the new website, Civic Plus is also creating a custom Indian Head Park mobile app that should be available in August or September.

Two notable features of our new website are *Report a Concern* and *Notify Me*. The *Report a Concern* functionality will enable residents to report concerns like pot holes, tree trimming requests, zoning issues, and the like. The requests will be automatically forwarded to the correct Village employees. The intention is to improve communications between our residents and Village employees, and to ensure that concerns are addressed in a timely fashion.

The *Notify Me* functionality will enable residents to be notified automatically of news/events of interest, such as VBOT Meeting minutes, recent news, budget documents and the like. *Please send your email address to Heidi Lopez at hlopez@indianheadpark-il.gov if you are interested in notification of Village news and information before the new website is rolled out.* The email you provide will not be used for anything other than Village communications, and you will be kept abreast of key website news before the public rollout in July.

2016/17 vehicle stickers go on sale May 16. Deadline is July 18. Visit our website for complete details.

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Trustee Brenda O'Laughlin and husband John served as the Grand Marshals of the Countryside St. Patrick's Day parade, along with Countryside Mayor Sean McDermott. It was a grand day!

Spring Gardening Tips for Trees

Looking at a satellite view of Indian Head Park you'll see a dense tree cover, especially in the older areas west of Wolf Road. Much of this beautiful canopy is comprised of various types of oak trees. Did you know these oaks are very susceptible to a preventable disease known as oak wilt? Oak wilt is a fungus that causes wilting leaves from the top of the tree downward and eventually death of the tree. It is spread by various means. Fresh wounds from pruning are the primary culprit in spreading this fatal pathogen. In addition to spreading oak wilt from tree to tree through the saw blade, the wound can become an entry point for disease carrying spores and beetles. Tree roots from infected trees can also spread oak wilt to nearby healthy trees.

Our oak trees are most susceptible to wilt during the growing season with the period from early Spring through Summer being prime. DO NOT allow your oak trees to be pruned during this period. It is ideal to hold off on any pruning until the cold winter months when the leaves are off and tree saps are not flowing. If you absolutely must trim an oak tree during the growing season, saw blades should be disinfected before use and before moving from tree to tree. An appropriate wound dressing (not normally recommended) should be applied to the fresh wound or to a stump to prevent oak wilt spread. We value and take pride in our trees in Indian Head Park. We have an arborist available to answer any questions you may have. Just call Public Works at (708)246-1233.

Who doesn't welcome Spring? It's that time of year when we delight at everything popping out of the ground. Everything expect for the dreaded "Mulch Volcano". No doubt you've seen these huge conical piles of mulch deposited around tree trunks. Some people think they look great. Your landscaper thinks it's great to sell you more mulch. To others they're an eyesore. To the tree, these volcanoes are actually harmful. Tree roots (especially on younger trees) grow into the mulch instead of the ground. Constant moisture around the bark softens it and invites insects, rodents and disease to invade. Several inches of mulch around the tree is okay, but keep it away from the bark. The flare at the base of the tree should always remain visible. Help keep our Village beautiful. No more mulch volcanoes.



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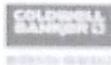
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Dog Walking/Pet Sitting

Experienced and insured dog walker and pet sitter who has the love of animals and the outdoors. I have been a resident of Indian Head Park for over 13 years. References are available. Please contact Liz @ 708.927.2671.

Village Board meets the second Thursday of every month

Upcoming Village Board meeting dates
April 14 • May 12 • June 19 • July 14

Smoke Signals is published quarterly by the Village of Indian Head Park to inform its residents of on-going activities in the Village and the ever-growing plans for the future in the pursuit of better government and good citizenship. Circulation is 2,000.

Editor is Trustee Rita Farrell Mayer. News for the next issue is due by June 17 and should be submitted electronically to: rfarrellmayer@indianheadpark-il.gov.

Full page ads - \$200.00, 1/2 page ad - \$125.00, 3 1/2" x 3 1/2" size ads - \$75.00, Business Card size ads - \$45.00, Trading Post ads - \$20.00 (no commercial ads - the ad will run two times at no cost, then a \$20.00 charge).

Extra copies and back issues (up to one year) of Smoke Signals can be obtained at the Village Hall.

VILLAGE OF INDIAN HEAD PARK
 201 Acacia Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525
 708 246-3080
www.indianheadpark-il.gov

Office Hours
 Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
 Thursdays 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Mayor:	Tom Hinshaw	
Trustees:	Heidi Lopez	Chris Metz
	Glen R. Mann	Brenda O'Laughlin
	Rita Farrell Mayer	Amy Jo Wittenberg
Village Clerk:	Laurie Scheer	
Administrator:	John DuRocher	
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