



The Spokesman

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE CITY TO THE PARK RIDGE COMMUNITY
WWW.PARKRIDGE.US

Referendum question on March ballot re: electricity services

The City Council approved a resolution to authorize a referendum regarding aggregate electricity services on the March 20, 2012, primary election ballot. Residents will be asked if the City should have the authority to seek competitive pricing bids for electricity services under a single contract that would include residents and small businesses. It is intended that by combining electricity service for all individual customers into a single bid, consumers will realize lower electric bills and save money.

As part of seeking competitive pricing bids for electricity services, Park Ridge entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the following neighboring communities to create a consortium that will enable each municipality to realize cost savings by working together: Deerfield, Glencoe, Highland Park, Lake Bluff, Lake Forest, Northbrook, and Skokie. Collectively, these communities will collaborate for the duration of the bidding process and seek prices for the aggregated electricity load of the municipalities that approve the referendum. If the referendum is approved in Park Ridge, the City will proceed with the bid solicitation process regardless if another municipality in the consortium does not approve the referendum.

If the referendum is approved in March, bids will be solicited for the consortium's aggregated electricity load. These bid rates would be compared to ComEd's current rates and the consortium will only move forward if the new supplier's rate is favor-

able. If no savings could be realized, the consortium retains the option of not proceeding with aggregated electricity services. Bid specifications for this project will include pricing for one-, two- and three-year terms. Additionally, all residential and small commercial retail customer accounts will automatically be moved to the new supplier; however, information will be provided to residents and commercial retail customers who choose to opt-out of having their account transferred to another supplier and prefer to remain with ComEd.

Please note that under this program ComEd will remain the distributor of electricity in the City; the selected alternative supplier will merely generate the electricity provided and deliver it to ComEd for distribution. Additionally, residents will continue to receive electricity bills from ComEd.

The Illinois State Legislature amended the Illinois Power Agency Act to allow municipalities to arrange for the provision of electricity to residential and small commercial retail customers by alternative electric suppliers (instead of ComEd) in August 2009. Under the new law, the City may seek bids for the provision of aggregate electricity supply services to these customers, in hopes that the selected rate will be lower than the standard rate offered by ComEd. The legislation contemplates an "opt-out" program in which all residential and small commercial retail customers

New budget method set

A new budget method is in place and a series of meetings addressing the various aspects of the budget is already underway. The City Council is meeting every Wednesday to discuss budget issues.

Meetings are set as follows:

February 8 - Contracting & Material continued

February 15 - Shared Services, Transfers, Debt Service

February 22 - Capital Plan, Replacement Funds

March 7 - Tax Levy

March 14 - Final Budget Summary (including 2-Year Future Projections)

March 28 - Special Council Meeting First Reading

April 2 - Council Meeting - Second Reading

The annual budget will tie the recent Strategic Planning session the Mayor and Council held this fall with the necessary financial allocation to achieve desired outcomes in the areas they believe are most important to the residents. These include:

- Vibrant Uptown
- Business plan – marketing the City, business attraction, business retention
- Public Works – Flood relief projects, water, streets, solid waste, trees and snow removal
- Cost containment in all City Services. ▲

(Continued on page 6)

Financial concerns continue....

Since I took office two and a half years ago, I often have used this space to write about challenges the City continues to face in these highly uncertain economic times. I have talked about the need to drastically reduce our spending and limit our expenditures to only those City services which are truly essential and traditionally the responsibility of City government. Despite some recent success, our financial condition remains precarious, in part because of wasteful habits formed over the years which left our General Fund, the City's operating fund and savings account, at a dangerously low level.

Although we posted a modest budget surplus in the General Fund for the fiscal year which ended last April (the first since 2006 and only the second in more than a decade), and it appears we will repeat that accomplishment this year, severe economic pressures still exist which require us to remain vigilant and do even more to tighten spending and make our City government more efficient.

Moody's Investors Service recently reviewed the City's finances and downgraded our credit rating. It also assigned a "negative out-

look" which represents an unequivocal warning to City government that we must do better, starting with the current budget process. Moody's stressed that those past multimillion dollar budget deficits continue to haunt us, as does the huge IOU owed by the Uptown TIF to the General Fund and the continued need for the General Fund to prop up the TIF.



We can improve our credit rating and our fiscal health by continuing to bring spending under control and committing ourselves to increasing the balance in the City's General Fund. This will require forging a budget surplus which will require even greater fiscal discipline than has been exhibited to date. The City Council will need to discard prior assumptions and make "business as usual" a thing of the past.

If we all remain vigilant and committed to meeting these challenges, we can achieve a fiscally sound future for our community.

See you in April.

Sincerely,

David F. Schmidt, Mayor

Appointments made

The Mayor appointed several volunteers to the Youth Commission including Dara Soljaga (reappointment), Jennifer Rubino (junior), Georgio Ronis (junior), Ian King (sophomore), and Jimmy Loomos (senior). ▲

Volunteers needed

Persons interested in serving are encouraged to complete a nomination form, available on our website, or in the Administrative Services Department at City Hall to be considered.

Candidates for the volunteer posts are interviewed and recommended by the Mayor's Advisory Board. The Board, currently chaired by Alderman Rich DiPietro, also includes the committee heads: Aldermen Daniel Knight, Marty Maloney, and Sal Raspanti. ▲

City clerk's corner....

The Primary Election time is fast approaching: Tuesday, March 20. Illinois has a chance to speak out on its choices from a field of many hard-working candidates.

Voter registration closes on February 21. Students who will be 18 years by election day and new residents need to register. Residents who have moved or changed their name need to update their registration. This service is available at City Hall, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and also at the Park Ridge Library.

Early Voting begins at City Hall on February 27 and closes on March 15. Voting will be available for all Cook County suburbs, Monday - Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Remember to bring a government ID with you.

Should you be away at that time applications for absentee ballots by mail can be sent to your travel address. Applications will be available in February here at City Hall or can be found at the Cook County election website: www.cookcountyclerk.com.

Please review the information on the Park Ridge referendum question, Electrical Opt/Out, elsewhere (page 1) in this issue. ▲

The Spokesman

CITY OF PARK RIDGE

505 BUTLER PLACE • PARK RIDGE, IL 60068

(847) 318-5200 FAX: (847) 318-5300

HOME PAGE: www.parkridge.us

ELECTED OFFICIALS

David F. Schmidt

Mayor

Betty W. Henneman

City Clerk

ALDERMEN

Joseph F. Sweeney

First Ward

Richard DiPietro

Second Ward

Jim Smith

Third Ward

Sal Raspanti

Fourth Ward

Daniel J. Knight

Fifth Ward

Thomas A. Bernick

Sixth Ward

Marty Maloney

Seventh Ward

The Spokesman is published by the City as a public information service for residents.

Jim Hock

City Manager

Aggie Stempniak

Editor

City Hall hrs: 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon-Fri

City Council meetings:

First and third Mondays, 7:30 p.m., at City Hall

Deputy clerk certified

Cheryl L. Peterson, deputy city clerk for the City, recently received Registered Clerk certification from the State of Illinois. She has also fulfilled all the requirements of the Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) Program of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) and has earned the CMC status.

The CMC is a declaration that she is proficient in her important position and has demonstrated mastery of administrative skills critical to good government. She has served as Deputy Clerk since March 2006. ▲

Police resume Nixle alerts

The Police Department has resumed utilizing the communications service, Nixle, a free service that allows the police to send important, valuable community information directly to residents using the latest technology.

With the Nixle Community Information Service, the department creates and publishes messages to be delivered to subscribed residents instantly via cell phone text message and/or email. Notifications can also be accessed online at Nixle's website at www.nixle.com.

When Nixle made the business decision to begin charging municipalities for service that had been previously no cost, the department and subscribers were disappointed but made the choice to discontinue service. However, Nixle recently initiated changes within its organization making it, again, possible to offer the service to law enforcement agencies at no cost.

The service is secure, reliable and easy to use. Anyone can participate and receive information about what's going on in Park Ridge. Former residents can check in, residents in neighboring communities and even commuters who frequent our town can learn about events occurring in nearly real time. This program also allows our community to work with and help the police. We plan on sending messages regarding missing persons or recent crimes in an effort to have more eyes on the street.

Messages can be sent specifically to residents registered within a 1/4 mile radius of an incident, giving them the opportunity to receive trustworthy information specific only to their neighborhood. Residents decide from which local agencies they want to receive information. Subscribers can also choose the way in which alerts are received, whether it is by email, text message, or over the web.

Residents of Park Ridge and those in neighboring communities can immediately begin receiving pertinent police department information via text message, email, and web by registering at www.nixle.com. Those residents who previously created an account with Nixle do not have to re-register.

Nixle does not replace the City's citizen notification system, *Everbridge*. The information disseminated on Nixle is generally specific to the police department, does not reach you by phone and may be used to supplement the Citywide notification system in the event of an emergency. *Everbridge*, on the other hand, is the Citywide notification system which can deliver messages to you any way you want—your home phone, cell phone, an email, text message and more. This is the primary way the City can reach you in any emergency. From time to time, the system may also be used in non-emergency situations to share critical City information. Residents can sign up for one or both of these programs at the City website, www.parkridge.us. They may also learn more about program differences on the site. ▲

Electronic recycling event set

The City of Park Ridge, Park Ridge Chamber of Commerce and Park Ridge Park District will host a one-day collection for the recycling of electronics on Saturday, April 21, 2012, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Public Works Service Center, 400 Busse Highway.

There will be a fee of \$5 per car; however, the Chamber of Commerce will distribute a \$5 coupon good towards a \$20 purchase at participating Chamber members.

Only the following items will be accepted: Cell phones, all computer-related equipment, TVs and audio/visual equipment, video game consoles, PDAs, MP3 players and radios, DVD players and VCRs, fax machines, household batteries, baby monitors, hair dryers, toasters, and food processors and blenders.

The following items will not be accepted: hazardous waste, air conditioners and fans, refrigerators, microwave ovens and stoves, car or acid filled batteries, and washing machines and dryers.

Please do not bring hazardous waste or other unlisted materials. ▲

New electronic recycling rules in effect

Residents will no longer be able to place a number of electronic products in their refuse for disposal.

Legislation took effect January 1, 2012, that extensively changes the Illinois Product Recycling and Reuse Act. The covered electronic products are expanded to include the following items: televisions, monitors, printers, computers (including tablet computers), electronic keyboards, facsimile machines, videocassette recorders, portable digital music players, digital video disc players, video game consoles, small scale servers, scanners, electronic mice, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers, digital video disc recorders.

ARC Disposal will not collect these items. SWANCC has worked with its member communities to provide environmentally sound recycling for electronics through one-day collection events and permanent drop-off locations. For a complete list of options, please visit swancc.org.

The City is also sponsoring special electronic recycling days with one set for April 21. ▲

Like us on Facebook

The City of Park Ridge is on Facebook! Type "City of Park Ridge" in the search box and then "Like" our page. The page is frequently updated with the latest news and events happening in the City. ▲

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every Monday
Employment Counseling, by appt
 @ Center of Concern 847/823-0453

Every Thursday
PR Lions Club Meetings, noon
 @ Riggios, Niles

Every Saturday
Critter Connection – Family Presentation
 PR Park Dist. @ Wildwood Nature Ctr.

February

4 Saturday
Pre-K–5th Open House; 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 @ Embers Elem. School

7 Tuesday
Kindergarten, New Student Reg.; 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.
 @ Dist. 64 Elem. Schools

8 Wednesday
Gen'l Meeting & Luncheon; 11:30 a.m.
 21st Star Chapter NSDAR @ Elks Lodge, Des Plaines

9 Thursday
Kindergarten, New Student Reg.; 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.
 @ Dist. 64 Elem. Schools except Carpenter
“Starting from Seed”; 7 p.m.

PR Garden Club @ PR Senior Center

10 Friday
Job Seeker Workshop; 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 @ PR Public Library

Bunko Parties; 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.
 Center of Concern @ South Park Rec. Center

11 Saturday
A Salute to the '40's Fundraiser; 6 p.m.
 Ave. to Independ. @ Stephens Ballroom, Rosemont
Daddy Daughter Sweetheart Dance, 6:30–8 p.m.
 Maine Park Leisure Center

12 Sunday
“Valentine Romance” Concert; 2:30 p.m.
 PR Civic Orchestra @ Pickwick Theatre

17 Friday
Oil Demonstration; 7:30 p.m.
 PR Art League @ South Park Rec. Center

20 Monday
Library Pub Quiz; 7 p.m.
 PR Public Library @ Houlihan's
Guest Speaker from Kalo; 7:30 p.m.
 Old Things Antique Club @ Messiah Lutheran

20 Monday – 9 Friday (March)
“Continuing the Tradition”; 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.
 Kalo Art Show @ Iannelli Studios

21 Tuesday
Senior Breakfast with the Police; 9 a.m.
 @ PR Senior Center

Mother/Son Bowling Night, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
 @ Habetler Bowl, Chicago/PR Park Dist. event

23 Thursday – 25 Saturday
Winter Play, “The Tempest” 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine South Auditorium

24 Friday
“Mardi Gras Masquerade” Benefit; 7:30 p.m.
 PR Community Women @ Snuggery, Edison Pk.

26 Sunday
Artists Reception, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
 Kalo Art Show @ Iannelli Studios

March

1 Thursday
Chicago Wolves Player Visit; 4 p.m. – 5 p.m.
 Grades 1 – 8 @ PR Public Library

2 Friday
Fire Department Services; 12:15 p.m.
 PR Pan Hellenic @ PR Country Club

First Fridays – March Madness; 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
 @ extended hours in shops and restaurants
Dr. Seuss Birthday Bash, 6 p.m.–9 p.m.
 Maine Park Leisure Center

2 Friday – 3 Saturday
“Thoroughly Modern Millie”; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine East Auditorium

3 Saturday
Pre-K – 5th Open House; 10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
 @ Embers Elem. School

Annual Gala, “Tropical Heat Wave”; 6:30 p.m.
 PR Civic Orchestra @ Café la Cave Restaurant

4 Sunday
Author R. Tripp Evans on Grant Wood, 1 p.m.
 Kalo program @ Iannelli Studios

6 Tuesday
Band Concert; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine South Auditorium.

7 Wednesday – 9 Friday
Maine East Art Exhibit; 7 p.m.
 @ Actor's Studio, Maine East H.S.

8 Thursday
“Indoor Composting”; 7 p.m.
 PR Garden Club @ PR Senior Center

9 Friday
Job Seeker Workshop; 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
 @ PR Public Library

Family Bowl-A-Rama, 5:30 – 7 p.m.
 @ Habetler Bowl, Chicago/PR Park Dist. event

9 Friday – 10 Saturday
“Thoroughly Modern Millie”; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine East Auditorium

10 Saturday
Chi. Flower & Garden Show, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
 Departs from Wildwood Nature Center

11 Sunday
“European Mix” Concert; 2:30 p.m.
 PR Civic Orchestra @ Pickwick Theatre

14 Wednesday
Gen'l Meeting; 1 p.m.
 21st Star Chapter NSDAR @ PR Country Club

15 Thursday
Choir Concert; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine South Auditorium

15 Thursday (through May 31)
“Screen Deco” film series; 7 p.m.
 @ Park Ridge Public Library

16 Friday
Hunger Games Tournament; 6 – 9 p.m.
 @ Park Ridge Public Library

Acrylic Demonstration; 7:30 p.m.
 PR Art League @ South Park Rec. Center

17 Saturday
“Treasures for Sale”; 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 Kalo Foundation @ Iannelli Studios

19 Monday
The Old Things Antique Club Meeting; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Messiah Lutheran Church

20 Tuesday
Senior Breakfast with the Police; 9 a.m.

@ PR Senior Center
Band/Orchestra Concert; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine East H.S. Auditorium

22 Thursday
Choral Concert; 7:30 p.m.
 @ Maine East H.S. Auditorium

26 Monday – 30 Friday
District 64, Spring Break - No School

April

1 Sunday
Blood Drive; 8 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
 St. Paul of the Cross Church @ Morello Parish
 Life Center

SAVE THE DATE

21 Saturday
Electronics Recycling Day; 9 a.m. – noon
 PR Public Works, 400 Busse Hwy.

Applications due for citizen's police academy

The Police Department is now accepting applications for enrollment in its upcoming Citizen's Police Academy. The classes will begin on Thursday, March 15, 2012, and will continue 10 weeks. The Academy meets Thursday from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. throughout the ten-week period.

Qualifications for attending are as follows:

- Who: Anyone who lives or works within the City of Park Ridge, that is at least 21 years of age.
- Requirements: Applicants will pass a simple background check, and have no felony convictions. Applicants will be notified in writing as to whether they have been accepted, denied, or placed on a waiting list for enrollment in an upcoming class.
- Date and time: Thursday evenings from 7 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., March 15, 2012 – May 24, 2012.

Those wishing to apply, or for more information, call 847/318-5252 or go to www.parkridgepolice.org. Applications may be picked up in person at the Police Department or downloaded at the police website. Completed applications are due **February 23, 2012**. Drop off or mail to the Park Ridge Police Department, 200 South Vine, Park Ridge, IL 60068, Attn: Lt D. Mellema. ▲

City boots vehicles for unpaid violations

In January, the City began booting and/or impounding vehicles whose registered owner has five (5) or more unpaid citations for violations of its Municipal Code for parking ordinances, City license violation complaints, compliance citations or automated traffic violations, in any combination.

If your vehicle is towed, you will be responsible for all fines and penalties as well as any towing and storage fees. Payments for these fees can be made in the cashier's office at City Hall only by certified check, money order or cash. If you have any questions, please call 847/318-5218. ▲

Key Box Program

Did you know?

The Park Ridge Fire Department



has a key box program that will allow you to secure your building's keys, and yet provide access for the fire department in case of emergency. Key boxes may be purchased at Anderson Lock in Des Plaines at 847/824-2800. You must specify that you need a Supra box keyed for Park Ridge Fire Department. These are very useful for elderly or disabled people who may have difficulty getting to the door in an emergency. For further information, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at 847/318-5286. ▲

Mission Statement

The City of Park Ridge is committed to providing excellence in City services in order to uphold a high quality of life, so our community remains a wonderful place to live and work.

Community police training scheduled

The Police Department is sponsoring a Community Policing Training program on Wednesday, April 4 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Public Works training room. The department has been continually adopting a community policing philosophy, according to Chief Frank Kaminski. This training will include police officers as well as members of the community.

Any interested should contact the Chief at 847/318-5261 or by email, fkaminsk@parkridgepolice.org. ▲

Community stars honored

Congratulations to those honored as the 2011 Community Stars by the Chamber of Commerce in January.

Those recognized for outstanding contributions to the City are: Sheila Duda, owner of TeaLula, "First Fridays" initiative; Karen Larsen, Park Ridge Historic Tours and work to save Iannelli Studios; Dean Patras, Taste of Park Ridge and Holiday Lights Coalition; Susan Scatchell, A-Abiding Care and passion for nonprofits; Carol A. Teschky, supervisor of Maine Township; Tony Tripp, Kiwanis; and Adrienne Timm, Mary Jo DiRe, and Margaret Gallagher-Smythe, Sunday Supper program at St. Paul of the Cross.

A lifetime achievement award was given to Bill Scharringhausen for his service; especially within the Kiwanis and the Park Ridge Community Church. ▲

Adopt a hydrant

With winter upon us, the Fire Department encourages residents to "Adopt A Hydrant" near their homes. When snow falls, please take care of your adopted hydrant by making sure a snow-free three-foot perimeter exists around the hydrant, allowing the Fire Department better access to the hydrant to start water flow. This will help save precious time in the event of a fire.

There are nearly 1,400 fire hydrants in Park Ridge. Hydrants are typically spaced no more than 500 feet apart in residential neighborhoods. During times of extreme snowfall, the Fire Department will make efforts to clear hydrants in the business districts; however, it is simply unable to make it to the neighborhood streets. That's why your help is requested the next time snow arrives!

All efforts made to ensure that Park Ridge stays fire safe are appreciated. Have a happy and safe new year! ▲

Dispose of sharps, CFLs and medications

Prescription drugs and sharps are accepted at City Hall for recycling on a monthly basis. The City also accepts compact fluorescent bulbs for recycling.

Collections are the first Thursday of the month from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Upcoming collection dates are February 2, March 1, and April 5.

Items for recycling may be turned in, in the lobby area of City Hall, 505 Butler Place.

Medicines need to be placed in a labeled container, and the bulbs in plastic bags. Fluorescent tube bulbs are not taken. ▲

Best decorated house

The winner of the "Best Decorated House" contest sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce as part of Winterfest 2011 is 405 S. Prospect Ave., home of Jenny, Rick and Ryan Kulik. The Park Ridge Garden Club selects the winners. ▲





POSTAL CUSTOMER
PARK RIDGE, ILLINOIS 60068

Presort Standard
U. S. Postage
PAID
Park Ridge, Illinois
Permit No. 491

Referendum *(continued from page 1)*

would be switched automatically to the alternative supplier, unless a customer affirmatively opted out of the program and continued service through ComEd or another provider. In order to seek competitive prices for electricity services in one contract, the City needs approval from residents through a referendum.

For more information, visit the City website at www.parkridge.us. ▲

Brickton art center awarded \$10,000 grant

Continuing efforts to find new sources of funding, Brickton Art Center was awarded a \$10,000 grant through the Sun-Times Charity Trust's Sun Shine Project. The Park Ridge nonprofit was one of just 44 chosen from more than 120 charities in the Chicago region that support youth in education, art and civic engagement.

"It is so exciting to know our education and outreach programs stood out from so many worthy nonprofits for this grant money," said Brickton Art Center Executive Director Alyssa Kulak. "We learned of this opportunity through Park Ridge Alderman Dan Knight, and truly appreciate his thinking of us and telling us about the contest deadline. We are always looking for new opportunities like this, especially given the cuts in funding that have been made at both the state and local levels in recent years."

Kulak said the money will be used to strengthen and create new art therapy and education programs.

Established in 1997, Brickton Art Center is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization serving the people of Park Ridge and surrounding communities through creative outreach services in art therapy, art education and exhibitions using various artistic

disciplines and media. A group of visionaries identified the arts as a vital part of a healthy community and set out to establish a base for the visual arts in Park Ridge. They created Brickton Art Center, an organization that fulfills the cultural and creative needs of over 6,000 residents of Park Ridge and the surrounding area.

Brickton Art Center draws operating funds from memberships, fundraising and classes, and is the only organization of its kind in the northwest Chicago area providing the following:

- Art therapy programming for community organizations like Lutheran General Hospital's Pediatric Brain Tumor Support Group and Cancer Care Center, Have Dreams, and MaineStay Youth and Family Services;
- Diverse art education for adults, teens and children; and
- Art exhibitions for students and professional artists at our gallery. ▲

Welcome new business

We welcome these new businesses to Park Ridge and encourage residents to look to the City first for their shopping and service needs.

Dunkin' Donuts

1129 Touhy Ave.
Phone: 847/720-4645
nihar.shah321@gmail.com

Chipotle Mexican Grill

fast food with integrity
119 S. Northwest Highway
Phone: 224/585-5028
www.Chipotle.com

Lola's Diner

now open daily, American cuisine
920 Busse Highway
Phone: 847/518-5226 ▲



A. Sterling Design

Mayor David Schmidt cuts ribbon for opening of the new Dunkin' Donuts on Greenwood and Touhy.