

CITY OF PARK RIDGE

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR THE
INFORMED ELECTED OFFICIAL**

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INTRODUCTION

Many citizens consider aldermen to be their liaisons in City government. In such a role, the alderman is asked numerous questions about municipal services, receives complaints about conditions in the City, and receives numerous special requests about particular citizen problems. When a citizen calls his alderman, he expects an informative answer or some direction concerning the appropriate administrative department to contact. It is, therefore, helpful for an alderman to be aware of City ordinances, policies and services, which will help him, respond to citizen inquiries.

It is also helpful to be able to anticipate citizen inquiries in advance. This handbook has been written with such a purpose in mind. It is based on a survey of City officials and a review of City policies and ordinances in order to assemble typical citizen questions and complaints. The question or complaint is posed and the corresponding answer, procedure or departmental referral is given. Although many citizen inquiries cannot be anticipated, this handbook should be helpful in responding to a number of these questions and to familiarize new aldermen and aldermanic candidates with City government in Park Ridge.

NUISANCES

EXCESSIVE NOISE

If a neighbor makes too much noise, what can be done?

Article 14 of the Municipal Code prohibits the use of any device, apparatus, or instrument that emits any loud, excessive or unusual noise in any building or on any premises in the City if the noise is an annoyance or inconvenience to persons on the street, public places, or neighboring premises. If the noise disturbs the peace of the neighborhood, it is considered a nuisance and the Police Department should be notified to restore peace.

AIR CONDITIONER NOISE

Can the City do anything about a neighbor's air conditioner noise?

If window air-conditioning units are operating properly, there is nothing that the City can do about the noise emitted from them. However, outside condenser units must be set back the same distances as required for buildings and structures. If a neighbor complains about the noise emitted from an outside unit, an Environmental Health Officer will check the unit location and determine whether it is operating properly. If it is determined that the unit is located less than the required distance, the owner may be required to move the unit.

WEEDS

Article 5, Chapter 11 of the Municipal Code states that all weeds in the City in excess of twelve (12) inches in height are declared to be a public nuisance. If the owner of private property does not cut or remove weeds after being cited by the Health Official, the City can remove the weeds at the owner's expense. If the owner of the property does not pay incurred expenses, a lien may be placed on the property.

GARDEN TRIMMINGS

Is it permissible to dump garden trimmings and tree branches in vacant lots or alleys?

Article 5, Chapter 12 of the Municipal Code prohibits the dumping depositing or placing of trash, garden trimmings, tree branches, stones, brick, plaster, concrete, scrap metal, lumber or any other discarded articles on any vacant lot, alley, school grounds, park, parkway, lawn or other private or public property.

MOSQUITOES

What is done by the City to combat mosquitoes?

Park Ridge is included in two districts, each of which spray throughout the season for mosquitoes. The area north of Devon and the area south of Devon between Canfield and

Cumberland are covered by the Northwest Mosquito Abatement District. The area south of Devon and west of Cumberland is included in the Leyden Township District.

STRAY ANIMALS

What can be done about stray dogs or cats in the neighborhood?

Any dog or cat running at large (off the premises and not under the control of the owner), or any unlicensed dog or cat will be impounded by the Police. Each year owners of dogs and cats must purchase a license tag. No person is allowed to have more than three dogs or cats over the age of six months at one time. Violation of these rules should be reported to the Police Department or Environmental Health Officer.

DOG DEFECATION

What can a citizen do if another person's dog defecates on his property?

Article 5, Chapter 8 of the Municipal Code requires that persons walking their dogs have in their immediate possession appropriate devices for scooping and removal of excrement. The ordinance requires that a person scoop and remove the dog's excrement when said dog defecates on another's property. Complaints should be filed with the Environmental Health Officer.

BARKING DOGS

What can a citizen do if a neighbor's dog barks continuously?

A complaint should be filed with the Police Department and an officer will be dispatched to investigate. If no one is at home in the residence from which the dog is barking, the officer will return later to issue the owner a ticket. This could result in the owner's having to appear in court, with the dog subject to impounding.

OPEN BURNING

Is open burning prohibited in the City?

According to Article 7 of the Municipal Code, it is generally unlawful for anyone to burn any materials not contained in equipment installed and designed to operate within a principal building (e.g. residence). However, it is not unlawful for a person to burn such substances as are reasonably necessary for the purpose of cooking food for consumption by his family and guests. The Fire Chief is authorized to issue permits for external fires, when a public purpose can be shown for the fire and upon proof that the proper permits have been obtained from the proper authorities of the State of Illinois and County of Cook. The Environmental Health Officer responds to complaints regarding smoke, fumes and odors.

DEBRIS RESULTING FROM CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Will the City require construction companies to clean up their construction debris?

Complaints about construction debris accumulated around buildings should be directed to the Building Department. The Building Department will investigate the complaint and require the company to clean up the debris.

ABANDONED CARS ON PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Article 14-3-16 of the Municipal Code provides that no person shall abandon a motor vehicle on any street, highway or any public property or other public way. A vehicle which has been abandoned on any public property or public way may be removed at the direction of a police official, provided that notice of intent to remove has been issued to the registered owner of said vehicle at his last known address, advising him that vehicle must be removed within seven days and that he may appear before the Chief of Police to contest the removal. If the owner fails to present valid reasons why the vehicle should not be removed, it may be towed immediately to any public or private storage facility and the cost of such towing or storage charged to the owner in addition to any fine imposed.

“Abandoned vehicle” shall mean any motor vehicle or trailer which remains on public property for a period of seven days or more while being in inoperable condition due to having one or more flat tires, or lacking any structural or mechanical component necessary to normal operation, or lacking valid State or local registration or licensing, or is incapable of moving under its own power, or is uninsured.

STORAGE OF INOPERABLE VEHICLES

The placing or keeping of inoperable motor vehicles, machinery, implements or mechanical equipment on any private property for a period in excess of ten days is considered a nuisance except that no more than one inoperable motor vehicle may be stored upon a lot if said vehicle is kept within a structure enclosed on all four sides. An “inoperable motor vehicle” means any motor vehicle, machinery, implements or mechanical equipment which is incapable of moving under its own power, or has one or more flat tires, or lacks any structural or mechanical component necessary to normal operation or lacks valid State or local registration or licensing, or is raised on blocks.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Can a citizen store his recreational vehicle in his yard?

Section 9.04 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates the storage of recreational vehicles in residential areas. In general, these vehicles are permitted in the rear yard providing they are suitably screened. Any questions regarding the storage of recreational vehicles on

private property in other locations should be referred to the Building and Zoning Administrator.

TRUCK PARKING

Truck parking is prohibited on all City streets in residential districts. For regulations regarding the parking of trucks on private residential property, the Building and Zoning Administrator should be contacted.

PUBLIC SERVICES

MUNICIPAL SERVICE REQUESTS

Who should be called for municipal service requests?

In general, service requests or complaints should be handled directly with the department charged with the responsibility for the services in question. If it is not clear which department might be involved, the citizen or his delegated representative should contact the City Manager's office for further information. Where service requests of a less routine nature occur or where a citizen is dissatisfied with the City's response to his request, the City Manager's office should be notified so that the Manager or his representative can more fully investigate the request and evaluate the actions taken by administrative personnel as a result of that inquiry.

POLICE SERVICE

Why, on occasion, don't the Police respond immediately when they are called?

The Police Department responds to emergency calls on a priority basis. If there are a number of pending calls, those calls which are most urgent or which involve the public safety or welfare of our citizens must be responded to before other calls are answered.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Why will the City ambulance service not always take patients to the hospital specified by the citizen?

Paramedic level ambulance service is "emergency/life saving" in nature. Paramedics must by state law take the patient to the closest hospital unless the hospital determines and authorizes transportation to another hospital because of specialized treatment requirements.

Paramedics will not provide transportation service for a non-emergency request, as they need to be available for emergencies.

PUBLIC WAYS AND TREES

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT OR SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT

By what process can improvements to public rights of way be accomplished?

Local improvements can be accomplished by either special assessment or establishment of a special taxing district. For many years, special assessment was the traditional method for the installation of improvement in the public right-of-way if a developer was not involved. In recent years the special taxing district has become an attractive alternative. Perhaps the prime advantage of the special taxing district is that the taxes are income tax deductible. Specific procedures are mandated by State law for use of either method to finance local improvements.

STREET RESURFACING AND CURB REPAIR

By what priorities are streets resurfaced and curbs repaired?

Streets are resurfaced on a priority basis with consideration given to the structural condition of the existing street, "rideability," classification of the street (arterial, collector, residential), and the volume of traffic. Curb repair priority is given to curbs located on streets to be resurfaced. Curbs are replaced after considering structural condition and grade.

SNOWPLOWING PRIORITIES

Why is snow plowed more often or quicker on some streets than on others?

Priority is given to streets serving the most people, namely, the arterial and collector streets, which collectively make up our snow routes. In addition, streets adjoining schools are given priority. These are also the streets that are salted to provide bare pavement as a goal. The City's objective is to keep these streets clear by frequent, repeated salting and plowing.

Residential districts are plowed simultaneously with the snow routes, but the resources allocated are not the same intensity. The time required to complete the fourteen districts (see map) will vary from approximately five to ten hours from the start of plowing depending on conditions. The City does not salt the entire length of residential streets so a bare pavement is not expected. However, the approaches to intersections on residential streets are salted (150 feet on each side).

Parking lot areas are plowed generally after the streets are plowed.

Snow removal is practiced only in the major business areas and City parking lots after the initial emergency has passed and only when the accumulation is deemed significant.

The snow routes are:

A. Arterials

1. Touhy – E. limits to Talcott
2. NW Hwy. – E. limits to Dempster
3. Devon – E. limits to Dee Road
4. Busse – Touhy to Forest Preserve Drive
5. Talcott – E. limits to Touhy
6. Dee – Oakton to Higgins
7. Cumberland – Higgins to Touhy
8. Greenwood – Elm to Oakton
9. Potter – Busse to Dempster

B. Collectors

1. Prospect – Higgins to Oakton
2. Elm – Dee to East
3. Main – Touhy to Prospect
4. Fairview – Garden to Main
5. Prairie – Garden to Main
6. Garden – Courtland to Cumberland
7. Butler Place – All
8. Summit – Touhy to East limits
9. Courtland – Higgins to Prospect
10. Western – Elm to Granville
11. Belle Plaine – Talcott to Canfield
12. Greenwood – Elm to Granville
13. Dee – Oakton to Northwest Highway
14. Hamlin – Oakton to Dempster
15. Vernon – Farrell to Dempster
16. Washington – Summit to Oakton
17. Florence – Sibley to Oakton
18. Sibley – Hamlin to Talcott and Prospect to Oriole
19. Hamlin – Elm to Sibley
20. Granville – Western to Washington
21. Elmore – Touhy to Michaeljohn to Oakton

ALLEY MAINTENANCE

How often does the City repair alleys?

The City maintains and constructs alleys according to one of three practices:

1. Unimproved alleys will be improved upon a petition of the majority of all residents abutting the subject alley. A special taxing district will be created to finance the improvement. Twenty-Five percent (25%) of the cost of the alley paving will be assessed to the properties benefiting. Sewers will be installed the

cost is included in the twenty-five percent (25%). The City will thereafter maintain the alley.

2. Citizens wishing to have their alley excavated and new grade established but still maintaining a crushed stone base will be responsible for creating a cash escrow in advance for such construction. The amount of the escrow will be 100% of the cost estimate. The actual work will be performed by either City forces or a private contractor.
3. In situations where neither of the above is acceptable, the City will maintain the existing public way by grading as deemed necessary by the Public Works Department to reduce potholes and eliminate minor drainage problems where such maintenance activities will not require excavation and/or grade changes.
4. Previously paved alleys will be reconstructed as needed and as funds are available.

SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION

What requirements are there regarding the construction of sidewalks?

All public sidewalk construction including sidewalks constructed on a parkway between the regular sidewalk line and the curb line, must be approved by the City Engineer. A permit must be obtained for such construction except when the work is performed under the City's annual Sidewalk Removal and Replacement Share-the Cost Program.

REMOVAL OF PARKWAY TREES

Can a Citizen remove a parkway tree at his own discretion?

Council policy does not permit removal of a parkway tree for any reason unless written permission has been received from the City. See Council Policy No. 24

TRIMMING OF PARKWAY TREES

Who is responsible for trimming parkway trees and by what criteria are they trimmed?

Trees are trimmed by the City on a rotation basis, within the limits of an annual appropriation. Deadwood and long-hanging branches will be removed during this cycle. Citizens are not permitted to trim parkway trees. Tree specialists who have been approved by the City Forester are allowed to trim the trees every seven years once City trees are seven inches in diameter and larger. City trees less than seven inches in diameter are trimmed once every three years and elm trees, regardless of size, will be trimmed once every three years. Dead and dangerously damaged trees are removed immediately as required. Parkway mowing by policy and practicality is the responsibility of the individual property owner.

BRUSH PICKUP

How can residents get rid of branches and shrubbery trimmings?

The City will pick up large piles of brush on the regular garbage day. All brush piles must be placed on the parkway next to the curb. The frequency of pickup is limited to the regular garbage day April through October and two weeks in January following Christmas.

Not included in this service are grass clipping, logs eight inches diameter and over, complete tree removals, miscellaneous wastes, lumber sod, stumps or roots, and debris from private contractual work or debris obtained from another site and dumped on the parkway for pickup.

Yard waste generally consisting of grass clippings, leaves, twigs and yard clippings. Yard waste will be picked up April through mid-December, if placed at the curb or in the alley where applicable, in special yard waste paper bags or 90-gallon containers purchased from the solid waste contractor.

DUTCH ELM DISEASE

Does the City have the right to require a property owner to remove and destroy a tree infested with Dutch Elm disease?

The municipal Code provides for City agents to enter upon any private property that has a tree with the appearance of Dutch Elm disease to remove samples to determine whether the tree is infected with the disease or is dead. If it is, the property owner will be notified and the tree will be required to be removed by and at the expense of the owner within ten days of notice. If the owner cannot be found or refuses to remove and destroy the tree, the City will remove it and the owner will be billed. Parkway trees infested with the disease are marked and the tree and stump are removed by the city.

SPRAYING OF PARKWAY TREES

Does the City spray parkway trees for disease and insect infestation?

Within the limits of annual appropriations, the City sprays parkway trees for diseases and insects when in the opinion of the City Forester the disease or insect problem is detrimental to trees in the community.

PLANTING OF PARKWAY TREES

What should a citizen do if he desires to plant a tree on a City parkway?

The City Forester must be contacted because only approved species will be permitted to be planted on City parkways. In accordance with the Share-the-Cost Parkway Tree Planting Program, a property owner may apply to the Department of Public Works to have a tree planted on the City parkway fronting his property. Total cost to the property owner is set annually as a part of the budget process. The trees planted are two inches in diameter and guaranteed for two years. Larger diameter trees are also available through our shared-cost program.

STARLING CONTROL

What does the City do to control the starling problem?

The City is using a control measure of heavily pruning and trimming trees annually in those areas of the City where starlings are known to roost. Other measures may be used if required.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICE

Will the City Forester examine trees and shrubs located on private property?

Upon request of a homeowner, the City Forester will examine trees and shrubs located on private property. The City Forest will identify and inform the homeowner of any insect or disease problems existing in said trees or shrubs. In addition, the City Forester will recommend specific remedial actions that may be taken by the homeowner to correct the problem.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

TRAFFIC SIGNS

What is the procedure for requesting the installation of a traffic sign (stop, yield, restricted parking, etc.) in the City?

The specific traffic sign request should be submitted in writing to the Traffic/Safety Committee in care of the Public Works Department for evaluation and disposition based on accepted traffic control criteria and in accordance with the "Manual of Urban Traffic Control Devices" as adopted by the U.S. Government and the State of Illinois. A sketch of the proposal should accompany the request. If the request does not comply with recognized standards, the petitioner will be so advised giving reasons for denial. The petitioner will also be advised that his appeal procedure is to the Public Works Committee, which will either reaffirm the staff decision or recommend alternative action to the City Council.

BICYCLE LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS

During what hours are lights required on bicycles and how large a reflector is required on the back?

Article 13 of the Municipal Code requires operational lights on bicycles during the period from one-half hour after sunset to sunrise. If a rear lighted red lamp is not on the bicycle, a red reflector glass button, not less than 2 ¼ inches in diameter may be used.

BICYCLE REGULATIONS

Can bicycles be driven on sidewalks? Is there a speed limit for bicycles? What are other rules for bicycles in the City?

Bicycles may be operated on all sidewalks except in the downtown area as provided for in Article 13 of the Municipal Code. Bicycles shall be operated at a reasonable speed considering the existing condition, rider safety and the safety of other persons, property and vehicles. Two or more persons riding in a group must ride single file. Only one person can ride on a bicycle at one time unless the bicycle is a tandem or multiple and only then if the operator is an adult. All bicycles operated on city streets, alleys or sidewalks must be licensed and the license must be attached to the bicycle. The licenses are permanent and provided without fee. Also, bicycles must be locked when left unattended. Violation of any of these regulations should be reported to the Police Department for appropriate action.

MINIBIKES AND SNOWMOBILES

Is the operation of minibikes and snowmobiles permitted in the City?

Minibikes may only be operated on private property with the permission of the property owner. They may not be operated on City streets. Minibikes are required to be equipped

with proper mufflers. Snowmobiles cannot be operated anywhere in the City, including the park district and forest preserve.

MOTOR VEHICLE STICKERS

Does the City of Park Ridge require motor vehicles to be licensed by the City?

Article 13 of the Municipal code requires residents to have their motor vehicles licensed by the City. Vehicle licenses expire on June 15 of each year. Applications are available at the City Hall cashier counter. The license fee is reduced by 50% if the applicant becomes a new resident of Park Ridge after December 15 of said year. Antique autos and ex-prisoners of war (i.e., so licensed by the State) are not required to be licensed by the City.

To transfer a license, the owner must remove the sticker from the licensed vehicle, bring it to the City Hall cashier and pay a \$3.00 transfer fee.

PENALTY FOR LATE PURCHASE OF VEHICLE LICENSE

A penalty is added for all vehicle stickers purchased after June 15 of each year unless a bill of sale can be provided evidencing purchase of the vehicle sticker within 15 days of purchase of the vehicle. A penalty of \$15.00 is assessed if the purchase is made within ninety (90) days of the due date. An additional \$20.00 is assessed if the purchase is made more than 90 days after the due date.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

BUILDING PERMITS

Is a building permit required for repairs or improvements to buildings?

Article 15 of the Municipal Code requires a building permit to repair, improve, alter, demolish etc., any building or structure in the City. Permit applications are made on forms furnished by the Department of Community Preservation and Development and require a signed statement indicating proposed occupancy or use and estimated cost. In addition, plans, drawings, and specifications are required.

All plans for new single-family dwellings, commercial and institutional projects, and additions to multiple-family residential dwellings, commercial and institutional projects, along with ground and wall signs must also be reviewed by the Appearance Commission.

PLUMBING ADDITIONS

Is a permit required to install additional plumbing, such as a second bathroom, in a house?

Article 15 of the Municipal Code requires a permit for all plumbing installations or alterations. After a permit has been granted, no material change can be made without receiving written permission from the Building Department. Before any plumbing system is used, a certificate of inspection and approval must be obtained from the Building Department. Before any plumbing system is used, a certificate of inspection and approval must be obtained from Building Department official.

FENCE HEIGHT LIMITATIONS

What is the height limitation for fence construction?

The Zoning Ordinance permits fences to be erected in residential districts to a height of five feet above the existing grade along any side, rear or corner side yard. Open fences four feet in height may be erected in the corner side yards of reversed corner lots. Fences are prohibited in front yards. In some instances, fences can be installed to a height of six feet for a distance not to exceed 25 feet. A permit is required for any fence. Requests for variances to the fence regulations may be submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

WATER AND SEWER

WATER SERVICE LINES

Who is responsible for installing and repairing service lines from municipal water mains?

All repairs between the water main and the “Buffalo Box” (located in the parkway) are made by the City. Service lines from the “Buffalo Box” leading to the premises to be served are installed and repaired by and at the expense of the owner of the premises. Service lines are installed under the supervision of the Building and Public Works Departments in accordance with applicable codes. Installation permits are required and the connection must remain exposed until it is approved by a Building Inspector who will authorize backfilling if the installation is completed properly. According to Article 11 of the Municipal Code, the City may discontinue water services to the premises until the required repairs are made by the owner. The City maintains, repairs and replaces all meters.

WATER BILL PROBLEM

How can a water bill problem be resolved?

Water bills are generated bi-monthly with citizens being requested to note their current water meter reading so that the next bill can reflect actual usage. Citizens are urged to contact the Water Billing Department when there is a significant change in water bill. High water bills may result from a leak in the plumbing, a clerical error, sprinkling, etc.

SEWER SERVICE LINES

Who is responsible for repairing service lines from municipal sewer lines?

According to Article 11 of the Municipal Code, all repairs to the main sewer line are made by the City. All repairs to the sewer lying outside the outer circumference of the main sewer line or pipe are made by the owner of the premises served. All repairs to the house sewer, including that portion of joint, connection, “Y” or “T” lying outside the outer circumference of the main sewer line or pipe are made by the owner of the premises served. In the event that failure occurs in the portion for the sewer system to be maintained by the owner of the premises, the City may close the public water curbstop and discontinue the service of water to the premises until the required repairs are made by the owner of the premises. A permit from the Public Works Department (located at City Hall) is required for any excavations in the public right-of-way. Permits are also required from the Building Department for repairs on private property.

PROPERTY TAXES AND REVENUES

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

Who can answer questions and resolve problems with property assessment?

Property assessment is a County function in which the City is not involved. Problems and questions should be referred to the Township Assessor at the township tax office or the Cook County Assessor's office.

DISTRIBUTION OF TAX BILL REVENUE

Each property tax dollar in Park Ridge is distributed among several governmental bodies. The tax revenue receiving bodies are the City of Park Ridge, Maine Township High Schools District 207, Park Ridge-Niles School District 64, Oakton Community College District 535, Cook County, the Forest Preserve, the Suburban T.B. Sanitarium, the Water Reclamation District, Mosquito Abatement District, the Park District, Cook County Health Facilities, Maine Township, Leyden Township, Norwood Township, Maine Township Road and Bridge and Maine Township General Assistance. The following table shows how the revenue collected from property taxes is distributed among these bodies:

Property Tax Rates for Overlapping Governmental Bodies
(per \$100 of Equalized Assessed Valuation)

<u>TAX</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Total Tax</u>	<u>City Portion</u>	<u>City % of</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Other Gov.</u>	<u>Other Gov.</u>
<u>Levied</u>	<u>Collected</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>of total Tax</u>	<u>total Tax</u>	<u>School Portion</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Bodies</u>	<u>Bodies % of</u>
			<u>Rate</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>of total Tax</u>	<u>% of total Tax</u>	<u>Portion of</u>	<u>total Tax</u>
					<u>Rate</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>total Tax</u>	<u>Rate</u>
1993	1994	8.836	1.001	11.33%	5.313	60.13%	2.522	28.54%
1994	1995	9.213	1.022	11.09%	5.633	61.14%	2.558	27.77%
1995	1996	8.718	0.913	10.47%	5.264	60.38%	2.541	29.15%
1996	1997	8.772	0.879	10.02%	5.362	61.13%	2.531	28.85%
1997	1998	9.501	0.891	9.38%	6.116	64.37%	2.494	26.25%
1998	1999	8.734	0.808	9.25%	5.594	64.05%	2.332	26.70%
1999	2000	8.651	0.779	9.00%	5.611	64.86%	2.261	26.14%

An examination of the table will show that the greatest proportion of property tax revenue is allocated to three school systems. The school systems generally receive between 60 and 65 percent of the annual property tax revenue while the City receives between 9 and 11 percent and other bodies received a combined total between 26 and 29 percent.

CITY USE OF REVENUES

What does the City do with its revenues?

City revenues are used in a variety of ways. Many uses are not seen by the average citizen, such as purchasing, personnel, data processing, insurance, payment of bonded debt, etc. Most of the City's revenue goes toward functions and services benefiting the daily lives of most citizens, such as water supply, sewer and water main maintenance, tree trimming and beautification of public property, street maintenance, ambulance service, firefighting, police patrol and investigation, traffic control, street lighting, snow and ice removal, alley maintenance, refuse collection, zoning and building control, public transportation and library services, to name a few.

Capital Improvement priorities and the largest share of the budget goes to Park Ridge public safety functions which have been expanded considerably over the years to provide better services for Park Ridge citizens. The Fire Department has developed from a volunteer to a full-time operation, and ambulance and paramedic service has been initiated by the City' the Police Department has been expanded, and a combined Emergency Communications Center with Des Plaines has been added to handle all emergency calls to the Police and Fire Department.

MISCELLANEOUS

BASEMENT FLOODING

What can be done to inhibit basement flooding?

Park Ridge has attempted to keep basements from flooding by installing relief storm sewers, a major storm water pumping station and overland flood barriers.

In some cases, basement flooding can be reduced or eliminated by installing overhead sewers and by disconnecting the downspouts on the house. Although downspout disconnection is not absolute remedy, it helps to relieve the problem, particularly when neighbors act in like manner.

OVERLAND RIVER FLOODING

What protection is there against overland river flooding?

Park Ridge has developed a flood control plan to warn residents of impending river flooding. In addition, specific areas of the City most susceptible to flooding have been protected by berms and floodwalls or these facilities are currently under constructions.

GARBAGE PICKUP

Who collects the garbage in Park Ridge and to whom are complaints directed?

Garbage collection in Park Ridge is contracted out to a private contractor. The city's contractor is ARC Disposal of Mount Prospect. If problems should result from the company's work, or if special pickup is requested, the company's phone number is 981-0091. Problems, which cannot be resolved by calling the company, should be referred to the Park Ridge Public Works Department at 318-5228.

What kind of garbage will the contractor pick up?

Garbage is collected once a week. Garbage must be placed in plastic carts, provided by ARC, consistent with existing practices.

Pickup of bulk items such as old furniture, carpeting, etc. is part of the regular weekly service. No special arrangement by the resident is necessary.

State law requires special handling of White Goods. White Goods are defined as stoves, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, hot water heaters, dehumidifiers, humidifiers, dishwashers, heat pumps, chillers, furnaces and boilers and may contain gases, require special attention. Citizens need to call ARC Disposal to have these items picked up at a charge.

Construction material will not be picked up by the City's contractor. Such material must be hauled away by the property owner or by a private hauler contracted for by the property owner.

RECYCLING

What materials does the City recycle?

The city presently collects certain recyclable materials at curbside in blue carts provided by ARC on the same day as regular garbage and yard waste pickup.

Items which can be recycled include aluminum beverage cans or clean formed aluminum trays; steel cans; glass bottles and jars, green, brown and clear glass only; plastic milk, pop and water jugs and colored or clear plastic necked laundry, bath products, anti-freeze, windshield washers, oil containers, any plastic bottle with a neck on it; newspapers, including inserts, junk mail (no envelopes with wax paper windows), magazines, brown paper grocery bags, phone books, catalogs, and cardboard.

Beverage cans, bottles and plastic jugs need to be rinsed before being set out for pickup. Labels need not be removed. Crushing is optional.

CITY EMPLOYMENT

How does the City fill employment vacancies?

Regular full-time employees are hired only after passing a series of examinations which, depending upon the position, may include a physical agility and/or strength test, written exam, background and reference check, medical exam, polygraph test, oral interview, psychological exam and perhaps an assessment center.

Part-time employees (including summer help) are hired by Human Resources. Applications for summer jobs should be submitted in early Spring.

SOLICITATION

Is any type of solicitation permitted in the City?

Article 14 of the Municipal Code requires that all solicitors in residential areas must be registered with the City. It is unlawful for a solicitor to knock at any home where there is a "No Soliciting" sign displayed. Soliciting must be limited to the hours between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. No solicitation is permitted on public property without a permit obtained from the City Manager's office.

HANDBILLS

Can handbills be distributed in the City?

Article 14 of the Municipal Code of Park Ridge prohibits the distribution or selling of any commercial handbill in any public place. However, the distribution of noncommercial handbills to persons willing to accept them without charge is permitted.

SALE OF LIQUOR

Under what circumstances can liquor be sold in Park Ridge?

No liquor may be served or sold unless the appropriate license has been obtained. Licenses may be granted only upon the recommendation of the Liquor License Review Board to the Liquor Control Commissioner, except in the case of a temporary license, which may be authorized by the Liquor Control Commissioner.

BLOCK PARTIES

Are block parties permitted in Park Ridge? If so, what is the procedure for obtaining approval?

Block parties are permitted in the City. In general, only local streets may be closed for a block party. For information on permitted closings of collector or arterial streets, see the Street Closings Prohibited map available in the City Manager's office. To obtain approval, a petition should be submitted to the City Manager's office at City Hall indicating the date and time of the proposed party. The petition must be signed by a member of each household within the area of the party. If it is determined that the street can be closed, memo will be sent to the Director of Public Works, the Director of Public Safety, and the organizer of the party indicating approval. Ultimate approval power rests with the City Manager.

CAMPING

Is camping permitted on any public property?

According to Article 14 of the Municipal Code of Park Ridge, it is unlawful for anyone to camp on any public street, sidewalk, in a public park, building or on any public property.

STREET LIGHTS

How does the City determine the type and location of streetlights?

A practice of establishing levels of street lighting to promote safety consistent with the residential character of the City is followed. Commercial areas, because of special conditions of pedestrian and vehicular use, are lighted by 22,500 lumen fixtures with modern directional

glassware. Such lights are mounted on reinforced concrete or aluminum standards. Arterial street lighting typically 12,100 lumen is installed and maintained by Commonwealth Edison Company in accordance with good street lighting practice.

Residential lighting, typically 8,600 lumen, is installed and maintained by the Commonwealth Edison Company. Streetlights are provided at all street intersections as a normal practice. In addition, mid-block lighting may be installed if the majority of affected residents on a street request it in writing. Such lighting will be placed as close to mid-block as possible. Easements for maintaining and servicing the cables in accordance with the needs for such installations are required as a part of the written request for additional lighting.

TAG DAYS

How does the City handle requests for Tag Days?

A permit to solicit on public ways must be obtained from the City Manager. Except as provided in Article 14-7-7, permission is not granted for use of City Streets. A permit is issued for tag days on public sidewalks in the business districts and on arterial streets only.

REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX

What is the property transfer tax?

The Park Ridge City Council has established a real estate transfer control system to correct violations of the zoning and subdivision laws. The system requires approval by the City of all property transfers and payment of a fee. The transfer control system went into effect November of 1987. The current fee for sale transfers is \$2.00/\$1,000 valuation of the property. This fee went into effect May 1, 1989. The City instituted a \$25 processing fee for exempt transfers December 17, 2001.

Why is it needed?

The property transfer control system is necessary in order to make it possible for the City to properly enforce its zoning and subdivision laws. These laws, which continue to be upgraded, enable the City to assure the orderly development and use of land in the City. Violation of the zoning and subdivision laws is illegal and can result in fines or other legal action against a violator.

Unfortunately, zoning and subdivision violations are extremely difficult to detect and prevent. In the past, there have been many cases in which the City has not been aware of a violation until long after it first occurred. For example, a property owner might illegally split a single lot into multiple parcels and sell off those parcels before the City became aware of the transactions. Or an owner might, without obtaining a building permit, construct a garage or room addition too close to the property line. Unless a neighbor complained, the City might not discover the illegal construction. Such violations can result in uncontrolled community development and can cause

serious hardship to an unsuspecting purchaser of the property. The transfer control system is designed to prevent such violations from occurring.

How does it work?

The law requires every seller of real estate to notify the City of the sale before it takes place. The City will review the deed or other documents involved in the sale and inspect the exterior of the property. If any violations of the zoning or subdivision laws are detected, the sale may be held up until the problems are corrected. If there are no violations, the City will stamp the deed and the sale can be completed.

Not every zoning or subdivision violation will cause the sale to be disapproved. The law exempts violations relating to a condition which was legal at the time it first occurred (a “legal non-conforming use”); violations which existed before the present zoning ordinance went into effect (September 2, 1975) on property which is now “improved” (i.e., with a building); and violations created on improved property after September 2, 1975, by a previous owner of the property.

At the time the City reviews the proposed sale, it will also determine whether the seller owes any money to the City: for example, for unpaid water bills. Any such debts to the City will have to be paid before the sale will be approved. The process of reviewing the proposed sale takes approximately five working days.

Questions may be directed to Community Preservation and Development.