

2017 STATE OF THE VILLAGE

March 15, 2017

Mayor George Yukich

First of all, I'd like to welcome everyone to the State of the Village presentation. I ask that you join me in thanking Chairman Larry Killmer and the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and their Executive Director Jane Bushong for organizing today's event.

The majority of this presentation will cover the accomplishments of 2016. It is exciting to talk about the accomplishments but first I'd like to acknowledge some very important people and agencies.

I'd like to recognize and thank Village Clerk Ann Holtz and Village Trustees Carlo Caprio, Beth Rodgers, Sharon Sweas, Christina Neitzke-Troike, Brian Burian and Mike Costa. Could the Village Clerk and the Village Trustees who are with us today please stand? Please join me in acknowledging their continued commitment to the Village.

I'd like to thank Village Manager Mike Mertens and members of the Village Staff. It is the Village Staff who carry out the policies and directives of the Board. They make it all happen. A number of volunteer committees also give generously of their time to provide guidance and recommendations to the Village Board and staff. I want to express my appreciation to each of you for your continued hard work on behalf of the residents of Homer Glen. Would our staff members and Village committee volunteers please stand up and be recognized.

A number of area and regional elected and appointed officials are here from governmental entities. In particular I'd like to recognize:

- State Representative of the 37th District, Margo McDermed;
- Anthony Dubicki from the office of Illinois House Republicans Leader Jim Durkin;
- Village Trustee Paul Chialdikas and Village Administrator George Schafer from the Village of Lemont; and,
- The City Administrator of Lockport, Ben Benson.

We greatly appreciate our intergovernmental partners including representatives who are here today from Homer Township, our great library district, School District 33C, our friends at Lockport Township High School, the Homer Highway Department, the Will County Sheriff's Office, the Homer Township Fire Protection District, the Will County Center for Economic

Development and the Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau. Please join me in thanking them with your applause.

[GAS EXPLOSION DEMONSTRATES COMMUNITY WORKS TOGETHER]

A very unfortunate tragedy hit our community last year but it exemplifies some of Homer Glen's strongest assets: Our strong sense of community, volunteerism and cooperation. A father and daughter were both injured on December 15 when their home exploded and caught fire because of a natural gas leak in a subdivision near the intersection of Parker and 143rd Street. Nearly two dozen families were evacuated from their homes until the area was deemed safe to re-enter. Village staff mobilized to open up the new Village Hall as a temporary shelter. The EMA, Fire Districts, Will County Sheriff's personnel and the Red Cross responded with professionalism. Local restaurants made donations of food for the emergency responders who were faced with a long and cold night. Many families made contributions to the Go Fund Me and United Way campaigns to help the residents impacted by this horrific incident. Village Hall was inundated with phone calls from residents wanting to lend a helping hand. I am proud to be part of this kind of community in which residents care about each other and cooperation among agencies and our governmental partners is so well honed. Please keep the father and daughter in your thoughts for their continued rehabilitation.

Your Village government is committed to continually improve the quality of life and respond to the priorities of Homer Glen residents. 2016 was an eventful year and the momentum created is helping to direct our focus in the new year. I am pleased to report that many projects long in the concept and planning stages are now underway, paving the way for more economic development in the coming years.

[NEW VILLAGE HALL]

The big news for the year was celebrating our 15th anniversary and the opening of our new Village Hall.

It is fitting that the Village transitioned into a new permanent Village Hall in 2016 as we celebrated our 15th anniversary as an incorporated Village. Work on the new Village Hall began in late February 2016 and culminated with the relocation of staff offices in July and the opening of the new Village Board Room and Community Meeting Room in August. The Will County Sheriff's substation also moved into their new quarters at the east end of the building.

The extensive renovation project came in well under budget. The Village Board and I are proud that the community now has a proper civic center. Village staff received much needed space and the community gained a gathering place.

[PARK AND RECREATION SUCCESSES]

(Heritage Park Plan)

The Village renamed Woodbine golf course as Heritage Park and began a planning effort for the future development of a brand new 100-acre community park.

Not many communities get the opportunity to plan a park improvement of such magnitude as this one.

Input from residents and other community stakeholders played an integral role in this important planning project. Heritage Park will truly be a park for the community, offering amenities for all age groups and interests. Eventually, the Homer Community Fest will relocate to Heritage Park in 2018.

The concept plan for Heritage Park outlines the different areas and amenities of the park, which will be built over a series of phases. The Village Trustees and I look forward to seeing the first phase of park improvements initiated this summer, with the construction of park circulation roads, the Village Green area, as well as the completion of drainage improvements.

(319 Grant for Heritage Park)

The new park development creates the opportunity to alleviate flooding problems in the surrounding neighborhoods. I am pleased to announce that the Village should be receiving an award of a 319 Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency for the Heritage Park project in the summer of 2017. The grant will deal with storm water improvements and water quality improvements, including wetland restoration and the construction of bio-swales, at the northeast corner of Heritage Park. The really great news is that the 319 Grant will cover 60% of the total project cost of about \$866,000.

(Goodings Grove Park)

Construction on the new Goodings Grove Park is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2017. The park is located at the end of Greystone Drive behind The Home Depot, within the future Goodings Grove Unit 5 subdivision.

The Village received an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for this project in the amount of \$171,000. The Village Trustees and I are pleased that this grant was fulfilled, despite the Budget impasse in Springfield. Like any major capital project, we are committed to seeking grant funding opportunities.

(Heroes Trail Extensions)

The Village completed the South Extension to the Heroes Trail in 2016, adding 1.6 miles to the trail network. This section of trail is located west of Bell Road near Martingale and runs through the ComEd right-of-way to 159th Street.

This new section of trail will ultimately connect to the multi-use path to be constructed along the north side of 159th Street, as part of IDOT's 159th Street improvements.

The Village will be constructing the Goodings Grove School extension to the Heroes Trail in 2017. This section of trail will connect the Goodings Grove School on 143rd Street to the existing trail at Pin Oak Drive. In total, the Village is receiving \$657,120 in federal CMAQ grant funds for these two expansion projects for the multi-use Heroes Trail. Our next focus will be to expand the trail westward, providing connections to the new Village Hall and Heritage Park.

(Motor Fuel Tax Funds Parks and Recreation Initiatives)

In order to properly invest in our future, the Village Board, in January 2016, approved a 3 cent per gallon motor fuel tax to fund our parks and recreation initiatives. The tax became effective last March. The motor fuel tax is the least impactful way to generate substantial funds to support parks and recreation initiatives because about 70% of our motor fuel sales come from customers passing through Homer Glen. With the motor fuel tax, non-residents contribute to the quality of life of our community.

[ROAD IMPROVEMENTS]

The Village is completing a Phase I study for the widening of 151st Street, from Bell Road to Cedar Road. Upon completion of the Phase I study, the Village will seek to apply for grants to fund the completion of the plans, as well as the actual construction of the project.

A priority for the Village is to complete public improvements in several residential subdivisions that were impacted by the recession and left previously unfinished. In 2016, the Village worked with the developers of the Evlyn's Gate, Evlyn's Gate North and Stonebridge Woods subdivisions to complete the roads in these developments.

[IDOT 159th STREET IMPROVEMENTS]

Utilities relocation to make way for the widening of 159th Street was accomplished over the past year. With the coming of spring, IDOT will prepare to complete the traffic shift to the north side and begin to construct improvements along the entire south side of the corridor during 2017. When completed, traffic will be shifted to the south side for improvements along the north side of the corridor. IDOT projects that the roadway improvements will be substantially completed in late 2018.

The Village will continue to provide business liaison services and special signage support to 159th Street corridor businesses impacted by IDOT road construction activity and is also working to attract new businesses to town.

[VILLAGE STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS]

The Village continues to fix storm water issues in Homer Glen. Last year, the Village completed drainage projects in the Spring Creek and DeBoer Woods subdivisions.

Upcoming projects for the current year will include completion of the drainage improvement projects in Erin Hills, Meadowview and Woodbine subdivisions.

[AEDs]

In January, the Village passed legislation requiring our largest businesses to have Automated External Defibrillators available for use by staff and patrons. The Village will be installing an additional AED at Village Hall as well as in each of our Sheriff's patrol cars. We are committed to a proactive approach to reducing fatalities resulting from sudden cardiac arrest. Thank you to the Village's Public Services and Safety Committee for their work on this initiative.

[ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP]

Our Village stays true to its motto of "Community and Nature in Harmony" by continuing to be a leader and steward of the environment.

From environmental programs and designations such as the International Dark Sky Community to best development practices, the Village of Homer Glen is recognized in the Chicagoland area for our environmental stewardship.

The Village received a Tree City USA Designation from the Arbor Day Foundation again this year. The Village has maintained this status every year since we first received the designation in 2009, in recognition of our high levels of tree care.

Through the Public Parkway Tree Replacement Program more than 300 diseased trees were removed from the parkways and 175 were replaced. More replacements will be planted in the spring and fall of 2017 and will continue as long as needed.

The Environment Committee planted a tree at the Library in recognition of Arbor Day and another tree in Heritage Park for Homer Glen Lands Day. The Norway Spruce that was planted in Heritage Park was used for our very well attended Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony.

In conjunction with the Will County Land Use Department, the Village held a Household Hazardous Waste collection event this past September and is looking into other recycling opportunities for 2017.

The Village's 10th annual Earth Day Arbor Day event will take place at Konow Farm, on Cedar Road, Saturday, May 20 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. This free event is filled with entertainment and demonstrations that showcase the importance of protecting our natural resources and environment. I hope to see you there!

[FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE]

(Excellence in Financial Reporting)

The Village is committed to financial excellence and integrity.

The Village of Homer Glen has, for the 15th year in a row, received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate of Achievement Award is the highest form of recognition a municipality can receive in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

(Bond Rating)

Financial rating agency Standard & Poor's recognized the Village's financial excellence. Standard & Poor's reported the Village's Bond Rating at "Double A Plus." The "Double A Plus" rating is next to the top and means that the Village has a very strong capacity to meet all of our financial commitments.

(Balanced General Fund)

The Village's general \$8.6 million operating budget forecasted an operating surplus of \$53,000 for the current fiscal year. The upcoming fiscal year will also have a balanced general fund operating budget, with a surplus forecasted for next fiscal year end. This budget will support outstanding services and significant public park, public building and storm water improvements.

(No Municipal Property Tax)

Homer Glen remains one of only a few Illinois communities that does NOT levy a municipal property tax for general operations. In addition, unlike surrounding Will and Cook County municipalities, the Village has no electric utility tax, no telecommunications tax and no real estate transfer tax.

(Significance of Retail Sales Tax Revenue)

Retail sale tax receipts are, therefore, a significant revenue source for the general fund. \$3.2 million of the general operating fund revenues in the current fiscal year are made up of receipts from the 1% sales tax. This is one of the main reasons why it's so important to shop and dine in Homer Glen. For every \$100 you spend at Homer Glen retailers, \$1 comes back as sales tax revenue to support local roads, police and other community services.

[ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT]

(Building Permit Activity)

Economic Development is a priority for the Village. Home owners and businesses see the opportunities and have made tremendous investments in Homer Glen.

Homer Glen saw the construction of 76 new single-family homes last year, an increase of 172 percent over the prior year.

For greater perspective, the Village issued an average of about 23 new home permits each year for the 8-year period between 2008 and 2015. The 76 new home permits in 2016 is a 334

percent increase over this annual average of the previous eight years. Retailers are attracted to housing activity, so it is great to see this uptick.

(Private Investment by Businesses)

The Village saw over \$2.9 million dollars of construction and remodeling work by both new and existing businesses in Homer Glen last year. The Village Board and I appreciate this confidence and we thank every business that is investing in the strong and vibrant future of our community.

(New & Expanding Businesses Activity)

Over 22,800 square feet of commercial space was filled as a result of new and retained business activity last year. A total of 10 new businesses opened. 15 existing businesses were retained in Homer Glen through relocations, expansions, remodeling and new ownership.

Our newest businesses represent a diversity of niches. New restaurants and eateries include Lily Garden Vietnamese Restaurant and Ben's Soft Pretzels.

We welcomed Rising Lotus Yoga, Anytime Fitness and Women's Primary Health Partners in the health and wellness niche.

Fine gems and custom jeweler Lord and Hunt Jewelers relocated from Orland Park to Homer Town Square to be closer to their customer base.

New service businesses including Randy's Annico Automotive, the audio-video specialist Technology Professionals and independent health insurance agency Consumer Benefit Resources further improved Homer Glen's business mix.

Crosstown Realtors and Love Your Nails both nearly doubled their sizes with their relocations. The Dance Studio, a long time Homer Glen business, was successfully transitioned to a new owner who now operates as Momentum Dance Studio.

Papa John's and Wendy's both have new franchisees at the helm. Sleepy's transitioned to Mattress Firm.

Under new ownership, the Orland Oak Center on 143rd Street has received a significant facelift. The façade renovation will be completed with new tenant signage. This important private investment will help attract new business tenants to the shopping center.

Construction of the 2-tenant outlot building at Homer Town Square added 4,200 square feet of new commercial space to the inventory for our newest business recruitments. Starbucks with its popular drive thru opened on February 16. Chipotle is targeting an opening around the middle of April.

More new businesses are on their way in 2017. We look forward to Frontera Sur Mexican Restaurant and Kenootz Pizza opening in the Grove Valley Center near Steamers and to Lou Malnati's opening at Homer Town Square near Jewel in the coming months.

(Sales Tax Revenue)

The Village's growing retail base generates a significant amount of sales tax revenue that currently helps the Village to operate without levying municipal property taxes or utility taxes for general operations. So, I am very happy to report that retail sales are trending strong.

Over the past 10 years, the 1% Sales Tax total has grown 165% from \$2.4 million received in Fiscal 2008 to \$3.2 million received in Fiscal 2017. The dollar increase in Sales Tax receipts was over \$800,000, representing an additional \$80 million dollars in retail sales in Fiscal 17 compared with Fiscal 08. For the current Fiscal Year, sales tax revenue is up 1 percent over this past fiscal year and we are on track to receive \$3.2 million by fiscal year end.

[LOOKING FORWARD]

Looking forward, the Village has a number of community development and strategic planning initiatives in the works.

(Building Code)

Development regulations are undergoing a review to make them up-to-date and more user-friendly. The Building Department, along with the Fire Protection Districts, are in the process of updating the Village's Building Code. The revised Building Code will reflect the substantial changes in construction technology, building safety, and energy conservation in the built environment that have taken place since the last update in 2007.

(Subdivision Regulations)

The subdivision and land development regulations are also being updated. These updates are needed because the Village essentially adopted Will County regulations at the time of incorporation. Current deficiencies will be corrected and revisions will be made so that the updated ordinance is consistent with the rest of the Village Code and more user-friendly.

(Extension of Water and Sanitary Sewer Lines to the Western Boundary)

While the State works to improve 159th Street, the Village is focusing on the extension of water and sewer mains to our western border. These utilities are crucial to realize new business development along the 159th Street corridor and the Village's western gateway at Gougar Road.

The \$2.2 million dollar water main extension will be constructed within the 159th Street right-of-way on the north side of the road. The Village will realize cost savings, taking advantage of timing the water main extension with IDOT's road improvement project.

The \$4.5 million dollar Fiddymet Creek Sanitary Sewer will be a gravity main through the lower elevations of the watershed it will serve. The Village's staff and engineering consultant are working to complete all tasks to prepare for construction of the water and sanitary sewer extensions. The plan is to go out to bid for both projects in the summer. We anticipate starting the sewer main construction this summer. The water main construction is projected to start in the coming winter after IDOT shifts the traffic pattern to the south side of the road.

(National Citizen Survey)

We want to understand how the residents feel about the current state and future of our community. In mid to late April, the Village will conduct the National Citizen Survey, capturing resident opinion on eight aspects of community livability: community engagement, education and enrichment, recreation and wellness, economy, built environment, natural environment, safety and mobility. This survey has been used by more than 300 communities in 45 states. 1,500 households throughout the Village will be randomly chosen to participate in this scientific survey

[CONCLUSION]

We have a great community and much to be proud of in Homer Glen. Our Village continues to be acknowledged for its quality of life and achievements ranging from safe city rankings to excellence in financial reporting and environmental stewardship recognitions.

Your support of local businesses helps grow our business community and helps the Village to attract new businesses. Please shop and dine in Homer Glen first.

You can sign up for automatic news alerts and my Mayor's Blog via text or email on the Village's website.

Like us on Facebook! The Village recently launched a Facebook page to help keep residents informed.

Your active participation in Village initiatives is important as we move forward. If you have a question, concern or great idea, please know that I, the Village Trustees and the Village staff are here to help and we will respond. I am happy to work with each of you here today as we continue to create Homer Glen's bright future.

Thank you for your kind attention. The Village Trustees, staff and I will stay around to answer any questions you may have.