

2019 STATE OF THE VILLAGE
April 16, 2019
Mayor George Yukich

1. I'd like to welcome everyone to the Homer Glen State of the Village Address. First of all, I ask that you join me in thanking Chairman of the Board Mike Shackel and Directors of the new Heritage Corridor Business Alliance, serving the business communities of Homer Glen and Lemont, for organizing today's event.

2. I would also like to acknowledge some very important people and agencies.

I'd like to recognize and thank Village Trustees Carlo Caprio, Brian Burian, Keith Gray, Christina Neitzke-Troike, Beth Rodgers and Sharon Sweas and Village Clerk Ann Holtz. Could the Village Trustees and Village Clerk please stand? Please join me in acknowledging their commitment to the Village.

I'd also like to recognize the new Trustees-Elect, Ann Holtz, Beth Rodgers and Rubin Pazmino, who will be sworn in on May 8. I look forward to working with them and the entire Board in serving the community for the years to come.

3. I'd like to thank our Village Staff. It is the Village Staff who carry out the policies and directives of the Board. They make it all happen. We welcome our new Village Manager Karie Friling and look forward to working with her. 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, new Village Manager and Village committee volunteers please stand up and be recognized?

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

4. Our intergovernmental partnerships are a strategic priority for the Village of Homer Glen. A number of area and regional elected and appointed officials are here from governmental entities. In particular, I'd like to recognize:

- Village of Lemont Mayor John Egofske;
- Village of Orland Park Manager Joe LaMargo; and,
- Amy Shanks, from State Representative Margo McDermed's Office.

We greatly appreciate our intergovernmental partners including representatives who are here today from:

- The Homer Township Library District,
- School District 33C,

- School District 92,
- Lockport Township High School District,
- The Homer Township Road District,
- The Will County Sheriff's Office,
- The Homer Township Fire Protection District,
- Northwest Homer 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.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

5. Improving the quality of life for our residents is at the core of what the Village does. Our priority is making certain that residents enjoy a high level of service and convenience without any municipal property tax for general operations. Strategic planning formalizes our goals to ensure that Homer Glen continues to be the "Community of Choice."

6. Last May, the Village began to implement a brand new Strategic Plan. This strategic approach, based on us listening to our residents and businesses, helps to ensure that the Village keeps its efforts and resources focused on initiatives that directly relate to desired outcomes for the community. The Strategic Plan is our road map for the next several years, guiding action and budget priorities.

7. Our collaborative process with residents and stakeholders in the year-long strategic planning process in 2017 and 2018 identified 6 (six) priorities to include:

- Intergovernmental Partnerships;
- Infrastructure;
- Financial Stability;
- Economic Development;
- Recreational Amenities; and,
- Growth.

8. Critical initiatives of the action plan this year will focus in three areas important for economic development and growth:

- Seeking clarity on the vision for the major commercial corridors relative to market opportunities;
- Evaluating gaps in water and sanitary sewer infrastructure that impact primary development locations; and,
- Updating the Sign Regulations.

9. Just last week, the Village Board selected a consultant to assist with these planning initiatives. The Sign Code update and infrastructure gap planning activities will be the first focus. The consultant will then concentrate on the Comprehensive Plan update that will include a new land use map and a roadmap for Homer Glen into the future. This process will be transparent and inclusive and will engage the entire community.

INFRASTRUCTURE

10. Infrastructure is a strategic priority for the Village of Homer Glen. Many of the Village's ongoing initiatives focus on laying the foundation in our still young Village. We have been laying the ground work for our future by improving our community's infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer utilities coverage and stormwater drainage.

11. The expansion and reconstruction of 159th Street from Will-Cook Road to Gougar Road by IDOT is 75% completed. The 2019 construction season is getting underway. IDOT is now projecting substantial completion of the new four-lane configuration by the end of this year. Homer Glen will be enhancing the 159th Street corridor with new signage and landscaping in the future as well.

12. The Village of Homer Glen has been proactive to assist our subdivisions and business owners' needs throughout the IDOT 159th Street project. I want to thank Homer Glen residents for your cooperation during this road construction project and I encourage each and every one of you to go out of your way to support local business owners. This improvement will be a great asset to our community and will serve to generate new economic development activity for many years into the future.

13. I am pleased to report on the strategic infrastructure investment of the Village to extend utilities to our western border.

14. Construction of the \$1.3 million dollar 159th Street Water Main is completed. This is a 16-inch diameter water main, which has been constructed within the 159th Street right of way, between Cedar Road and Gougar Road.

15. All that remains to be done is to fill, pressure test and chlorinate the new water main. Within the next few weeks, this process will be completed and the water main will be available to provide water to properties and new developments along 159th Street.

16. Construction of the Fiddymont Creek Sanitary Sewer is nearing completion.

17. The new sanitary sewer is located primarily within the Forest Preserve District of Will County property, between Cedar Road and Gougar Road. Currently, the overall project is about 80% completed.

18. Phase I on the western side of the project is 100% completed. The remaining work on Phase II is expected to take approximately 3 weeks, weather depending. Restoration work is expected to take a few additional weeks.

Both of these utility extensions have been strategic priorities for the Village and will help attract new commercial and residential development to the area.

19. The Village inherited a large number of drainage issues throughout the community. In order to effectively manage these drainage issues, staff compiled a list of over 50 drainage issues, small to large, and ranked them according to various criteria.

20. Recently, the Village contracted with the engineering firm of HR Green to prepare plans, specifications and cost estimates for the Village's 2019 Drainage Improvement Program. The goal for 2019 is to address the top four projects from the drainage list to reduce and/or eliminate roadway and property flooding. Once the plans and cost estimates are available, the Village can determine which projects can move forward this year for actual construction.

The drainage issues included in the 2019 Drainage Improvement Program are located in the Meadowcrest, Stadtler Ridge Estates, Country Woods and Chickasaw Hills (5C and 6) subdivisions.

21. Major reconstruction of Illinois American Water's Chickasaw Hills Water Reclamation Facility located on Parker Road and Seminole Trail was started about a year ago. The project will invest \$20.48 million to upgrade aging infrastructure. Construction is estimated to be completed around mid-2020. Once the improvements are complete, Derby Meadows will be converted from a water reclamation facility to a pumping station, and wastewater treatment will be regionalized at the Chickasaw Hills facility. An engineering study, performed by Illinois American Water, determined that reducing the number of water reclamation facilities in Homer Glen would likewise reduce operating costs.

CODE & PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

22. The Village Board and staff are committed to improving the Village Code. Our focus aims to continually make the Code more user-friendly, business-friendly and competitive for residential and commercial development opportunities.

23. Much was accomplished during 2017, including a 35 percent reduction in residential development impact fees;

24. A new consolidated Land Use and Site Development Chapter in the Code;

25. An updated Building Code;

26. A streamlined planned unit development process for smaller scale developments; and,

27. A streamlined permit process for restaurant outdoor seating and liquor sales.
28. Over the past year, two additional efforts to build on this progress were initiated. Staff researched and prepared a proposal to update the Use Table for nonresidential zoning districts. The proposed update of the Use Table will make it clearer for zoning applicants by grouping similar land uses.
29. Additionally, Staff researched opportunities to update the Liquor Control section of the Code with new liquor classifications. Updating our liquor classifications will enable business owners to enhance customer experience to remain competitive. New liquor classifications will also expand business recruitment opportunities, help Homer Glen to further diversify its retail venues and generate new retail sales tax. The Village Board provided feedback to Staff on both of these initiatives in February. The Village Board will consider draft amendments to the Code to update both the Use Table and new liquor classifications in the near future.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

30. There is a lot of good news to report with the Village's finances.
31. Better than anticipated revenues this current fiscal year was led by increased sales tax revenue, building permits and development revenue, in addition to carefully managed expenditures.
32. The Village's growing retail base generates a significant amount of sales tax revenue that helps the Village to operate without levying municipal property taxes or utility taxes for general operations.
33. Sales tax receipts year to date through March 2019 are up 2.1% from the same period last year. We are on track to receive \$3.4 million from the 1% Sales Tax by fiscal year end.
34. The Village's \$8.9 million general operating budget has forecasted an operating surplus for the current fiscal year. The upcoming fiscal year 2020 is also forecasted to have a \$420,000 projected general fund operating surplus. This budget will support outstanding services and significant public park and storm water improvements.
35. The proposed FY 2020 Budget builds on the positive performance of the prior fiscal year. The new budget has no new fee increases, and as everyone knows, the Village is continuing its practice of not levying a municipal property tax for general operations.
36. And on a very positive note, a 5% cost reduction in the service contract with the Will County Sheriff's Office will result in \$200,000 of savings to the Village in the FY 2020 budget.

37. Additional good news is that during FY 2020 the Village will make its last payment on the incentive agreement with Meijer. This means that in FY 2021 the Village will receive and retain 100% of the 1% Sales Tax generated from the Meijer store, saving the Village \$270,000 annually.

38. The Village is committed to financial excellence and integrity. For the 17th year in a row, the Village of Homer Glen has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

39. Standard & Poor's reports the Village's Bond Rating at "Double A Plus," a rating of strong capacity to meet all of our financial commitments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

40. Economic Development had a good year in Homer Glen with many positive outcomes to report.

41. Homer Glen welcomed 46 new single-family homes to our community last year and has issued 259 new home permits over the last 5 years.

42. The Village Board approved a new walkable mixed-use community for the key 13.5-acre development site north of the Home Depot. The Square at Goodings Grove will be developed with 76 townhomes and about 3.9 acres of commercial frontage.

43. The developer has envisioned a town center plan that focuses on pedestrian connections, view corridors and usable open space. This mixed use plan will serve as a viable transitional use between existing commercial and adjacent residential uses in the Goodings Grove Planned Unit Development.

44. Retailers are attracted to housing activity. The approval of The Square is important news to commercial developers and businesses who are watching Homer Glen. The Village Board and I look forward to The Square breaking ground soon.

45. The Village has been successful in attracting new businesses. Over the past 12 months, we welcomed the following new businesses: Infuego Furnishings and VIP Nails;

46. The escape room experience, "We Escape," and Randori Jiu Jitsu;

47. Big Joe's Backyard BBQ Restaurant;

48. Sloane Stevens Salon and Bella Body Med Spa;

49. Domani Development;

50. Hempology CBD Store and RE/MAX Millennium.

51. Dollar Tree and O'Reilly Auto Parts are two of our newest retailers to open in Phase I of Homer Glen Bell Plaza at the southwest corner of 143rd Street and Bell Road.

52. The overall planned development will be constructed in three phases. Ultimately, Homer Glen Bell Plaza will have 8 commercial buildings adding about 45,000 square feet to our inventory of commercial space on 9.4 acres at this prominent corner.

53. Taco Bell will soon join the other new retailers open at Homer Glen Bell Plaza. Taco Bell is locating in the new multi-tenant building facing Bell Road. A drive-through and outdoor seating will be featured.

54. Dialysis Care Center is a national corporation with locations in a number of states. In 2018, Dialysis Care Center chose Homer Glen to open their new corporate headquarters. Dialysis Care Center purchased the former Midwest Bank Building on Bell Road, completed major improvements to the building and opened in January. Dialysis Care Center now provides 80 jobs in Homer Glen and future growth and facility expansion is anticipated. Already nearby businesses and restaurants are benefiting from the infusion of new daytime workers in the area. A grand opening and ribbon cutting event with many dignitaries took place on April 5.

55. As a leader in dialysis care, the Village of Homer Glen is proud to have Dialysis Care Center select Homer Glen for their state-of-the-art corporate headquarters. This is great news for the Village of Homer Glen and economic development.

56. The prospect of a new major sales tax producer is now a reality. In seeking to expand the business, John Deere dealer Shorewood Home and Auto acquired Circle Tractor earlier this year. Shorewood's business owner also purchased 4 acres east of BI Rental on 159th Street. Shorewood Home and Auto is operating from the Circle Tractor location and will continue there while a new and larger facility is constructed next to BI Rental. The business will relocate operations to the new building later this year or early next year. The Village Board approved Shorewood Home and Auto's new site plan last week. This is a great economic development story for Homer Glen that includes business succession, recruitment and expansion.

57. The Village continues its very good record of retaining existing businesses. Bank of America moved into their new facility at 143rd and Bell Road.

58. Bump and Grind Auto Body made a major investment in a new façade.

59. Marian Village made a significant investment to re-imagine its facilities for independent senior living. The redesigned space now offers a centralized hub where residents can gather for recreational activities, three new dining venues and the wellness center.

60. Aldi is currently making improvements for a 3,200 square foot addition and facade improvement to the store entrance area including new signage.

61. Over 32,400 square feet of commercial space was filled as a result of new and retained business activity last year. 11 new businesses opened. 17 existing

businesses were retained in Homer Glen through expansions, remodeling and new ownership.

62. The Village realized over \$5.8 million dollars of private investment in improvements by both new and existing businesses 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.

63. The Village looks forward to more new businesses in the coming months. In addition to Taco Bell, men's hair salon HoneyCuts and Pizza Hut are preparing to open soon.

64. A gas station developer is under contract for five acres of the development site at the northeast corner of 159th Street and Gougar Road. The developer is working with IDOT on their access permit. The Village expects to advertise for the public hearing in the near future.

RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

65. Providing recreational opportunities to our residents remains a top priority for our Village.

66. Over the past year, our primary focus has been on developing the jewel of our park system, Heritage Park.

67. Heritage Park officially opened to the public last summer following the completion of Phase 1. Phase 1 construction included Heritage Circle, a 1.5 mile trail and the planting of 136 new trees.

68. On the east side of the park, work continued on constructing wetlands, bioswales, rain gardens and improving the fishing pond. These beautiful additions will offer educational opportunities and improve drainage in the Woodbine subdivision. This project was funded with assistance from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Landscaping for this project will be completed this spring.

69. Also this summer, the Active Core will open to the public. This seven acre area in the center of the park will provide active recreation opportunities for all ages.

70. This includes a nature-themed play area, a pavilion, bocce ball courts, tennis courts...

71. ...As well as pickleball courts, sand volleyball courts and a challenge course. The Active Core project is under budget and will allow us to spend resources on other amenities in the park.

72. The next addition to Heritage Park will be a certified 18-hole disc golf course, designed by a Homer Glen resident at no cost. This fast-growing sport offers play for all ages, while maintaining the natural environment.

73. Although most of us are happy to finally be done with winter, there is at least one thing to look forward to when the cold returns. The Heritage Park sled hill will be open to the public and be one of the best sledding hills in the area!

74. In order for residents to use the park, they need a safe way to get there. This spring, we are constructing a bike trail along 151st Street between Heritage Circle and Eagle Ridge Drive. This short trail addition will connect Heritage Park to the Heroes Trail system through Woodbine subdivision and provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists in a large portion of our Village.

75. The 103 acres of Heritage Park offer countless possibilities. We have contracted with an architectural firm to provide schematic design for the future phases of the park. These designs will inform the Board as we continue to develop a world class park. Stay tuned for updates!

76. Park improvements have not been limited to Heritage Park. Last September, Goodings Grove School Park opened. This park was the result of a partnership with the Goodings Grove PTO and School District 33C.

77. The park, along with the Goodings Grove School connection to Heroes Trail, helps address the lack of open space in the nearby Old Oak and Chickasaw areas. The park is open for public use after school hours as well as during the summer months.

78. The Village recognizes that there is still a need for parks in neighborhoods throughout the community. The Parks and Recreation Committee has discussed potential future park locations and the Board will continue to consider opportunities to develop open play areas for our residents.

79. Aside from providing residents with daily opportunities for recreation, our parks allow the Village to host expanded Special Events.

80. The first annual Chalk It Up event was held last July at Stonebridge Park. Dozens of child artists made the sidewalk their canvas and created beautiful artwork. Building on this success, the Chalk It Up event will be hosted once again at Stonebridge Park on July 13 this summer.

81. 2018 was the first year of the newly re-imagined tree lighting ceremony, "Homer for the Holidays." Hundreds of residents enjoyed arts and crafts, outdoor decorations and musical performances.

82. The kids really enjoyed our special guest, Santa!

83. I am excited to announce that Homer Fest, our Community Festival, will take place at Heritage Park this year. All of the activities will be located on one site making management of the event much easier. The carnival will be on a paved surface so that rain should not be an issue. Homer Fest will take place June 20 to 23. We are thrilled to show off our new park to the thousands who will attend.

84. All of our hard work in planning for parks and special events is bearing results. The Village Trustees and I thank residents for your participation in the planning process and we are proud to see these new park facilities and connections coming online.

QUALITY OF LIFE

85. The Village was named a 2018 Tree City USA by the Arbor Day Foundation in honor of our commitment to effective urban forest management. This is the 10th year that the Village has received this recognition by meeting the program's requirements.

86. Homer Glen ranks as the 5th Safest Community in Illinois. Home Snacks used FBI crime data for 300 cities with a population of more than 5,000 to determine which cities are the safest in Illinois. Homer Glen maintains its number five position from last year.

CLOSING

87. We have a great and safe 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.

88. Please remember that 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. Your support of local businesses is especially important and appreciated. I encouraged all of you to shop and dine in Homer Glen.

89. Your continued active participation in Village initiatives is equally important as we move forward. Residents and businesses can stay informed by signing up for news alerts through the Village website.

90. You can also follow us on Facebook. Our Village Staff welcomes your calls to Village Hall when you need assistance.

91. The Village Trustees and I are 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 and for taking the time out of your busy schedule to join us today. The Village Trustees, Staff and I will stay around to answer any questions you may have. Enjoy the rest of your day.