



RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | December, 2022



Year in Review: 2022

The past year was another full of progress for the Village of River Forest. The Village made notable strides in infrastructure investment, sustainability initiatives and community events.

Automated Metering Infrastructure: In February, the Village Board committed to yet another “smart city” advancement. For several months, Village staff worked to install new technology to improve water meter reading and services available to our residents. The new antennas and water meters allow for staff to collect data remotely that provides more accurate usage readings. Following the installation of the new meters, the Village launched an online portal called **WaterSmart** that allows for water customers to review their consumption and billing in real-time. So far, more than 400 residents have registered for the online portal. If you’re interested in signing up on the portal, visit [this link](#).

Alley Improvement Program: Also in February, the Village Board acted to expedite the alley improvement program. Originally, the plan was to complete the work over a five to seven year timeframe, but the Board instead committed to completing the work by 2023. Throughout 2022, nine

alleys were reconstructed with new concrete pavement and permeable pavers. There are five alleys in the program left to complete, with work scheduled for spring 2023.

In April, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved **comprehensive amendments** to the Village’s ethics ordinance. The amendments enhance the Village’s local ethics requirements and add requirements beyond those in State law. These amendments put the Village in a ‘best-in-class’ category for ethics reform, and continue the Village’s tradition of requiring elected officials, appointees, employees and contractors to conduct themselves with integrity and honesty when working with, and for the Village.

In June, the Village partnered with the villages of Maywood and Forest Park for the first annual West Villages’ Juneteenth Parade. The parade was attended by hundreds of people, and culminated with a well-attended event at Proviso East High School. The parade was just another example of the Village’s ongoing commitment to the Twin Villages Covenant with Maywood to work collaboratively with this neighboring community.

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From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

As you drive around River Forest looking at the beautiful holiday decorations, please keep in mind that December is Art and Architecture Month and there is some absolutely beautiful architecture in River Forest. Our oldest building dates back to 1831, in addition to homes that were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, William Drummond and their contemporaries. We also have amazing styles of architecture along our historic district, which extends from the east at Harlem Avenue to the west at the Des Plaines River, and from Division Street to the north to Washington Boulevard. This area consists of approximately 860 properties! The Village is committed to preserving the rich heritage in River Forest and December is a great time to take a glimpse into the homes of Christmas past.

I would also like to take a moment to remind residents that as we approach 2023, there will be changes to the Madison Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. The Village owns three properties in this District that have been vacant for several years. In order to attract appropriate development to the site, the Village Board has decided to demolish the properties and preliminary work has begun. In late November, the necessary asbestos abatement was completed to ensure a safe demolition of the properties. The physical teardown of the buildings is scheduled to begin in the next few weeks. Demolition costs will be fully funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. To learn more about this project, click [here](#).

Finally, I would like to take a moment to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday and a bright new year ahead! Please visit all the trees decorated by various groups in River Forest at Memorial Park at Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue.

Sincerely,

Cathy Adduci, Village President
Village of River Forest



Village Board Trustees



**Erika
Bachner**



**Kathleen
Brennan**



**Lisa
Gillis**



**Ken
Johnson**



**Robert
O'Connell**



**Respicio F.
Vazquez**

Village Clerk



**Jonathan
Keller**

To contact the
Village Board
to submit a
comment or
question, click the
button below



News Around Town



River Forest Park District

Register for 'The Park Bench' newsletter! Stay up to date on program details, registration reminders, and more! The Park District sends out a monthly e-newsletter called 'The Park Bench' and a maximum of three other emails per month. Click [here](#) to register. You can also view the [Winter Fun Guide!](#)



Santa's Mailbox at The Depot

401 Thatcher Ave, River Forest

Drop off your letters to Santa from December 2-16 between 8:30 am-4:30 pm.

Make sure you include a return address.

River Forest Library December Events

Visit the library website to see everything happening this December at <https://www.riverforestlibrary.org/> - there's something for everyone!

For Adults:

Thursday, 12/8, 7-8:30 p.m., Craft and Chat. This month's craft is holiday gift preparation, and advanced registration is required.

Saturday, 12/10, 2-3:30 PM, Joan & Bette: A One-Woman Musical, Joan Crawford and Bette Davis, iconic movie stars who had a legendary feud in their day, find themselves trapped in purgatory... in the same body! Performer Jillann Gabrielle presents an original, one-woman musical comedy featuring 14 songs.

For Teens:

Wednesday, 12/21, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Solar Soirée, Grades 5-8 Learn about the galaxy and enjoy a fun space themed craft at this space age party just for middle schoolers. Advanced registration is required.

For Kids:

Wednesday, 12/21, 3:30-4:30 p.m. T-Rexplorers, Ages 4-10. Get up close and personal with authentic dinosaur bones in this hands-on interactive dinosaur show! Best for ages 4 and up. Advanced registration is required.

Jillann Gabrielle as Bette Davis



JILLANN GABRIELLE AS JOAN CRAWFORD

Village Department News

Police Department

Online shopping for the holidays can be convenient and fun, but it comes with some dangers as well. The Police Department wants to remind online shoppers that in 2021, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) recorded nearly 850,000 complaints of online theft incidents involving a total of \$6.9 billion in losses to individuals and businesses around the globe. More and more common are complaints that goods purchased online are never received, or stolen shortly after they are delivered. For additional online shopping safety tips click [here](#) for information from the US Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency.



Quick Tips to Avoid Package Theft:

- Opt for curbside pickup at a local store or have packages delivered to your workplace.
- Install security cameras near delivery areas.
- Reroute or reschedule deliveries to fit your schedule when you will be home to receive them.
- Ask a neighbor to keep an eye out for deliveries (and offer them the same courtesy).
- Add delivery instructions to your order, to place them somewhere more discreet.

Quick Tips to Avoid Online Shopping Fraud:

- Deal with reputable online retailers and beware of deals that are too good to be true.
- Don't browse or shop using public Wi-Fi connections.
- Use strong passwords and do not duplicate passwords for multiple accounts.
- Avoid using debit cards to shop online. Credit cards are safer and do not have direct access to cash in your account.
- Don't fall for email scams. Always verify the actual email address of the sender.

Contact River Forest Police Crime Prevention Officer Ben Ransom at (708) 366-7125 or bransom@vrf.us for additional information or safety tips.

Public Works

Leaf Collection Ends December 9

The last day for the Village's annual Fall Leaf Collection Program will be Friday, December 9. Please remember to rake only leaves onto the street by 7 a.m. on your collection day, leaving the curb exposed, where Village crews will collect them. Grass clippings, brush or any other type of yard waste mixed with your leaves will not be collected. Learn more [here](#).

Watersmart

Join more than 400 of your neighbors that have already joined [WaterSmart](#). The Village's online portal makes it easy to access a number of services without ever leaving your home! You can pay utility bills online - including your water bill, thanks to the new WaterSmart Portal. Applications for building permits, service requests, commuter parking payments and more can also be accessed online! To see the full range of online services, click [here](#).

Snow Event Reminders

As winter arrives, residents are reminded of the following regulations to ensure Village streets and sidewalks are passable after snow events, which is especially important in the case of an emergency that police or fire are responding to:

- Do not park on Village streets for eight hours following a snowfall of two inches or more.
- Residents and business owners must remove snow and ice from sidewalks in front of, and adjacent to their property within 24 hours after a snow event.
- Snow or ice frozen on sidewalks that cannot be removed without injury to the pavement should be treated with an abrasive material, such as sand and salt, until weather permits further clean-up.
- Snow removal using snow blowers is prohibited between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.
- The placement of snow or ice on any Village owned street, alley or sidewalk is prohibited.

Residents are encouraged to deposit snow onto parkways (instead of in the street) to help prevent driveway aprons from being covered as plows pass. The Fire Department asks residents to assist in keeping hydrants clear of snow as well, which makes them easier to locate in emergencies.



Visit vrf.us/Snow for safety tips about gas venting, winter driving, shoveling and snow blowers. Be safe out there when the snow hits this season!

Fire Department

Fire Department Continues Statewide Holiday Safety Program for Holiday Season

As we approach the holiday season, the Fire Department would like to remind residents to be sure and take steps to keep your holiday safe and happy. The Department will once again team up with the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association and neighboring fire departments in the "Keep the Wreath Red" fire safety program. This year, the program kicked off Thanksgiving Day and will run through Saturday January 7, 2023. This fire safety program was designed to alert residents of fires caused by holiday-related decorations. Wreaths that are displayed at firehouses serve as a visual reminder to all area residents to take additional safety precautions during the holiday season, such as not leaving candles burning near anything flammable or leaving them lit when you leave your home, and ensuring that cords for holiday lights are in good shape to avoid potential electrical fires, among others. More safety tips can be found [here](#).

Village Department News

Continued from page 4

During the holiday season, fire departments are asked to hang a holiday wreath containing red lights in a conspicuous spot, easily seen by the public. The wreath in River Forest will be hung at the 400 Park Avenue station, and will be illuminated constantly - and if a fire occurs anywhere in the Village that is directly caused by holiday decorations (trees, lights, cords, candles, burning wrapping paper in fireplaces, etc.), the red bulb(s) will be changed to white bulb(s).

Below are more fire safety tips to "Keep the Wreath Red"

Check all illuminated decorations to make sure they are in good condition. Light strands that have frayed or cracked wires should be thrown away and replaced with New UL approved devices. Outside cords should be approved for exterior use, and inside cords should not be placed under carpets or throw rugs. Power strips should be used inside whenever possible. The Village will have a "used light" bin again this year located on Central Avenue behind Village Hall for all old light strands.



Keep live trees watered frequently! The water level should cover the tree stem by at least two inches and should be checked at least daily. Be aware of the life of your tree. If the needles fall off readily when the tree is shaken, it's time to remove the tree from your home. Always turn off the lights when leaving your home or retiring for the night.

- NEVER use lighted candles on trees and be sure to use extreme caution while using candles.
- Extinguish candles when you leave the room or if you're retiring for the night.
- Use sturdy candle holders that will not tip over easily.
- Keep candlewicks trimmed to keep the flames small.
- During power outages, avoid using candles.
- Use flashlights or battery operated candles.
- Make sure your fireplace is in good working order and have the chimney cleaned regularly.

Christmas wrappings and tree branches should NEVER be burned in your fireplace. Their intense rapid burning can cause a chimney fire, or flames can extend out of the firebox and into your home. Make sure the chimney flue is open before using the fireplace.

As always, check your smoke detectors to ensure they are working. Smoke Alarms that are more than 10 years old should be replaced. New smoke alarms can make great presents for the holidays!

Prepare a Family Escape Plan and post it in a visible place in your home so the entire family and visitors can see. Plan two ways out of every room in your home and designate a family meeting place outside for everyone to meet to ensure everyone can get out safely in the case of a fire.

The wreath at the fire station can help to serve as a reminder to have a fire safe holiday season and help us to, "Keep the Wreath Red!"

For more information, call the Fire Prevention Bureau at (708) 714-3562.

River Forest Sustainability

Sustainable Gift Giving

Environmentally responsible holiday shopping can take many forms. Some people pledge to not purchase Christmas gifts, and instead donate their holiday budgets to families in need. Others set out to buy gifts they know the recipient wants or needs to avoid waste and many will shop at local, small businesses and choose durable, repurposed, easily repairable or upcycled items.

Thoughtful gifts that affirm a commitment to the planet include:

- Bicycles and comfortable hiking shoes to encourage slow transportation and healing walks in nature.
- Solar-powered devices and chargers that support renewable energy.
- Consumable items and foods that won't clutter the home or landfill.
- Services and experiences that don't need to be gift wrapped.
- Donations to environmental charities that are meaningful to the recipient.

Individuals can also consider gifts that encourage loved ones to grow their own fruits, vegetables and herbs or to plant trees in their backyards. Other efforts include gifting flowering plants that support bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Green thumb gifts such as herb planters, wildflower seed packets, garden tools, utility gloves and vegetable-growing instruction books are also popular selections for sustainable gifts.

Reusable gifts make it easy and fun for recipients to be kind to the planet year-round by reducing the dependence on single-use, nonbiodegradable plastic that pollutes the environment and harms aquatic wildlife. Purchase straws made of stainless steel, organic bamboo reusable cutlery, silicone muffin tins; water bottles and insulated containers made of stainless steel or glass. Food bags, wraps and bowl covers made of beeswax, silicone, cotton or canvas also help with sustainability efforts, in addition to zero-waste shampoo, conditioner and body wash bars.

Eliminating wrapping paper, bows, and ribbons from the holiday equation is a great zero-waste lifestyle choice! Gifts can just as easily be wrapped in fabric, scarves and cloth napkins, or presented inside a reusable gift bag. Another alternative is to use wrapping materials and greeting cards that are biodegradable. Avoid papers with plastic glitter, foil and other decorations that may contain non-biodegradable, petroleum-based elements. When recycling, remember to remove tape, bows and ribbons.

Even utilizing one of the many suggestions above is a step in the right direction to protect our environment!

Organizations Serving River Forest



Township

Many Township services and programs are returning to meeting in-person. To learn more, visit [RiverForestTownship.org](https://www.riverforesttownship.org), the River Forest community calendar at [rfhappenings.com](https://www.rfhappenings.com), or email Supervisor Carla Sloan at supervisor@riverforesttownship.org.

LOSS support group now meeting in-person, Every Third Monday from 6-8 p.m. at River Forest Township, 8020 Madison Street, RF. Next meeting is December 19.

A monthly support group is re-starting in-person for adults (18+) who are suffering the loss of a loved one to suicide. The group is run by LOSS (Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide) and is led by a licensed clinical social worker. LOSS is a completely non-denominational program, presented by Catholic Charities.

All are welcome to attend. Please call (312) 655-7283 or visit [catholiccharities.net/loss](https://www.catholiccharities.net/loss) for more information or to register.



From the Township Assessor...

2nd Installment Property Tax Bills Due December 30, 2022

The 2021 Second Installment Property Tax Bills payable in 2022 have been posted to the Cook County Treasurer's Office website at [cookcountytreasurer.com](https://www.cookcountytreasurer.com). Taxpayers have the ability to view, pay and print out a copy of their property tax bills. Be sure to check to ensure exemptions you are entitled to are listed on your tax bill. If you are missing an exemption, please contact the Assessor's Office, where you can receive assistance with correcting tax bills. Email assessor@riverforesttownship.org or call (708) 366-2787.

Board of Review Open for 2022 Assessment Appeals

The Board of Review is now open for appeals until December 27, 2022. The River Forest Township Assessor's office is available to assist residential taxpayers with their appeals. If you have received a positive appeal result in the past two years, it may not be necessary to appeal. If you would like an appeal packet, please call the office at (708) 366-2787.

Stay informed on your property by signing up today for notifications, [here](#).

[riverforesttownship.org](https://www.riverforesttownship.org) - 708-366-2029 x11

Park District

Visit the Trees at Memorial Park

Last night, the Park District hosted the annual Tree Trimming event at Memorial Park at Lake and Lathrop. The trees will be lighted through New Year's Day.



[rfparks.com](https://www.rfparks.com) | 708-366-6660

Library

Phase 1 of Construction has Begun

The first phase of the Library's air handler project has begun with the construction of an exterior masonry enclosure, which is designed to match the façade. This enclosure will house the Library's new air handling equipment, which will be installed this spring. Construction of the enclosure will take approximately six weeks and will not affect library services. The machinery will arrive and be installed in spring, and the first phase of the room renovation will begin at that time. Stay tuned for updates on this exciting development!

Sarah's Inn Holiday Gift Project

Celebrate the season by supporting Sarah's Inn Holiday Gift Project donation drive. Please donate new and unwrapped toys and books. The Library will accept donations until Monday, December 5. Read more about the program at <https://sarahsinn.org/> and get gift suggestions.

[riverforestlibrary.org](https://www.riverforestlibrary.org) | 708-366-5205

Organizations Serving River Forest



Oak Park and River Forest High School



Roosevelt Middle School



Willard Elementary School



Lincoln Elementary School

District 200

District Considers Next Phase of Capital Investments

Over the summer, Oak Park and River Forest (OPRF) High School completed the majority of Imagine OPRF Project 1, the first phase of the district's five-phase long-term capital projects plan. These are the most significant renovations to the campus since the late 1960s, and will include adding a two-story Student Resource Center, 15 classrooms, eight all-gender washrooms, and an ADA-compliant elevator - as well as the renovation for 65 existing classrooms.

The School Board is now considering the next phase of construction, Project 2. Project 2 focuses on replacing the Physical Education wing at the southeast corner of the building and includes:

- A 25-yard x 40-yard pool to replace the two current pools, which were built in 1928 and have exhausted their useful life.
- A balcony for pool spectators.
- Boys locker rooms to replace current locker rooms, which have a host of issues (poor ventilation, plumbing problems, inadequate toilet space, etc.).
- All-gender locker rooms for gender non-conforming students.
- An elevator that complies with accessibility requirements (currently there is no elevator at this end of the building).
- A multi-purpose/dance gym to replace the current studio.
- Larger, flexible, multi-use gyms to replace small, limited use gyms.
- An expanded treatment room for athletic trainers to address inadequate space issues.
- Improvements to the performing arts green room, which is insufficient to meet student needs.
- PE classrooms, athletics offices, and a conference room to replace the ones removed during demolition.

At its October 27, 2022, meeting, the Board of Education got its first look at a detailed schematic design and price estimate for Project 2, which is projected to cost approximately \$99.5 million. The next step is for the Board to provide feedback on the scope of the project. Then over the next several months, the Board, as well as the district's Community Finance Committee, will need to examine various options for funding Project 2 and whether to move forward with Project 2.

For more information, an FAQ about Project 2 is available by clicking [here](#). The October 27 Board presentation, which includes floor plans, is available by clicking [here](#).



oprfs.org | 708-383-0700

District 90

District 90 Requests Community Feedback on Kindergarten Program

District 90 recently started to review the Kindergarten program to ensure that the curriculum aligns with broader instructional programming and provides all students with a strong academic foundation. To support this effort, the school district is conducting a survey to garner feedback from stakeholders across the school community regarding perceptions on the Kindergarten program model and if it meets the needs of students and families.

Please consider participating in this survey by visiting this link. Or, you can access the survey at the QR Code below. The survey can be taken on any wi-fi connected device, including a mobile phone, iPad, or laptop/desktop computer. Computers are also available at the River Forest Public Library. Individuals who do not have access to wi-fi enabled devices may contact the D90 office at (708) 771-8282 to arrange a time to take the survey in person. The survey closes at 5 p.m. on Monday, December 19, 2022.



District 90 is also holding a Town Hall Forum on December 6, 2022, at 7 p.m. in the Roosevelt Auditorium. Held in concert with the Committee of the Whole meeting, the Town Hall Forum represents an additional way to garner feedback from community members about their perceptions of the District 90 Kindergarten program. Please consider participating in both the Kindergarten Program Survey and the Town Hall Forum.



District 90's Winter Break

District 90's Administrative Office and schools are closed for Winter Break from Thursday, December 22, 2022, through Monday, January 2, 2023. The Administrative Office reopens on Tuesday, January 3, 2023, with holiday hours from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Classes and the regular office schedule resumes on Thursday, January 5, 2023. Happy Holidays!

district90.org | 708-771-8282

Year in Review: 2022

During the Summer, the Village turned its focus to several sustainability initiatives. In June, Village President Cathy Adduci joined Oak Park Village President Vicki Scaman and Broadview Mayor Katrina Thompson to launch the **Cross Community Climate Collaborative**, or C4. The goal of C4 is to share sustainability strategies across municipalities and reduce current greenhouse gas emissions by 45% through 2030. Thirteen communities have signed on with the group since it was founded.

Also over the summer, the Village Board adopted two ordinances that were recommended by the Village's Sustainability Commission. The first requires restaurants and food-serving establishments to only hand out single use foodware upon request. River Forest joined Chicago as the only area communities to implement a similar ordinance. The Village also received the **SolSmart Silver designation** from the U.S. Department of Energy as the result of a new ordinance that permits rooftop solar panels in all zoning districts. River Forest is one of only 14 Illinois communities that has received this designation.



In September, Village President Adduci was sworn in as President of the Illinois Municipal League (IML). This organization represents nearly 1,300 villages and towns across the state, and is an influential organization in advocating for local government in the State capitol.

This year, River Forest Girls Softball added two more state championships to its trophy case. The 10U and 14U teams both won, making it the first dual championship in River Forest Little League history. Both teams were honored at a Village Board meeting in September.

In October, The Village Board voted to implement **several temporary traffic control measures** in the northeast section of the Village. This action followed several months of studies and community feedback. The Board recognized growing safety issues in the area, and Village staff began installing the barriers in November. The Board has also authorized a Village-wide traffic study to evaluate safety concerns in the rest of the town.

Government taxing bodies are required to approve their tax levies by December 31 each year. Below is a sampling of estimated tax levy increases introduced by local taxing districts.

Taxing Body	Estimated 2022 Tax Year Levy Increase
Village of River Forest	4%
River Forest Park District	5%
District 90	5.8%
District 200	3.96%
River Forest Library	4.9%
Cook County	0.4%



Follow the Village on Social Media



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River Forest Events



Village Contact Information

Village Administration
708-714-3520

Village Administrator
Brian Murphy

Finance Department
708-714-3524

Director Rosemary McAdams

Fire Department
708-714-3560
Chief Tom Gaertner

Public Works and Development Services
708-714-3551
Director Jeff Loster

Police Department
708-714-3540
Chief James O'Shea

Emergency Services
Dial 911

400 Park Avenue River Forest, IL 60305
708-366-8500
708-366-3702 (fax)
Monday 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tuesday- Friday 8a.m. – 4:30 p.m.