

RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

The Village of River Forest Newsletter | January, 2025



Community Engagement Moving Forward

In the spring of 2024, the Village made the promise to create stronger engagement opportunities for residents to bring their thoughts and ideas directly to the Village. Throughout 2024, these included the new “Casual Conversations with the Village President” events, which began in the spring and have been held quarterly, along with Neighborhood Dialogues that started in the fall and were hosted by residents in their homes. Both initiatives were designed to be held in informal settings so questions from residents could be answered directly by Village representatives – and both will continue in similar formats in 2025, based on their success.

Coming in 2025 - New Initiatives to Expand Upon This Positive Momentum

- ◆ Business community members will be invited to share their ideas and provide feedback on how to improve processes, to ensure River Forest is a business-friendly community.
- ◆ Community surveys will be launched to invite input from residents to help guide Village leadership on future development opportunities in key commercial corridors.

To sum it up, there will be more listening by the Village, more informal conversations and new initiatives planned to ensure our residents and business community members know their input and feedback is valuable, for the good of River Forest moving forward.

In This Issue

- Village President.....2
- Village Board of Trustees. .2
- Front Desk FAQ's3
- RF Team Member3
- Village Year in Review ...4
- The More you Know4
- Boards & Commissions ...5
- Sustainability.....5
- Local Organizations6
- Local Happenings.....7
- Village Contacts.....7



From Village President Cathy Adduci

Dear River Forest residents,

Happy New Year! Now is the perfect time to set new goals and resolutions for 2025. One of those can be to become more sustainable in your everyday life, which can include signing up for the Village’s **Community Solar** program or **Curbside Composting**. For other ideas, view the Village’s Guide to Sustainable Living to help you make other environmentally friendly choices.

At the January 13, 2025, Village Board meeting, there will be a discussion and presentation to recap the fall’s Neighborhood Dialogue series, an initiative facilitated by strategic communications firm Jasculca, Terman & Associates. The goal of the series was to gather input and feedback from residents on overall quality of life, including potential economic development, parking, traffic and Village communications. The Neighborhood Dialogues, in addition to the quarterly Casual Conversations with the Village President, are both meant to encourage stronger engagement between residents and the Village, and I have been thrilled with the success of these events.

That is why I commit to continuing and growing our community engagement in 2025. These exchanges of ideas will include conversations with business owners. These events will be paired with our continued newsletter promotion. In 2024, we sent out 77 E-newsletters to our subscribers, totaling 267,124 emails sent. Thanks to our attentive and involved community, 166,303 emails were opened.

Speaking of other goals for 2025, the Village is intent on pursuing a resolution at the Lake and Lathrop property that would allow for a development that benefits our community. In addition, the Village will be seeking input from our residents about different development opportunities on the Village-owned property on Madison Street. Stay tuned for updates in future Village communications.

I wish you and your family a wonderful new year ahead!

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

[Contact the Village Board](#)

Front Desk FAQs

Answers to the most recent, frequently asked questions from community members.

Question: Will my waste collection/pickup service be delayed due to any of the holidays?

Answer: Yes, if a holiday falls on or before your regular pick-up day, your service will be delayed by one day. This applies to New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Question: Are there any holidays when waste collection services stay the same in winter?

Answer: Yes! Your waste collection/pickup will take place as usual on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, and St. Patrick's Day over the next few months.

Question: How often is compost picked up in the winter?

Answer: Compost is picked up every other week on Tuesdays during the winter months. The dates over the next few months are January 14 and 28, February 11 and 25, and March 11 and 25, 2025.



RF Team Member Spotlight

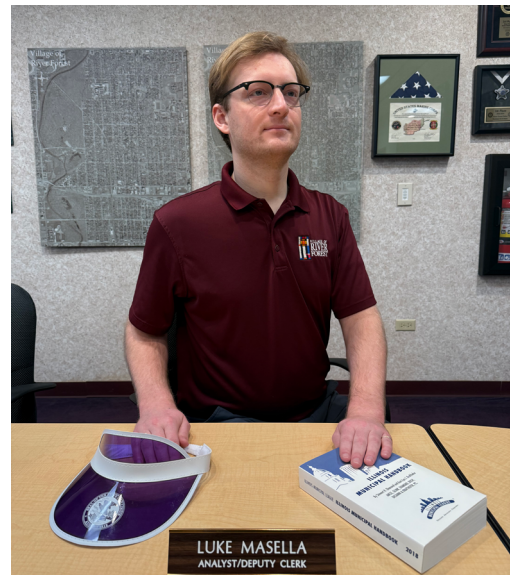
Learn more about Village team member, Luke Masella through a Q&A.

What is your job title and what services do you provide for the Village? My full title is Deputy Village Clerk/Management Analyst. Long story short, I am involved with services and activities from all Village departments. I am the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer for the Village, which means I am responsible for receiving and responding to requests for public records - so this is one of my most public-facing job responsibilities. I am also the staff liaison for the Village's Historic Preservation Commission (which meets once a month, as needed). I really enjoy this part of my job, because the historic nature of many of the Village's homes is a key characteristic of River Forest. As the Deputy Clerk, I maintain the Village's records, such as taking and recording meeting minutes, in addition to cataloguing ordinances, proclamations and resolutions.

What's one song or artist that you're embarrassed to admit you like?
"Then He Kissed Me" by The Crystals.

If you could only have three apps on your phone, which would you pick?
Reddit, Uber and Snapchat.

If salary weren't a factor, what job would you want to have? The Mayor.



Village Departments in Action

So much goes on behind the scenes as Village employees deliver services to the community.

Fire Department CPR

Since 2022, the Fire Department has made great strides to increase participation in certified CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) education throughout the community. Due to this dedication to such important education, the Department has seen an increase of 245% more participation in CPR classes compared to 2022. The Department believes these numbers will only grow with new state legislation that mandates CPR training for schools in the state. A mission of the Department moving forward is to reach a 15% education rate of River Forest's population through either providing a certified CPR class or an informal "Hands-Only" CPR class. There are approximately 300 trained civilians with certified CPR training provided throughout the Village thanks to the efforts of the American Heart Association Certified Trainers who serve with our Fire Department.

For more information on life-saving trainings provided by the Fire Department, click [here](#).



River Forest Data: Year in Review

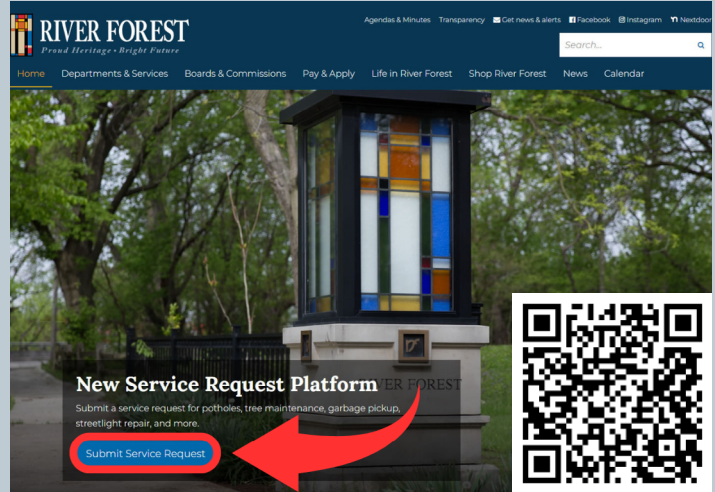
In 2024, the Village was hard at work providing many public services the community relies on; below are a few highlights from throughout the year!

- ◆ 1,153 tons of materials were diverted from landfills – representing a 35.77% Village waste diversion rate.
- ◆ 2,224 miles of streets were swept, equal to each block in town being swept 31 times. This represents (approximately) the distance between River Forest and San Francisco!
- ◆ 132 sidewalk ramps were reconstructed and brought into ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance.
- ◆ 11% of Village streets were repaved, using more than 7,100 tons of asphalt.
- ◆ 115 community events were attended by the River Forest Police Department.
- ◆ There was a 245% increase in participation for CPR training offered by the Fire Department (more on page 3).
- ◆ Police officers spent 7,573 hours in training for community policing, crisis intervention, use of force and emergency medical care.
- ◆ The Building Department issued 283 permits in 2024, a 12% increase over last year – a good indicator of dynamic growth and investment in our community!

The Village will continue to share this meaningful data with the community, which helps to develop a greater understanding of the vast array of services provided by the Village of River Forest.

Service Request Portal Off to Popular Start

The Village is thrilled with the success of its new Service Request Portal, which launched in September of 2024. Over the last three months, residents have submitted 132 service requests with the vast majority of requests (126!) directed to the Public Works Department. Some of the requests have related to tree trimming, pothole repairs and sidewalk maintenance. Residents can track their service requests by logging in to the system, or can submit inquiries anonymously. Click [here](#) or use the QR code on the image below to access the easy-to-use portal.



The More You Know – River Forest Park District

To help community members understand what services are provided by the different organizations that serve the public, this new section will highlight how the public library, park district, township and school districts enrich the lives of our residents. While these agencies operate independently from the Village, the common goal is to work together to build an even stronger and more connected community. You can learn more about the River Forest Park District in this edition.

The Park District offers diverse recreational programs, events, and facilities for residents. The Park District has its own **electd board** that meets on the second Monday of each month. The organization manages and maintains **several properties** within the Village, including Keystone Park, Priory Park, Constitution Park, Centennial Park, Memorial Parkway, Washington Square Park and Washington Commons Park. Its offices are in The Depot, sharing a building with the River Forest METRA station. A wide range of **programs** are available for residents, and you can explore and register for them **online**. Learn more about what the Park District offers and get involved!



Board, Commissions & Committees Updates

2025 Schedule

The Village's 2025 Meeting Calendar for all boards, commissions and committees is now available online [here](#). There you can view agendas for upcoming meetings, which include topics that are planned for discussion – and are posted at least two days before any meeting is held. The [calendar](#) also provides access to past meeting minutes and recordings for residents that want to review past discussions and any actions taken. All meetings are held in the Community Room on the first floor at Village Hall at 400 Park Avenue, unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **Village Board** - Meets on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ **Economic Development Commission** - 1st Wednesday of Each month at 6:00 p.m.
- ◆ **Sustainability Commission** - 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ **Development Review Board** - 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Zoning Board of Appeals** - 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ **Historic Preservation Commission** - 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ **Traffic & Safety Commission** - 3rd Wednesday of every other month, starting with January at 7:00 p.m.

Other Village Commissions meet as needed including the Plan Commission, Ethics Commission and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group. Agendas for these meetings will also be posted on the Agendas & Minutes calendar.

Want to Get Involved?

Volunteer to Serve
on a Village Committee



Scan the QR Code
to Learn More

Village Starts to “Electrify” Fleet

On December 16, the Village Board approved the purchase of the Village vehicle fleet's first electric vehicle. The 2025 Chevy Blazer will be assigned to the Police Department for use in tactical missions and for investigative surveillance. This investment moves River Forest one step closer to receiving a designation as an Electric Vehicle Ready Gold Community. To achieve this designation, the Village has updated its zoning code, installed a public charging station and upgraded its permit review process in recent years. Oak Park is currently the only Illinois municipality that has received the Gold designation from the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. River Forest is looking forward to joining this exclusive group, which supports the continual emphasis on sustainability throughout the community.

Sustainability

2024 Sustainability Year in Review

The Sustainability Commission would like to recognize several of the actions taken by the Village in 2024 to help the community be more environmentally friendly.

The Village partnered with the University of Illinois at Chicago. Through this partnership, Master of Urban Planning & Policy graduate students developed two Climate Action Plans for River Forest. Village officials and staff worked collaboratively to provide input and feedback on the recommendations given, covering the natural environment, land use, transportation, resilience, resource management, buildings and energy, and community engagement. The Sustainability Commission developed a survey to gather community input on these recommendations, which can be found [here](#).

The Village made several sustainable commitments for its facilities. Through grants and rebates, a complete conversion to LED lighting at Village Hall took place, at no cost, and will result in a 78% energy reduction and \$88,000 in energy and maintenance savings over 20 years. Additionally, all Village's diesel machinery and equipment have been converted to cleaner running biodiesel, and the Village's water pumping station and street lighting is now the anchor tenant of a community solar farm - resulting in a 10% savings for the supply portion of the Village's electricity bills. This initiative will result in an estimated \$180,000 in savings over the life of the 20-year contract. Residents can participate in community solar and earn the same savings on electricity bills. Learn more [here](#).



The Village's forestry program saw 122 new trees planted in parkways over the last year. Additionally, the Village received a USDA Forest Service grant through the Morton Arboretum, which covered the cost to treat all parkway Ash Trees for Emerald Ash Borer, further helping preserve the community tree canopy.

The Sustainability Commission has much to look forward to in 2025, including the continued implementation of UIC Climate Plan recommendations and the expansion of public EV charging stations, thanks to an IEPA EV Charging Infrastructure Grant.

Organizations Serving River Forest

Township

To learn more about Township programs and services, click [here](#), visit the River Forest [Community Calendar](#), or email [Supervisor John Becvar](#).



- ★ **FRED Parent Group:** a free, peer support group for parents/caregivers of children, teens and young adults with mental illness offered on Tuesdays (1/7 and 1/21).
- ★ **Nonprofit Grant Applications:** due January 15 for qualified non-profit organizations serving Mental Health, Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities, Youth & Family Services and Intergenerational programming.
- ★ **Senior Programs:** Pickleball class, Mahjong, Zumba and Medicare counseling. Click [here](#) for dates and times.

Township Assessor

First Installment Tax Bills Due in 2025 Available Online

The 2024 Tax Year First Installment due date will be Tuesday, March 4, 2025.

You can now view your first installment tax bill online. This Installment bill is an estimate that amounts to 55% of the previous year's total tax. Exemptions are only reflected on the 2nd installment tax bill with an estimated due date of August 1. View and pay your First Installment bill online through the Cook County Treasurer's website or download a pdf of your bill and take it to any Chase Bank location to pay in person. <https://cookcountytreasurer.com>

riverforesttownship.org - 708-366-2029 x11

Library



Visit the New Library Website!

You can view the digital version of the Library's Bookplate newsletter [here](#), which is also mailed to all River Forest residences. Visit the Library's [Calendar](#) to see events and activities planned for residents of all ages. Highlights include:

- ★ **Chair Yoga, Adult**
- ★ **Classical Guitar Concert with Neal Alger, Adult**
- ★ **Mocktail Party: A Non-Alcoholic Cocktail Demo & Tasting, Adult**
- ★ **Community Blood Drive: January 18 in Library Meeting Room, Adult**

**[Registration for the Blood Drive](#) is encouraged but walk-ins are welcome.



riverforestlibrary.org | 708-366-5205

Park District



Discover exciting Winter and Spring events for the whole family in the **Park District's Winter/Spring Fun Guide**. The guide includes more than 20 pages of activities, from STEM Lego sessions for kids to Adult Platform Tennis. Registration is now open for both residents and non-residents. Winter programs start on January 6! Don't miss out—[click here to register](#) and secure your spot today.

rfparks.com | 708-366-6660

District 90



River Forest District 90 classes will resume after winter break on Tuesday, January 7th. Please also note that schools will be closed on Monday, January 20, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. For the latest updates on School District events, including PTO meetings and parent-teacher conferences, please visit the River Forest D90 Calendar [here](#).



district90.org | 708-771-8282

District 200



Local Partners Support High School Students with Special Needs

Preparing students with disabilities for life after Oak Park River Forest High School is more than just a school-based effort. Local businesses play a critical role by employing more than 40 Huskies in the Special Education division's Community Integration Transition Education, or CITE program.



Pictured Above: Eddie a District 200 CITE program participant

If you want to learn more about this program and join the 40 local businesses currently employing CITE students as paid workers or volunteers, contact Brian Dubina, the OPRF pre-vocational education coordinator, at bdubina@oprffhs.org.

oprffhs.org | 708-383-0700



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River Forest Events



Village Contact Information

Village Administration
708-714-3563

Village Administrator
Matt Walsh

Finance Department
708-714-3524

Director Rosemary McAdams

Fire Department
708-714-3560
Chief Tom Gaertner

Public Works
708-714-3551

Director Jack Bielak

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.