

HAWTHORN WOODS HAPPENINGS



Spring

2022

Issue 1



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Did You Know...

Our Meadowlark Park and Arboretum, 188 Meadowlark Drive, boasts a 2.5-acre pollinator meadow habitat (pictured above) comprised of four distinct Illinois historical native prairies: Native Wildflower, Low Meadow Pollinator, Wet-Mesic Prairie with Forbs, and Wet-Prairie with Forbs. Come check it out!



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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

We are all looking forward to the return of spring and getting back outside to enjoy warmer weather over the next few months. We are planning a full outdoor season of fun, beginning with our Bark in the Park special event on Saturday, April 9, in Community Park that is fun for dogs... and the whole family! We are also planning a family dance in the barn this spring, and will bring back to life the reminiscent barn dances that were popular back when Hawthorn Woods was just becoming a municipality.

We are busy planning our Aquatic Season, our Concerts in the Park each Friday evening, and I am happy to introduce to you a NEW EVENT this year. On Saturday, September 24, we will be expanding our traditional Fall Family Fun Fest and growing the event into a hometown celebration called Party in the Park. The event will relocate to Community Park to accommodate an evening of music, food, and games. As the sun sets, the Party in the Park will feature adult libations and late-night music and dancing. We can't wait to share plans as the event date draws closer.

I wanted to also address a topic coming up this summer that will be important to all residents as the Village will ask voters to consider a referendum question that, if successful, would create a funding source for road maintenance for our Village streets. Our plan will eliminate the vehicle sticker program and replace it with a rate levy increase to fund road maintenance, repair, and replacement. The Village Board has a unique window of opportunity in 2022, as our last street funding program that was implemented 20 years ago, is now expiring and in its last year on your tax bill.

With the expiration of the SSA's (Special Service Area) in 2022, and the implementation of replacement funding, we would create a sustainable road funding program for the Village without a significant (if any) increase on most residents' tax bills. Depending on which SSA you are currently enrolled, many residents could actually see a decrease. I hope you will take the time to learn about the referendum question, as this is the only year where we can implement the funding plan at the same time the last road debt is retired, essentially having a neutral effect on your tax bill. We will continue to provide additional information in the weeks ahead, so all residents are informed on this important matter which affects the property values of every resident in town.

I hope you enjoy our upcoming community special events as spring approaches, and find time to get outside and enjoy one of our 25 parks we have ready to explore in town. Please check out our website at www.vhw.org for a printable map of our municipal parks and nature trails.

Make it a healthy spring, and I hope to see you around the Village or at one of our many upcoming special events.

Kind Regards,

Mayor Dominick DiMaggio

June 28, 2022 Road Referendum

Hawthorn Woods Still Working to Pave the Way!

On June 28, 2022, the Village of Hawthorn Woods is planning to place a referendum question on the ballot seeking a replacement funding mechanism for road repairs and maintenance. The Village has a unique opportunity to replace the existing road Special Service Area (SSA) tax rates with a Village-wide \$0.18 dedicated road tax. \$0.18 is equivalent to the average of the combined current road SSA tax rate. Year 2022 is the last year the road SSA taxes will be collected. If the proposed referendum is successful, a more equitable funding program would replace the current SSA road bond.



Hickory Road, Hawthorn Woods

Currently, some residents pay a higher portion of their real estate taxes than others based on their SSA population and location in town. Some residents pay no portion of their real estate taxes for the current SSA because they were not enrolled in the SSA program, as their subdivisions were not part of the Village at the time the SSA's were created. This program will include all properties in the Village based on the assessed valuation of each property. The plan will not borrow in bonding capability, incurring interest. Rather, annual street maintenance projects, as outlined in the engineering plan, will occur as taxes are collected.

Pertinent information regarding Village roads is noted below:

- An independent engineering study performed in 2013 and updated in 2018, indicated that the Village's average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) was 3.9 (Good) in 2013 and decreased to a PCI of 5.0 (Fair) by the 2018 update, illustrating that the roads are significantly deteriorating.
- The study also identified failing pavement, roads without concrete ribbon, and aging metal culverts under our streets.
- Over the next 20 years, all Village roads will need resurfacing or reconstruction. With proper maintenance, the lifespan of a road is 15 to 20 years with our freeze/thaw cycles.
- Currently, some residents pay a higher portion of real estate taxes to current road SSA's and some residents pay no portion.
- Starting in 2023, there will be no more road SSA taxes, as the last road program is expiring. The replacement program would promote more equitable funding for all residents as our municipal roads belong to everyone.

What happens if the referendum is passed?

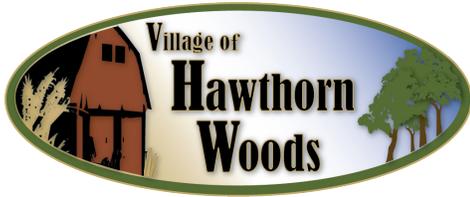
- The referendum is expected to generate \$900,000 annually for Village roads.
- A property with a fair market value of \$500,000, regardless of location within the Village, would pay a road tax of approximately \$290 annually, based on the \$0.18 tax rate, or approximately \$25.00 a month.
- The new road tax would begin in 2023, just as the current road SSA is no longer collected. This would create a neutral effect for most tax bills.
- The plan will eliminate the annual Village vehicle sticker fee charged each year for all vehicles.
- The referendum will include all properties within the Village based on the assessed valuation of each property, creating a more equitable plan for all neighborhoods.

What happens if the referendum is not supported by voters?

- The current Village tax rate does not provide enough income to fund the necessary road repair and maintenance program. With the current tax rate, the Village is unable to undertake the repair and replacement of our roads, currently estimated at \$28 million dollars.
- For every year we delay the program, road conditions worsen and the program expense increases. Pavement on roads will crumble, impacting vehicular traffic and making snow and ice removal difficult. Similar to the Darlington Road collapse, additional culverts will fail, forcing emergency road closures and detours.

Please contact the Village at (847) 438-5500 if you have further questions about the referendum.

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What is Light Pollution?

Light pollution is the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light. As a designated International Dark Sky Community, the Village of Hawthorn Woods is committed to preserving and protecting our night sky from the negative effects of artificial light at night.

However, light pollution is reversible and the residents of Hawthorn Woods can make a difference by following these simple steps:

- Only use lighting when and where it is needed.
- If safety is a concern, install motion detector lights and timers.
- Fully shield all outdoor lighting – light should shine down, not up, to save money and energy.
- Fully shielded fixtures can provide the same level of illumination as unshielded fixtures.
- Turn off indoor lights when not in use to save energy and money.

For more information about light pollution from the International Dark-Sky Association, visit darksky.org.

