

Press Clippings 08/04/21

---Courier-News---08/04/2021

U-46 plans revamp of Larsen parking lot

Project at middle school should include more spaces, zoning officials say

By Gloria Casas



School District U-46 is reconstructing Larsen Middle School's parking lot to improve traffic flow. The district is adding a second entrance that should help with traffic jams around the Dundee Avenue school. Gloria Casas/Courier-News

School District U-46's plan to reconstruct Larsen Middle School's parking lot and create a new access driveway to Hill Avenue got Elgin's Planning and Zoning recommendation with a stipulation the district tries to find a way of creating more parking spaces.

Larsen Middle School, located at 655 Dundee Avenue, has two parking lots at the rear of the campus with a single access point on Jefferson Avenue, Senior Planner Damir Latinovic said. The district would reconstruct the parking lot and create the Hill Avenue driveway that would be a one-way exit to help improve traffic flow, he said.

Commissioner Karin Jones' children went to Larsen. Traffic was always "a nightmare," she said. The additional exit will alleviate some of the issues, but "I don't think there is any school

in District U-46 where everyone is happy with the traffic. It's just the nature of the beast," she said.

The district needs several exceptions to Elgin's zoning codes for the project, Latinovic said. One exception includes having fewer parking spaces than required, he said. Larsen needs to have 95 parking spots but, the reconstruction would reduce that number to 86.

"I can't understand why you are decreasing the parking spaces," Commissioner Nancy Abuali said. "I would hope there's

a way of increasing the parking. There's no parking there when there are events. It's very hard for the community and parents to go watch any events."

A problem with Larsen is the school is landlocked, said Jeff Meindl, project manager at Hampton, Lenzini, and Renwick, the district's civil engineer. The property is surrounded by homes, and an area with a field has a hill that would be difficult to turn into parking spaces, he said. "So, there's really nowhere to go to add more parking," he said.

Commissioner Alejandro Lopez, like Abuali, was concerned about the decreased number of parking stalls. He asked whether reducing the parking stall from 9 feet wide to 8.5 feet wide would be allowed. It could help increase the total number of parking stalls, he said.

Meindl thought it could create four more stalls in the parking lot. But Latinovic said the width of spaces is based on the size of today's cars. The trend today is larger vehicles like pickup trucks, SUVs, and vans, he said. However, the district could decide what direction to take, he said.

The commission voted to recommend U-46's petition to the city council but asked the district take another look at increasing the number of parking spaces.

U-46 is planning the project for 2022, said Jolene Linneman, U-46 construction project coordinator. It gives Larsen Middle School an opportunity to move its bus pickup and drop-off lane from Dundee Avenue, which is being reconstructed in 2024, she said. The lane will be moved to the back of the school, she said.

Gloria Casas is a freelance reporter for the Courier-News.

---WGN-9---08/04/2021

16-year-old killed in Bartlett crash

BARTLETT, Ill. — A 16-year-old boy was killed in a crash in Bartlett, according to police.

The accident happened just after 9 p.m. Tuesday on Devon Avenue and Newport Blvd.

The medical examiner has identified the teen as Alex Czerwik. Police have not released further details on the cause of the accident.

A police investigation is underway.

The Examiner of BARTLETT

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"IF I WERE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER OR A NEWSPAPER WITHOUT A GOVERNMENT, I WOULD NOT HESITATE TO CHOOSE THE LATTER." THOMAS JEFFERSON

75 cents
August 4, 2021



Local business
given BEDA funds
See Page 5

Guest Seat:
Dis(al)arming
See Page 7

Park District receives 'short end' of U-46 deal

By Joe Hyland

With District U-46 schools set to re-open on Monday, Aug. 16, the Bartlett Park District is getting set to once again conduct pre- and after-school programs. At least, they were until the district got some bad news from U-46.

The bad news was that the school district would no longer honor its end of two intergovernmental agreements (IGA) it had with the park district.

One of the agreements, signed in 1990, covers Centennial Elementary. The other, signed in 1993, covers Sycamore Trails and Prairieview elementary schools. Both agreements trade, among other things, property maintenance by park district person-

nel in exchange for use of the gyms at the schools.

"During the last couple of months we have continued to do maintenance at the schools," said Superintendent of Recreation Kim Dasbach. "Not having this space would have an extremely large impact on the programming we do for the community."

Dasbach said in a written report that the district submits a request annually for the use of the gyms. This year, the request was denied as the school district now labels such things as outside/external rentals which it is not approving. She added in the report that the school district was awaiting additional guidance which may re-

solve the issue. That, however, does not obviate more immediate concerns.

"If they continue to be denied that could impact our biggest indoor seasons," Dasbach said. "They said they would give us information as soon as possible."

Commissioners, needless to say, were less than thrilled at the turn of events.

"We're getting kind of the short end of the deal," Commissioner Diana Gunsteen said.

Executive Director Rita Fletcher said staff was glad to have board input,

"I wanted to see how far you guys wanted to go and how far you wanted us to push it," Fletcher said.

"Roughly how much time are we

putting in as to the maintenance?" Commissioner Lori Palmer asked.

"We haven't stopped," said Superintendent of Parks and Planning Kelly O'Brien, noting that the work involves mowing, mulching and similar tasks.

Commissioner Ted Lewis observed that this was done even during the pandemic.

"During the last year, we haven't used the schools," Lewis said.

"We followed up our part of the agreement," Commissioner Dale Ann Kasuba added.

Gunsteen agreed.

"It can't be a one-sided agreement," Gunsteen said, suggesting that legal action should be undertaken if necessary.

Village Board approves streets project resolution

By Seth Hancock

The Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution regarding the 2021 streets resurfacing project at its meeting on Tuesday, July 20.

The cost of the project is \$1.4 million, over \$400,000 under budget, with Arrow Road Construction Company of Elk Grove Village. A notice of bidders went out in early July in the Illinois Department of Transportation's contractor's bulletin, and seven bids were submitted.

"The bids ranged from \$1,394,309.34 to \$1,586,541.90 with Arrow Road Construction Co. being the lowest bidder," wrote Nick Talarico, civil engineer, in a memo. "The village had budgeted \$1,810,500.00 for this fiscal year's resurfacing project."

Talarico added: "The work shall consist of pavement removal, HMA surface removal, HMA pavement patching, leveling binder and HMA surface course, drainage structure adjustments, sidewalk/curb and gutter/driveway removal and replacement, pavement marking, driveway culvert removal and replacement,

grading and shaping ditches and landscape restoration."

The notice of bidders stated the "project is located on various streets within the Village of Bartlett."

The streets department's page on the village's website notes that some streets fall under township, county and state jurisdiction.

"Streets is the largest division in the Public Works Department," the webpage states. "Streets staff are responsible for maintaining the Village right-of-way's and most other Village properties, including the cemetery and commuter parking lots. Some street maintenance activities include street patching and paving, snow plowing and salting, parkway tree trimming, street light maintenance and installation, roadway sign installation, tree planting, street sweeping, grass and weed cutting, street striping, landscaping, 'JULIE' underground locating, maintenance of the storm sewer system, ponds, creeks, and rivers. Less visible activities include vehicle and equipment maintenance, sidewalk, bike path, and curb repairs, as well as subdivision inspections."

New truck purchase approved via board vote

By Seth Hancock

The Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved, by a 6-0 vote, of the purchase of a new public works vehicle at its meeting on Tuesday, July 20.

The purchase is a 2022 Ford F-250 pickup truck from Currie Motors in Frankfort. The cost is \$29,096 which was obtained through a suburban purchasing cooperative.

"This vehicle would be purchased as part of the Streets Division Capital Outlay Budget," wrote Dan Dinges, director of public works, in a memo. "The price includes start up service and freight, delivered to the (Public Works) Facility. Additional pricing also includes plow assembly and additional strobe lighting and typical upfits."

The truck will replace a vehicle that

exceeds its lifespan under the village's vehicle evaluation system.

"The vehicle will be delivered at the total cost of \$29,026 after discounted adjustments," Dinges wrote. "FY 2021-2022 budget provides \$35,000 for the purchase of a new 2022 Ford Pickup that replaces the 2006 Ford pickup, that has over 83,000 miles and an evaluation rating of 33 (anything over 28 is a high priority replacement)."

Also unanimously approved was a bill list totaling \$1.8 million, with the water fund's \$1.4 million making up the largest share followed by the general (\$206,048) and sewer (\$100,847) funds. The largest bills were \$822,349 to Gerardi Sewer and Water Company for a water main replacement project and \$505,951 to the DuPage Water Commission for the May water bill.



Missing person, Lisa M. Raska.



Last seen photo of Raska.

(Courtesy photos)

Police seek help locating missing person

The Bartlett Police Department is seeking the public's assistance during a missing person investigation in locating 58-year-old Lisa M. Raska. Raska was last seen in the area of Hale Avenue and North Avenue after she left her residence on foot on Friday, July 30, at approximately 7 p.m. She is 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighs 130

pounds, with brown hair in a ponytail and brown eyes. She was last seen carrying a blue plastic cup and wearing a black colored T-shirt, gray colored shorts and flip flop sandals.

Anyone with information about her whereabouts is asked to call 911 or the Bartlett Police Department at 837-0846.

Police encourage residents to secure vehicles, valuables

According to the Bartlett Police Department, they and other local police departments have experienced an increase in stolen vehicles during the late evening or early morning hours, specifically targeting unlocked vehicles with the keys left inside unattended parked vehicles. Five vehicles were stolen from residences and a business since the beginning of July. Two of the stolen vehicles were later recovered in Chicago and Hoffman Estates. Bartlett police are also investigating several occurrences of burglary to unlocked motor vehicles that occurred since July 20.

The department is asking resi-

dents to please be vigilant in securing their vehicles by making sure the doors are locked and windows are completely up. Police also caution to remove all valuable items, including wallets, purses and electronic devices from vehicles. Also, make sure the key or key fob is not left or hidden inside vehicles.

Police officers are continuing to conduct extra neighborhood patrols and working with other local police departments to investigate the recent occurrences of stolen vehicles and burglaries to motor vehicles. Residents are encouraged to immediately call 9-1-1 to report any suspicious activities in their neighborhoods.

Pet of the Week



Seeking safe and sound home

Elena is an unclaimed stray around 3 years old. She would fit into most any family who treats her like the princess she is and keeps her safe and sound inside. All those interested may get the adoption process started by completing an adoption application at bit.ly/OurAdoptables and a staff member will reach out to schedule a time for a meet and greet. DuPage County Animal Services is also in need of fosters homes. (Photo courtesy of DuPage County Animal Services)



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Fire Dist. Board receives six month financial data

By Seth Hancock
The Bartlett Fire Protection District's Board of Trustees was provided with a financial analysis for the first six months, ending June 30, of the current fiscal year at its meeting on Wednesday, July 21.

Total actual revenues were at \$5.7 million (54 percent of budgeted \$10.6 million) which is up 8 percent from the \$5.2 million collected by the period last year. Operating expenses were at \$5.4 million (56 percent of budgeted \$9.8 million), up 16 percent from \$4.7 million last year, and capital expenditures at \$592,421 (58 percent of budgeted \$1 million), up 219 percent than the \$185,470 spent last year.

Property taxes represented 81 percent of the total revenues at \$4.3 million of the \$8.5 million budgeted. Ambulance/CPR service fees (\$812,561) followed at 14.3 percent.

James Howard, finance director, said that a 2.3 percent Consumer Price Index (CPI), used to determine the property tax levy, was used this year, but a 1.4 percent CPI is projected for the coming levy.

"So, when we levy this November, December it's going to come down some," Howard said.

Inflation has been in the news and

the Federal Reserve is claiming it's "transitory," and Howard said "we're going to continue to monitor that."

Grant revenues have sharply risen this year, a 1,093 percent increase from \$9,823 last year to \$117,159 this year.

"You can see obviously a lot more than what we had last year, so that's always good," Howard said. "For us, that's more of a salary reimbursement for COVID-related expenses."

Personnel costs and benefits represented 69.9 percent of operating costs at \$3.9 million (55 percent of budgeted \$7.2 million) which is up 19 percent from \$3.3 million spent last year. Major capital expenditures included a fire engine note payment (\$305,285), training tower (\$112,820), Station 1 roof replacement (\$86,813), new engine equipment (\$59,458), Station 3 interior painting (\$16,496) and furniture (\$11,050).

The fund balance began at \$3.8 million and dropped to \$3.5 million, which represents 64 percent of reserves.

"Anything greater than 40 percent is showing that you're well with reserves for the future, and right now we're about 64 percent," Howard said.

The district has \$3.2 million in investments and a \$4.5 million letter of credit.

Expense proposals slated for Dist. U-46 board vote

By Seth Hancock
The Board of Education in School District U-46 is prepared to vote on \$5.6 million in expenditure proposals at its upcoming meeting on Monday, Aug. 9.

The items were presented at the July 19 board meeting.

The largest item is a five-year contract renewal, costing \$1.7 million, with Athletico for athletic trainers, coming from the education fund if approved.

"Athletic trainers will be on site at each high school for 40 hours per week per season as well as 100 hours over the course of the summer to meet the needs of athletes when they are at practice, camp, and competitions," the proposal states. "In addition, this contract extends the number of floater trainers from one to two in order to support both home and away competitions and practices that are hosted at multiple locations."

Other contract renewals from the education fund include Northwest Evaluation Association's MAP tests for second through eighth graders (\$241,500), AP exams for high schoolers (\$232,032), PSAT exams for sophomores and juniors (\$80,015), Cognitive Abilities Tests for gifted identification (\$36,040), AAPPL tests for State Seal of

Biliteracy qualification (\$36,000) and Project Lead the Way membership (\$34,600).

Also from education funds, the district is asking for \$125,872 to purchase parts for two distribution center truck replacements and \$58,931 for scoreboard and timing system replacements for Elgin's Larkin High School.

The district is asking for \$1.4 million (operations and maintenance fund) for installing drinking fountains at 14 elementary schools.

From the tort fund, U-46 is seeking \$543,750 for property insurance and \$325,095 for an excess workers' compensation policy.

To be paid by the nation's and state's taxpayers, the district is asking for \$357,500 (Preschool for All Grant) with One Hope United for extended day childcare, \$197,000 (Federal IDEA Grant) for audiology services from Geneva Hearing Services, \$85,000 (IDEA Grant) with Gorbould Behavioral Consulting and \$62,918 and \$58,950 (IDEA Grant) with Richard Van Acker for behavioral consultant services, \$62,918 (CTE Grant) to purchase automotive technology equipment and \$57,430 (Title III and education funds) for LAS Links tests for dual language students.

Restaurant proposal given green light to proceed

By Seth Hancock
The Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved of a proposed new restaurant, Le P'Tit Resto Bar Tapas, at its meeting on Tuesday, July 20.

Approved was a site plan, special use permits and a major design exception. The site of the proposed restaurant, by petitioner Rakesh Chopra, is off of West Railroad Avenue.

"The petitioner is requesting a site plan amendment for a tapas bar and lounge to be located in an existing 1,235 square-foot barn building on the Banbury Fair property," wrote Rober-

ta Grill, planning and development services director, in a memo. "Special use permits are also being requested to allow a restaurant to serve liquor, outdoor seating, live entertainment, and a (planned unit development) to allow two principal buildings on one zoning lot. The petitioner is also requesting a variation to reduce the number of required parking spaces from 16 to 4."

Grill added: "The proposed restaurant would be located in the existing

U-46 mandates mask use as school year looms

By Seth Hancock

Mask mandates are back for all School District U-46 students in the 2021-2022 school year.

The announcement came from Superintendent Tony Sanders in a July 27 message to staff, effectively a week after stating masks would be “strongly encouraged” but optional at secondary schools at a July 19 Board of Education meeting. Sanders already planned forced compliance of masks on elementary students.

However, Sanders said on July 19 that it was “contingent” on what he was told to do by state and federal

agencies, and he cited new Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance in his July 27 message.

"Today the CDC updated their guidance to recommend indoor masking for all teachers, staff and visitors regardless of vaccination status," Sanders wrote. "The Illinois Department of Public Health quickly issued a statement that they will adopt the latest recommendations of the CDC."

“Effective immediately, I am reinstituting the requirement that masks be worn in all schools and departments by employees, students, and visitors – regardless of vaccination status – within

all U-46 buildings. As a reminder, school bus drivers and passengers have been required to wear a mask (unless the driver is alone) since the last guidance of July 9," Sanders added.

This comes as the CDC has pushed conjecture about the delta variant. Of note, the CDC announced on July 21 that it was removing the Emergency Use Authorization status on Dec. 31 for the PCR tests, which has been the standard test used to diagnose COVID-19, because it cannot differentiate between “SARS-CoV-2 and influenza viruses” which makes COVID-19 data unreliable.

A large group of parents, filling two overflow rooms, attended the July 19 board meeting opposing the mandates. One parent, Andrew Bucaro, read directly from a box of medical masks which clearly stated the masks do not protect against viruses.

Another parent, Kori Duncan, raised a study from the University of Florida of masks worn by children at school which found 11 dangerous pathogens on the masks. *The Examiner* found 42 peer-reviewed studies showing masks to be ineffective including one from the CDC in May 2020 that said there's "limited evidence for their effectiveness."

Deer hunting opportunities available on private land

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has announced that it is taking applications from youth firearm deer hunters and youth and adult archery deer hunters for fall 2021 deer hunting on private land through the Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP).

The IDNR has leased 13,365 acres of private land for the fall 2021 deer hunting season through IRAP, creating 323 public access deer hunting sites in 39 counties. Sites are available for the 2021 Youth Firearm Deer Season (Oct. 9 to 11), and for youth and adult archery deer hunting the entire month of October and Dec. 16 to 31, at no cost to participants to access those sites. To apply, a licensed hunter must submit an online application.

To participate as a youth hunter, applicants must have not reached their 18th birthday by the first day of the hunting period and must be accompanied by an adult of at least 21 years of age. Adult archery deer hunters must be at least 18 years of age by the start

of the archery deer period they are applying for. All hunters must have completed a department-approved hunter education course (if born in 1980 or after) and have acquired an Illinois hunting license, habitat stamp and a valid IDNR archery deer hunting permit to hunt at an IRAP site. IRAP archery deer hunting applications must be submitted online by 5 p.m. Aug. 13. Hunters may submit up to three IRAP deer hunting applications per year, one for each IRAP deer hunting period. A lottery drawing will be held when more applications are received than there are sites available.

Applications for IRAP Youth Firearm Deer Hunting sites can be found online at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP/Pages/Youth-Shot-gun-Deer.aspx>.

Applications for IRAP Youth and Adult Deer Hunting sites can be found online at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/IRAP/Pages/Archery->

Deer-Hunting.aspx.

Only successful applicants will be notified by mail approximately three weeks prior to their assigned hunting period, upon which they will receive a map, driving directions, and an IRAP site permit allowing them to hunt on their assigned, privately-owned deer hunting site.

Deer hunting on IRAP leased property is available during the following hunting periods:

- Youth firearm period: Saturday to Monday of Columbus Day weekend, Oct. 9 to 11;
- Youth and adult archery periods: Period 1 is Oct. 1 to 15; Period 2 is Oct. 16

to 31; Period 3 is Dec. 16 to 31.

The IRAP program is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service Voluntary Public Access Habitat Incentive Program. To date, IRAP has leased more than 26,000 acres in 49 counties to provide for various public access opportunities such as turkey, archery deer, youth firearm deer, small game, waterfowl and upland bird hunting, and pond and riverbank fishing. IRAP serves to re-connect families to the outdoors, and to carry on hunting traditions while improving the habitat.

Forest Preserve District to host 'Nighttime Nature' series events

According to the Forest Preserve District of Kane County, for those that wonder what the nocturnal world of the forest preserves looks like, they should come explore it during the district's Nighttime Nature Series!

Join district naturalists for these after-hours programs. First, "Singing Insects" nature program is on Wednesday, Aug. 11, from 7 to 8 p.m. at Hampshire Forest Preserve, located at 44W780 Allen Road, Hampshire. The late summer soundscape is amazingly beautiful and intricate. Venture out to explore the world of nocturnal singing insects! Participants will learn about the calls of some of the more common evening music-makers. Then we'll use our new-found listening skills to get up close and personal with some of the songsters.

Next, is "Secret Life of Bats" on Thursday, Aug. 12, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at LeRoy Oakes Forest Preserve, located at 37W700 Dean St., St. Charles. Kane County is home to many flying creatures, but none is as shrouded in mystery as the bat. Come out to experience nighttime in the forest preserve and

learn about the mammalian winged creatures of the night, and the important niche that bats fill in our local ecosystem. Be prepared to enjoy the acrobatic flight of some of the local bats, as dusk settles over the land.

Advance registration is required for these programs. The registration fee is \$2/ person/program. Register for one, or both! Call 630-444-3190 or email programs@kaneforest.com to register. For more information, or to see a full roster of forest preserve district nature programs, visit www.kaneforest.com. Find the district on social media by searching @forestpreserve.





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