



City Scoop

The City of Collinsville's Semi-Annual Newsletter

Spring 2017

New & Improved Trash Service Coming Soon!

After a 20-year contract for manual trash service, the City is upgrading to automated pick-up on July 10th.

The change is the result of extensive City Council meeting discussions and staff negotiations with Republic Services. The City compared automated trash rates for surrounding communities to determine whether there was financial merit to extending the contract and automating now, or if it would be better to let the contract expire in 2021 and then solicit bids for automation.

The City found that Glen Carbon, who solicited bids in 2016, had the lowest rates

for automated pick-up. After discussion and negotiation, Republic offered the City a 5-year contract extension to automate with no rate increase the first year. It also keeps our rates the lowest in the area (approx. \$1/month lower than Glen Carbon) over the next 9 years. The City Council voted to approve the contract extension on January 23, 2017.

The other key change is individual on-demand bulk trash pick-up. This allows residents to schedule two large item pick-ups per year at their convenience--no more set spring and fall dates. This service is already available!

Other benefits of the contract extension include a 95 gallon trash container provided to residents at no charge, less wear and tear on City streets, the maximum annual rate increase lowered from 5% to 4%, and a stronger bargaining position when the City is required to solicit bids for trash service in 2026.

Republic will provide details by mail on the change to automated service in May and June, including how to request smaller or additional trash containers. Still have questions or want to schedule a bulk pick-up? Call Republic at 618-656-6883.



MAYOR'S CORNER

Spring is a time for growth, and we are seeing that throughout the City. With significant business development happening all over town, the construction of the City's new Water Plant, two new City Council members, and much more, it is a very exciting time for Collinsville!

As we progress through this year, we will continue to see positive changes in our City. Staff is working diligently to improve the City's infrastructure, bring in new businesses, and deliver high quality services, and the City Council is committed to listening to your thoughts and making decisions that will bring you and the City the greatest benefits.

We are continually working to keep you informed on what is happening in our City. As part of that effort, we are excited to bring the City Scoop to your door twice a year to update you on all of the important City news. We welcome your thoughts and appreciate all you do to make our community great!

Code Enforcement

The City is working hard to maintain and strengthen the character, safety, and value of properties in our community. Our primary goal is for voluntary compliance with the City's Codes, including Building, Property Maintenance, and Zoning. This is achieved by responding to citizen concerns, proactively seeking violations, and working to solve problems in a swift and fair manner. The most common summer issues are overgrown yards and unpermitted construction. Priority is given to imminent safety hazards such as dangerous structures or unprotected swimming pools. To report a Code Violation, please call City Hall and choose Option 4.

Be sure to check our Fall issue for details about "Christmas at the Collins House," a new City event that will take place December 2!

Collinsville is Booming!

The City is experiencing unprecedented growth in both residential and commercial developments! In just the first three months of 2017, we've seen a lot happen:

Value of Commercial Construction: \$19,517,701

Value of Residential Construction: \$1,937,793

Total Construction Value: \$21,455,494

These are just a few of the developments we're seeing around town:

AMEREN has rezoned property on Eastport Executive Dr. in preparation for a 40,000 sq. ft. office building.

COLTON'S STEAKHOUSE is now open in Eastport Plaza.

MOTOMART is getting ready to build a 3rd location at the corner of Beltline & Vandalia.

FIREHOUSE SUBS on Beltline opened with the highest sales numbers in company history!

The SIHF Central Collinsville Health Center is open at 1215 Vandalia and offers income-based medical, dental, and behavioral health services.

And there is more in the pipeline showing that Collinsville's small town feel, big city amenities, unrivaled access to the entire region, and development-friendly atmosphere is attracting a lot of attention!

UTILITY TAX REBATES

Utility tax rebates for April 2016 - March 2017 are available for senior, disabled, and low-income residents until May 31, 2017. The rebate is for City taxes on electric and gas service.

In the fall of 2015, the City Council held several Strategic Session meetings with City staff to discuss the City's budget and determined that the Capital Projects Fund was underfunded compared to the amount of infrastructure improvements and equipment upgrades needed.

Utility tax revenues are dedicated to the Capital Projects Fund, so the City considered increasing the utility tax rate from 1.25% (the lowest rate in the area) to 4%, which is still lower than the average rate of 4.42% for surrounding communities. This increase also allows the City to reallocate sales tax from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund to ensure full staffing for the Street Department and to address potential state budget cuts. The City Council passed the Ordinance on January 25, 2016.

City officials were conscious of the burden the increase would put on senior, low income, and disabled residents and wanted to simply not charge them. However, state law does not allow for exclusions. A rebate provision, which is relatively new in Illinois legislation, was written into the Ordinance. City staff is committed to ensuring eligible residents receive the rebate and is available to assist with the application process. The City will continue to investigate ways to automate the application process and make it more convenient for eligible residents. Please call City Hall at 346-5200 with any questions.

Water Plant Construction Underway

After several years of planning, the City broke ground on its new Water Plant on February 22, 2017. The decision to build the new plant began with a 2008 study that examined the City's current facility. The study noted deficiencies with existing wells and distribution storage, and recommended constructing a new facility.

The City Council considered upgrading the existing water plant, but due to the extreme cost and difficulty of upgrading, the Council decided that constructing a new facility was a better long-term investment for the community. The design contract was awarded to Hurst-Rosche in November 2013.

After some setbacks concerning the location of the new plant, the City finalized 9535 Collinsville Rd. as the new location in early 2016 and awarded the construction contract to Korte & Luitjohan in the fall. Construction is expected to be completed by summer 2019.



Meet the New Fire Chief

Collinsville is pleased to welcome our new Fire Chief, Kevin Edmond, who comes to us from Mentor, Ohio. Chief Edmond is committed to community outreach and fire safety and prevention. With the number of fires the department has seen since the Chief's arrival in January (over 300 fire-related calls), we want to remind residents that fire is everyone's fight. If we work together to be more safety-conscious and take some simple steps, we can reduce the number of fires and increase the chances of getting out safely if a fire does occur.



Tests show that you have about two minutes to escape a fire before becoming disoriented by the smoke and toxic gases. One of the best ways to detect fires early and ensure you have time to escape is to have working smoke detectors in every bedroom, outside sleeping areas, and on every level, including the basement. Spring cleaning is a great time to check your smoke detectors and replace the batteries. It's also important to know two ways out of every room in your house and to practice your escape plan.

The Fire Department is always willing to help with any questions related to fire safety, smoke detector installation, or creating an escape plan. Just call 618-346-5022.

Beginning in May, the Street Department will spray and deploy larvicide to control mosquitos for the summer season. Please call 346-5214 with questions or concerns.

Uptown Progress



Since 2015, the Public Works Department has been continually improving Uptown infrastructure. The completed projects include water and sewer main upgrades, Streetscape improvements, a new public parking lot, and water tower painting. To date, they have completed \$5.45 million in infrastructure rehabilitation.

The remaining improvements are set to be completed in 2019 and include completing water and storm water main replacements and street repaving. These anticipated projects represent another \$1.13 million in improvements.

The Uptown improvement projects not only bring the City's infrastructure up-to-date, reducing the number of main breaks and drainage issues, they also make the Uptown area more attractive for both residents and developers.

Liquor Code Updates

On January 23, 2017, the City Council passed amendments to the City's liquor code. The changes focused primarily on aligning the City's code with the liquor codes for the State of Illinois and surrounding communities.

The most noticeable change concerns the weekend closing time, which was 3am. Staff reviewed liquor codes of surrounding communities and found that most closing times were 2am on the weekends. Police Chief Evans expressed concern that Collinsville's later closing time might encourage people to travel here after drinking in nearby communities. City Council meeting discussions on the issue concluded that a 1am closing time would have too negative an impact on business owners, but that a 2am closing time would be consistent with neighboring cities and benefit the community as a whole. Week night closing times are 1am for all license types.

The update also created 2 types of add-on permits that allow certain classifications to hold tasting events (Class N permit) or outdoor special events (Class O permit). Other changes include provisions for State-required BASSET training, prohibition of BYOB establishments, and requiring a valid Business License for approval. The City has also partnered with the Illinois Liquor Control Commission to conduct field compliance inspections, which will increase safety in our community and build the City's relationships with both the State and local business owners.

