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February 2014

Newsletter

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Donald B. Lockhart
 815.568.6559

Ward I	Ward II	Ward III	Ward IV
Steven Mortensen 815.735.0766	Matt Keenum 815.404.4585	Gretchen Samuelson 815.509.4206	Dennis Hammortree 815.568.5577
Michael Smith 815.568.1246	Carole Bartman 815.568.7970	Nicole DeBoer 815.568.0911	Todd Hall 815.568.7273

City Clerk Constance Boxleitner
 815.568.6937

Standing: S. Mortensen, M. Keenum, D. Lockhart, G. Samuelson, D. Hammortree
 Seated: M. Smith, C. Bartman, C. Boxleitner, N. DeBoer, T. Hall

CITY DEPARTMENTS

- Mayor's Office**
815.568.7112
- Administration**
815.568.7112
- Police Department**
815.568.7231
- Public Works & Building Department**
815.568.2669
- Utility Billing**
815.568.7112

FEATURED INSIDE:

- Tollway Work Continues
- New Marengo Radio Station
- Transponder Installations

City Officials meet with Tollway Authority and IDOT ...STH 23 / I-90 Interchange Planning Continues

From a meeting last month, the City received indication that the development of a widened bridge designed to accommodate an interchange seems likely; whether the project evolves into a second phase in which the on and off ramps are constructed at some time in the future remains to be determined. As has been stated before, bridge construction, and the assumed associated lane tapering on STH 23 are still scheduled for 2015.

City officials, the Illinois Tollway Authority and the Illinois Department of Transportation had their first formal sit-down on January 16, 2014 to discuss the development of an I-90 interchange at STH 23 on Marengo's southern edge. The City, through its engineers from H.R. Green and the City Administrator, presented future traffic volume and flow projections, and development plans for the area per the *Southwestern Area Comprehensive Plan* amendment. The traffic study developed by HRG was reviewed and slightly modified by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) prior to its release to the Tollway and IDOT officials.

While the CMAP traffic flow analysis seemed favorable for the immediate construction of the total interchange, the Tollway Authority and IDOT were initially a little more circumspect. It was agreed that the Tollway and IDOT along with the City's engineers would revise the traffic flow and volume numbers, planned out to 2040, and present them to CMAP for final agreement. The traffic analysis is necessary to create a more detailed preliminary design of the interchange, including typical cross-sections.

The technical staffs of the Tollway Authority, IDOT and the City's HRG engineers also are being joined by a traffic engineer from the McHenry County Department of Transportation. (HRG has been under contract with the City since last year to perform these services, and for developing a preliminary interchange design.) The engineers from the various agencies have since been corresponding intermittently to gain final agreement on the traffic numbers. From their conclusions, a progress meeting scheduled for March will help determine parameters for the preliminary bridge and interchange design. Due to the impact on STH 23 within a half mile or so of the assumedly expanded new bridge, the design will also address nearby intersecting roads to the state highway. The City, through H.R.Green, is responsible for producing the interchange design which is scheduled to be presented to

the Tollway Authority and IDOT in May.

This design will ultimately develop cost centers from which the project's share holders can negotiate the cost sharing and timing of development of the interchange through a

Memorandum of Understanding. The meeting(s) to discuss the MoU, would start shortly after a planned May meeting when it is assumed the interchange design proposal will be reviewed and accepted.



The landscape near and at STH 23 and the I-90 Tollway will soon be changing. The Riley and Getty Road bridges of the very Southeastern edge of this photograph will be replaced this year. The Route 23 bridge is scheduled for replacement in 2015.

Attention Students:

Vehicle Sticker Design Contest Starts Again

The City of Marengo is sponsoring a competition to design the 2014/15 City Vehicle Sticker. Entrants must be enrolled in grades 6 through 12 or equivalent during the 2013/14 school year and reside within the Marengo

City limits.

Entries must be the artist's original design and meet specific design requirements that are detailed on the entry form.

Submissions will be accepted until 4:00 P.M. on Friday, March 28, 2014. The winning entry will be chosen by a committee that will include Mayor Lockhart. Last year, the \$100 design winner for 2013/14 vehicle design was Stacey Camp.

Applications, along with contest rules, may be picked up at MCHS Student Service office, MCMS main office, Zion main office, City Hall or printed via the City website at www.cityofmarengo.com beginning March 1, 2014.



Springtime Storm Preparedness

By: Chief Joseph Hallman

We have had some interesting weather issues over the last couple of years to say the least. I am not going to argue whether it is due to climate change, global warming or El Nino; but I hope to merely point out some things to keep in mind when dealing with a severe weather outbreak. Generally speaking, one should be prepared to the extent possible to “survive” for at least three days on your own. This should give ample time for the emergency responders to eventually get to you, restore your power, bring other services back on line, etc. Of course this ultimately depends upon the size and scope of the disaster you are confronted with. Something larger could necessitate a longer response and recovery time.

Years ago, it was common for people to have various stores of food and supplies within their dwellings. I can fondly remember going to Grandma’s house and opening the canned jars of Bread and Butter pickles. Grandma lived through the so-called Great Depression (not too sure what was so great about it), but she never forgot and always had stores of food and other items. I’m not advocating everyone go out and learn the art of canning, but the point is that you should have some necessary food supplies that could support you and your family for a period of time should you not be able to get to a store, or the store may be out of service. This can also be extended to medicine, water, and pet foods. It would be prudent to have a fresh supply of batteries for flashlights and possibly a battery operated radio. Of course candles could be useful, but remember the potential for fire associated with their use. For those of you with unlimited monetary resources a nice portable generator surely helps to keep the refrigerator / freezer working as well as a light or television. This can be a life saver if you have younger children/elderly folks at home.

Finally, it is very important to employ some form of early warning measure before a disaster happens. By this I mean that one could utilize the various technologies and applications now being offered through media and governmental outlets to receive advance notifications of an impending storm. These could literally be life savers. As our weather service continues to perfect advance warning practices, please take the time to find and use these free services. If I can be of any assistance in these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me at the police department.

Transponder Installation Beginning *City asking Resident Assistance in Scheduling*

With the installation of three transponders on Friday February 21, 2014, HBK Water Services, Inc., the City’s contracted installer of the water meter transponders, will begin what will amount to about a six to nine month process of changing out all 2,560 units

throughout Marengo. A transponder is typically located in the basement of a single family home. Just to make sure the process is working well, the first three change outs will be in the homes of city employees. HBK has already scheduled 350 appointments for transponder replacements. At the beginning of February appointment requests were coming in at about 10-20 per day. The initial concentration for installation is in Billing Section 2, the primarily residential area on the southeastern portion of the city. That being said, HBK is taking later-in-the-year installation reservations for two other billing sections located on the northeastern part and the western part of the City.

When installations begin, door hangers will be placed on dwelling units in the Billing Section in which HBK is currently working as a reminder to those who haven’t made a change out appointment. HBK is asking for those residents, particularly in the short-term those located south of the railroad tracks and from east of the development along Park Street, to call and make an appointment. As indicated previously, from start to finish the whole change out process should take 15-30 minutes. Appointments are to be Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Please call HBK Water Services at 847-202-4389 to schedule a time.

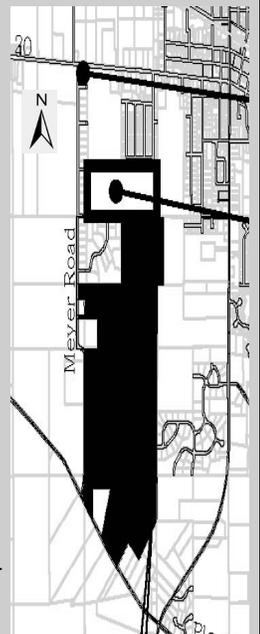


Seven Oaks Residential Development Being Repackaged for Mixed Uses

Over the past few months a proposal to revise the Seven Oaks development plan has been winding its way through the approval process. Located on the east side of Meyer Road and north of Pleasant Grove Road, this project was originally planned and approved for the development of single family homes. Now the project is proposing the development of a mix of various types of residential units and the possible inclusion of about 3 acres of commercial development adjacent to the Meyer/Pleasant Grove intersection. These changes have been brought about due to the development of the Southwest Area Comprehensive Plan amendment approved a year ago by the City Council. The project area is bordered by the recently amended Comprehensive Plan area on the west and the south.

The new plan calls for the development of estate single family housing, traditional single family housing, townhouses, and either 96 apartment units or a senior citizen residential development which would be targeted for those who have needs for independent living, assisted living care, rehabilitation care & memory loss care.

Following a Planning and Zoning Commission review of this concept, the City Council is expected to review this proposal at the beginning of March. Final approvals could come in March or April.



MARENGO GETS NEW RADIO STATION

Non-Profit Community Radio WXMR-LP - 94.3 FM

By the end of 2014, Marengo residents will have a new source for news, entertainment and information, when low-power FM radio station WXMR-LP goes on the air at 94.3FM.

This is a project of the Marengo Community Radio group, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Board President Brian Kelly explains their mission as a plan to provide “Marengo-Union area residents with a varied lineup of music, local sports, entertainment and information. That includes emergency information of all kinds.”

After a 12-year period during which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) was not granting any new low-power permits, they re-opened to applications in October 2013. The Marengo Community Radio group completed and submitted its application for consideration. After a three-month wait, they received confirmation that their license had been granted in January 2014.

After a license is granted, only then can a group begin the fundraising necessary to purchase and erect the equipment needed to get on the air, and they have only 18 months to do it. The group estimates the needed equipment will cost about \$30,000.00, and will be employing a combination of underwriting, grants, and donations to raise the necessary funds.

Marengo Community Radio group has been broadcasting online at www.marengoradio.info and over local Charter Cable Channel 19 for more than a year while they waited for the FCC to begin accepting applications for new licenses. Their studio is located inside Marengo Community High School, and they anticipate their FM signal will reach about 10,000 listeners within a five-mile radius of that location. The high school is working with the station to provide its students with unique broadcasting opportunities available on local radio, and they plan to have students participating in shows in all categories of programming.

LPFM licenses are granted only to non-profit groups and permit only non-commercial broadcasting, so LPFM stations are a niche product that enables these groups to do hyper-local programming: broadcasting local sports events, interviewing local citizens, and following local events. From the latest high-school state championship, to ongoing street repairs or the best summer garden in southwest McHenry County, WXMR-LP will be the place to hear the stories behind

the stories.

Anyone wishing to get more information about the mission and plans of WXMR-LP, are welcome to visit their website at

www.marengoradio.info or call Executive Director Steve Sandman at the studio, 815-572-8344.



Pictured Above: Steve Sandman, Jamie Sandman, and Adam Johnson (Marengo Main Street) are gearing up for a live broadcasting at Marengo Radio Studio. Marengo Radio received their license in January 2014; one of the first five in the country.

Projected FY 2014/15 Budget Revenues Reviewed by City Council

On February 10, the City Council reviewed the projected General Fund and Water/Sewer Fund revenues for the FY 2014/15 budget. Revenues for the \$3,740,367 General Fund are expected to be up \$106,292 from what was currently budgeted, but down \$68,140 from the expected total that will be collected this year. This increase is due primarily to the fact that, at the beginning of the fiscal year, the City received the last unbudgeted “catch up” payment from the state for income tax distribution that all cities had been delayed beginning in 2010.

The four main revenue sources, property taxes (34% of the total General Fund) state income tax distribution (19%), sales taxes (16%), and utility taxes (16%) show a combined increase of \$144,000. After two years of reductions totaling \$50,000, municipal property taxes are expected to increase by 1.88% and add another \$26,000 to the revenue base. Other revenues are down. Notably, while the number of citations issued has

slightly increased, revenues from court fines have fallen all over the county due to the empathy shown to offenders as acknowledged by the county judges. Projections for court fine revenues have been reduced by \$15,000 in the upcoming year.

Somewhat noteworthy is the fact that this upcoming year’s General Fund revenue budget will still be about \$65,000 less than what was budgeted just before the economic downturn in FY 2008-09.

For the \$1,683,627 Water/Sewer Fund just a nominal increase of \$15,653 is projected in the upcoming fiscal year. This money is used only for the operations of these two utilities. Effectively, all of this revenue comes from the water/sewer bills. While this increase reflects no changes, sewer bills are expected to increase in the upcoming year to offset some of the \$12 million construction cost at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This revenue is being gathered into a segregated capital improvement account.

Harsh Winter Breaks Budget's Line Items

...But Budget Contingency Accounts Cover the Gap

Since the snow storm beginning on New Year's Eve, the Public Works crew has been



In FY 2014/15 a truck is scheduled to be replaced. Money for this acquisition has been saved through annual payments to a sinking fund; therefore no additional expense to purchase the truck will be needed from the General Fund.

out on the streets on seemingly a constant basis. It is not uncommon to find time sheets turned in where several of the guys have averaged an 80-hour work week. Mother Nature has been particularly tough on overtime this year since a great deal of the snow fall has occurred on weekends. As we approach the end of this month, this year's snow fall total is about double our 34-inch annual average. Even though a 300-ton shipment is awaiting delivery (frozen waterways are causing shipping delays), the city still has plenty of road salt – enough to cover six to eight more snow events. Enough salt was stockpiled from last year to easily give the coverage necessary to get through this extraordinary winter.

Similarly, the city's budget is capable of handling these unanticipated costs. While the street division, for instance, budgets overtime assuming a typical winter, other money is set aside in the General Fund contingency account. On the pay period that closed on the first Saturday in February, the Street Divi-

sion's \$20,000 annual overtime budget had been exceeded by \$20,020. This doubling of the OT line item (with some more to come) will be covered by the Contingency Account that has a \$47,487 balance. In recent years the City has set aside two percent (2%) of its General Fund (operating) budget for unanticipated expenditures. Given that the new Fiscal Year starts May 1, going forward it is expected that the Contingency Account will be able to take on more overtime and other unanticipated winter weather related costs (like snow plow repair).

Broken and frozen water and frozen sanitary sewer mains have recently become a problem that are causing more overtime. The Water/Sewer Fund overtime line items total \$14,000. As of the beginning of the month this line item was exceeded by \$2,900 with more expenditures anticipated because of the frozen mains. Still the Water/Sewer Fund has a contingency account that will cover the gap.

WWTP Construction Rate Increase Scheduled for May Would raise the level from 50% to 75% of the 2011 Treatment Plant Increase

Per the plan that was in-place in 2012, on March 10, 2014 the City Council will be asked to raise the Wastewater Treatment Plant's Debt Service User fee by \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons of water used, effective for billings developed in April and due in May. For the typical Marengo residential water/sewer user that uses an average of 17,000 gal per quarter, the increase on the quarterly bill would amount to \$17 per quarterly billing. In two person households, the increase may be equal to as much as half the average. The flat fee that was a part of the old 2011 rate increase structure, and was *eliminated* (except for the largest 20 or so commercial and industrial users) during the 2012 rate reduction, is not proposed to return. For single family residential units this flat fee equaled \$9.57 per quarter, and for rental dwelling unit and small commercial property owners it equaled \$25 per quarter.

Right now money collected for the Sewage Treatment Plant's \$12 million construction financing is at a rate of \$2.00 per 1,000 gallons of usage. Now that construction has begun, the Utility is in need of more funds so as to offset some of the internal borrowing used to cash-flow payments for the project's start-

up. Another rate increase and the last needed for the WWTP's construction, anticipated also to be \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons used, is scheduled for May or August of 2015. The

first of 20 annual loan payments financing the project (at a borrowing rate of 1.93%) is scheduled to be made to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in June, 2015.



This new centrifuge was one of the first pieces of equipment installed for the treatment plant improvement. The cost of this machine including installation totals approximately \$330,000.

Regalia, Reminders and other References

E-Pay

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve service to our residents, we are offering the following electronic payment options at www.cityofmarengo.com:

- Water/Sewer Payments
- Vehicle Sticker Payments
- Parking/Bond Ordinance violations

Payments can be made by Mastercard, American Express, Discover or E-Check. The convenience fee charged for using credit services is not charged or collected by the City of Marengo.



Garage Sales

A \$5.00 garage sale permit application can be printed at www.cityofmarengo.com or picked up at City Hall. The ordinance allows an address to hold two garage sales yearly for up to six consecutive days with the ability to split the six days into two consecutive weeks. Only three signs are allowed to advertise the sale. They are to be displayed during the dates of the sale and are to be removed 24 hours after the sale. Signs must have their own support and are to be posted in the ground. Attachment of signs to telephone poles, trees, traffic signals or any city, state or federal signage is not allowed.

Email Updates

Want to stay connected with City happen-

ings? Have Marengo City Council agendas, news releases, calendar's of monthly meetings and general updates delivered right to your inbox. To register, go to www.cityofmarengo.com and enter your email address in the "subscribe to email updates" box or stop by City Hall.

2014-15 Vehicle Stickers

The 2014-15 Vehicle Stickers will be available for purchase beginning in June. The cost is \$20 per vehicle or \$5 per vehicle for those aged 65 or over. Fees are doubled if purchased after July 31, 2014. Residents not displaying a current vehicle sticker are subject to an ordinance violation fine of \$150. Funds raised from the purchase of these stickers are used for street repairs.

Overnight Street Parking

Parking is not allowed on any residential street between the hours of 12:01 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Central Business District parking is not allowed between the hours of 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Violators are subject to a \$25 ordinance violation fine.

Travel Trailers & Recreational Vehicles

Parking of travel trailers, utility trailers or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the front property line between the dates of April 15 and October 15. After October 15 and prior to April 15, the parking of travel trailers, utility trailers and/or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the building setback line.

Approved Resolutions and Ordinances November, December 2013, and January 2014

November

13-11-A Determining the Amount of Funds to be Levied for the 2013 Tax Year

December

13-12-1 Establishing 2014 City Council Meeting Dates

13-12-2 Abating the Tax Levied for the Year 2013 to Pay Principal and Interest on General Obligation Refunding Bonds

13-12-3 Abating the Tax Levied for the Year 2013 to Pay Principal and Interest on General Obligation Bonds

13-12-4 Abating Taxes on Certain Property Annexed to the City of Marengo-Western Parcels Annexed in 2007

13-12-5 Establishing a Property Tax Abatement for Certain Property that is Subject of an Prior Economic Incentive Agreement

13-12-6 Establishing a Property Tax Abatement for Certain Property that is Subject of an Prior Economic Incentive Agreement

13-12-7 Establishing a Property Tax Abatement for Certain Property that is Subject of an Prior Economic Incentive Agreement

13-12-8 Establishing a Property Tax Abatement for Certain Property that is Subject of an Prior Economic Incentive Agreement

13-12-9 Establishing a Property Tax Abatement for Certain Property that is Subject of an Prior Economic Incentive Agreement

13-12-10 Authorizing the Sale or Disposal of Surplus Property

13-12-11 Denying a Petition to Rezone 21905 W Grant Hwy from a Special Use/B2 General Business to Special Use/Manufacturing

13-12-12 Authorizing the Execution of a Promissory Note to Refinance the Loan for the Police Department Expansion and Payoff the Dispatch Console Loan.

13-12-13 Levying the Taxes for the City of Marengo for the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year

13-12-14 Levying taxes for Special Service Area Number 2 for the 2013 Tax Year-Parkrise Unit 5

January

14-1-1 Authorizing the Sale or Disposal of Surplus Property

The *February 2014 Marengo Newsletter* has been produced by the following staff members: *Article contributors:* Gary Boden, Chief Hallman and Marengo Radio. *Desktop publisher:* Megan Lopez