

The Nosy Neighbor

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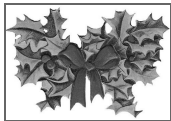
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Interceptor Sewer to be Extended

Due to sewer backups that occur in a limited number of homes during heavy rain events, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has mandated repairs be made to the sewer collection system.

In October 2010, the village board started working with Missman, Inc. to design a plan suitable to carry the additional inflow to the sewer plant. The plan was formally accepted by the IEPA in April of this year and requires completion by December 2013.

Costs for the project are expected to reach \$350,000 and that poses a funding challenge for the village board. Though state and federal legislators have been contacted on multiple occasions, grant

funds remain scarce to non-existent and village officials fear residents will be forced to bear the funding burden.

The majority of grants require the village meet 51% low-to-moderate income (LMI) guidelines. The LMI for Orion is only 23.2%.

The board is still searching for other sources of funding with hopes of avoiding an increase in sewer user fees. Residents are still paying down a 20-year, \$4 million loan for an IEPA-mandated project from the year 2000.

While the board continues to search for funds, property owners in the area of the proposed interceptor sewer can expect to see Missman, Inc. engineers performing preliminary survey work.

The affected area begins at 10th Street near the Catholic Church, extending southwest to 15th Avenue. From that point it will proceed west and cross 8th Street before turning toward the north to parallel the existing sewer main. The new interceptor sewer main will connect to an existing interceptor sewer that was installed in 2000.

The board hopes to seek bids and award a contract in late 2012. Construction should begin in the spring of 2013.

A map of the proposed interceptor sewer is available upon request from the village clerk's office.

Gas Vapor

As far back as 1996, village officials made attempts to push the Illinois EPA to eradicate a gasoline vapor problem in the village's sewer system.

The vapors are suspected to be linked to leaking under-

ground tanks discovered in 1995 at 1009 Division Street. After 15 years of inaction by the IEPA, the vapor problem came back to haunt the village by once again seeping into residential homes.

Finally, IEPA officials moved

forward to require a prior owner of the property to conduct a site investigation. A consulting firm has been hired and is performing the multi-part investigation. The report is not expected to be completed until sometime in 2012.

Winter Updates

Snow Route

In past years, the December edition of *The Nosy Neighbor* politely reminded residents of the village snow and snowmobile routes by spelling out each street and avenue name. This year, a map has been provided below for viewing convenience. The routes can be seen at a glance without slogging through a bunch of text.

Oftentimes, the snow route regulations are ignored, but residents are urged to follow the regulations or risk having vehicles towed.

Once two or more inches of snow have accumulated or are reasonably expected to accumulate, the police shall be authorized to cause the towing or other removal of vehicles that are in violation of the snow route ordinance.



Online readers of *The Nosy Neighbor* can obtain a map at Village Hall.

To avoid drastic measures by village personnel and the financial consequences of having your vehicle impounded, take a moment to review the snow route regulations, particularly if you live along a snow route and regularly park your vehicle on the street.

Snowmobile Route

Snowmobiles can be operated from any point of origin in the village in a reasonably direct route to the nearest snowmobile route.

Snowmobile route signs and directional arrows are posted to guide recreational riders along the route.

Many communities ban the use of snowmobiles on streets under all circumstances. If regulations are violated on a regular basis, village officials could follow suit and require snowmobile users to trailer their sleds through Orion.

Snow Plowing

Snow routes will be plowed first, followed by secondary streets. Alleyways will be cleaned after all streets have been plowed and are open to traffic. Once streets are open to traffic, employees will return to push snow back to the curb, if necessary.

Those plowing driveways should be careful not to push snow into the middle of the street and leave it there.

Streetscape Plan

The streetscape plan is still under review by the Illinois Department of Transportation. Items holding up approval are diagonal parking on 4th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues and the slope of the sidewalk on the south side of 11th Avenue between 4th and 5th Streets. Both are violations of current standards.



Online readers of *The Nosy Neighbor* can obtain a map at Village Hall.

De la Paz (cont'd from pg. 4)

The board lucked out and found operators Gary Chase and Larry Lawson, from the Galesburg area, who agreed to operate Orion's plant on an interim basis.

De la Paz and village trustee Shirley Carney took the opportunity to have a complete audit of the plant performed and also worked to repair a damaged relationship with the Illinois EPA. IEPA officials were chagrined years earlier when village officials went over the agency's head and complained to state legislators in order to get final approval to close out a plant upgrade.

An immediate problem facing De la Paz and the board was the accumulation of sludge buildup in the bottom of one of the sewer lagoons. The solution was to haul twenty-four truckloads of sludge from the lagoon and spread it on a farmer's field.

Further, the Illinois EPA required a sludge management plan be devised, which entailed upgrading existing wooden sludge beds. The village board chose to seek bids for new concrete sludge beds designed to be lined with concrete paths for the use of an end loader. Up to this point, much of the beds had to be hand shoveled. Bids for the project, however, ranged from \$85,000 to \$119,400, up to 76% above estimates.

The village engineer renegotiated with the low bidder, changing the beds' construction from concrete to wood and requiring some work be performed by village employees. Objecting to the motion to renegotiate with the contractor was trustee Ed Willhouse, who wanted the project rebid. He cast

a no vote. Because another trustee was absent and the motion needed approval by a 2/3 vote, De la Paz cast the deciding vote. The motion to renegotiate was carried, and construction of the sludge beds was completed as renegotiated.

According to the *Illinois Municipal Handbook*, Illinois law allows the president to vote (a) when the vote of the trustees results in a tie; (b) when one-half of the trustees have voted in favor of an ordinance, resolution, or motion even though there is no tie vote; or (c) when a vote greater than a majority of the corporate authorities is required by state statute or local ordinance.

Meanwhile, by late 1985, two applications were received for the specialized field of sewer plant operator, and Mr. Steve Botch, formerly an employee of the City of Rock Island, was offered the position at a salary of \$24,700.

Mr. Botch would work for the village for five short years before submitting his resignation. In his letter of resignation, Botch said he came to Orion with a five-year plan to rebuild the sewer plant and establish a process control program. Feeling he accomplished those goals, Botch chose to quit his position and further his education by pursuing a degree.

In November of 1985, De la Paz was approached about the construction of a Pizza Hut restaurant by Greg Moss, owner of other Henry County area Pizza Huts. The village board approved a rezoning of the property at 18 13th Avenue to pave the way for its construction. Pizza Hut would become the first franchised fast food restaurant in Orion.

Construction of the restaurant was not without its detractors, among them those who worried about increased traffic over the 13th Avenue railroad bridge and the request for a liquor license.

Due to relatively new anti-trust laws, the village was advised by legal counsel to eliminate the limit on the number of liquor licenses that could be granted. Instead, De la Paz, acting as liquor commissioner, was advised to utilize her power to approve or deny requests based on applications submitted. The Pizza Hut liquor license application was approved.

In December, while crews were busy constructing the Pizza Hut building, the village board worked to formulate a route allowing snowmobile enthusiasts passage through the village.

The winter months also found De la Paz and Sewer Superintendent Botch taking a road trip to Schaumburg, Illinois, in order to purchase a used truck with sewer jetting equipment that could be used to clean sewer mains on a regular basis.

In a recent conversation with De la Paz, she recalled the need to stop several times to refuel the jetter truck on the long trip back to Orion.

The jetter practically eliminated the need to call in a private contractor to perform costly clean outs. The truck cost \$6,400 and remains in use to this day.

More to come in March
- Lori Sampson

Shortly after taking office, De la Paz was confronted with her first opportunity to cast a vote as village president.

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online readers.

De la Paz, soon to be sworn in as village president, joined the ribbon cutting ceremony for the 11th Ave. jurisdictional transfer. L-R: Steve Morse, A. Jan Ryden, an IDOT rep, De la Paz, and engineer Henry 'Hank' Mayer

Former President Ryden had sealed a deal just prior to the end of his term to place a full time doctor in Orion, so De la Paz and the board got right to work after the 1985 election by entering negotiations to sell the village-owned lot behind what was then Hughes True Value to Franciscan Hospital. The lot was offered to the hospital for the purpose of constructing a doctor's office. The board had contemplated giving the lot to the hospital, though there was minor opposition to a deal of that nature.

Mr. Sam Alba, longtime resident of Orion, objected to giving the lot away, noting a lack

of recognition for Dr. Andrew Skladany, a general physician with a 27-year part-time practice in the community.

Ultimately, Franciscan Hospital rejected the offer from the village, choosing instead to purchase property at 509 11th Avenue for construction of a clinic for Dr. Joel Braunstein, a full time osteopath.

Moving their attention to infrastructure needs, De la Paz and the board joined with affected property owners to close an open storm water ditch on the north side of 12th Avenue in the east end of the village. The

project rid the village of an eyesore and paved the way to better street maintenance and the installation of curb and gutter. Sanitary sewer work was also being done in the area and both projects were completed by mid September. Installed was 870' of storm sewer and 801' of sanitary sewer.

De la Paz then found herself confronted with the unexpected resignation of Sewer Superintendent Mark Blythe, forcing her and the board to find someone to operate the sewer plant until a new employee could be hired. (De la Paz cont'd pg. 3)

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