A BRIGHT FUTURE

The town that evolved from sleepy farming community to a thriving residential haven for starter families in the years following World War II is on the move again. The Town Council/Redevelopment Commission is focusing first on projects that will infill some commercial corridors while transforming others.

PUBLIC WORKS RELOCATION

Discussion is getting serious about relocating Highland Public Works and the Sharp Athletic Complex.

Under the Town Council’s review are several parcels in south and east Highland – 15 acres to 20 acres – large enough to accommodate an upscale town garage and green space.

The larger acreage could allow Sharp Athletic Complex to move with Public Works.

Council President Dan Vassar said the land on north Kennedy that houses Public Works could add significantly to the tax base. Property taxes paid by new businesses keep the rates stable or reduce them for everyone else.

“Every day we leave the town garage in its current location, we are missing the boat,” Vassar said. “We have an opportunity to redefine the north Kennedy Corridor and a primary gateway to Highland. The highest and best use of this prime real estate is for commercial/retail development. It’s something we need to act on now.”

BILLBOARD & GREEN SPACE

View Outdoor Advertising would like to erect a billboard on north Indianapolis at the Stan’s Bait Shop property. The company is offering to provide green space – at no cost – that could be beautified by the town.

“Lawyers for the town and View Outdoor Advertising are hammering out the details,” Council President Dan Vassar said. “From what we’ve seen, this has the potential to be a great way for us to transform that gateway leading into town.”

REDEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

The hunt is on for a new Redevelopment Director. Cecile Petro, who became the town’s first full-time redevelopment director 12 years ago, will retire June 9.

Over the next several weeks, Council President Dan Vassar said he and his fellow councilors will be meeting with a consulting firm and create a job description tailored for the needs of the town.

The plan is to begin advertising for the new director in May and begin a search for the ideal candidate early summer.

“The ideal candidate will have broad experience with communities, such as Highland, and able to juggle numerous projects at once.

“We have been blessed and lucky to have had Cecile,” Vassar said. “She balanced value-added programs with day-to-day redevelopment duties designed to make Highland better. Hers will be big shoes to fill.”

NEW HIGHLAND STREET SIGNS

Two major intersections are going to be decked out with illuminated signs from dusk to dusk. Highway and Kennedy along with Fifth and Ridge will be the first to get the signs with the trademark Gazebo and white lettering. “The new street signs will add flavor and style to the community,” Councilman Mark Herak said “They will also make it easier for visitors to find their way.”

CLASSIC CAR CRUISE

Calling all classic car enthusiasts! If you have a classic car or antique hot rod, join us for the Highland Main Street Car Cruise in downtown Highland. Cars may be registered onsite that afternoon. One lucky cruiser will walk away with the Van Senus Auto Value Award and 10 others with Sponsor Choice Awards.

WHEN: 1-5 p.m. JUNE 3, Rain date JUNE 4
WHERE: Downtown Highland along Highway From Kennedy to Fifth.
INFO: Contact Lance Ryskamp at (219) 972-7598 or lryskamp@highland.in.gov.

MAY POP-UP GALLERY

Please join Highland Main Street for the next pop-up art gallery that will feature the talents of local artists Liz Mares and Carlene Chess. Refreshments will be served.

WHEN: 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. MAY 18
WHERE: First Midwest, 2842 Highway.
INFO: Hilco Real Estate is handling the sale of the Highway Avenue branch. Call 855-755-2300 for details.

HIGHWAY OF FLAGS

Highway of Flags is getting a spring makeover. Longtime resident Jack Vander Giessen and the memorial’s designer Ross Gambrii are giving the monument at Ridge and US 41 a fresh coat of paint and a few cosmetic changes. Constructed in time for the Memorial Day remembrance in 1975, the colonnade honors members of the armed services who hail from the seven states U.S. 41 traverses — Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida.

HIGHLAND MURALIST

Highland artist Jessica Haug will create a downtown mural inspired by the Heron Rookery. “Great Blues on Pink” was selected from a field of 32 designs submitted by 21 Northwest Indiana and Chicagoland artists. The public art project, expected to be complete by June 3, will be on the east wall of Miles Books, 2821 Jewett.
POLICE MEMORIAL
Please join Highland Police as they honor their fallen colleagues during an 8:30 a.m. inspection and a 9 a.m. memorial service at Sheppard Park.
The event honors Officers Donald R. Sheppard and Robert Markley, who were killed in the line of duty.
Sheppard was killed Nov. 12, 1971, during a gun fight with an escaped convict. Markley was killed by an intoxicated driver on March 10, 1978.
WHEN: 8:30 a.m. MAY 13
WHERE: Sheppard Park, 9217 Liable
INFO: Call Highland Police Officer Randall Stewart at (219) 838-3184.

CRIME WATCH MEETING
Learn about recent neighborhood trends at this month’s crime watch.
WHEN: 6:30 p.m. MAY 10
WHERE: HPD Community Room
RESERVATIONS: Call Sgt. Shawn Anderson at (219) 838-3184 or email sanderson@highland.in.gov.

WARD 1
BERNIE ZEMEN
bzemen@comcast.net
(219) 781-1056

WARD 2
MARK HERAK
mherak@highland.in.gov
(219) 838-0126

WARD 3
DAN VASSAR - president
dvassar@highland.in.gov
(219) 924-1945

WARD 4
STEVEN WAGNER - v. president
swagner@highland.in.gov
(219) 718-3199

WARD 5
KONNIE KUIPER
kkuiper@highland.in.gov
(219) 924-7820

NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?
Send your suggestions to:
gazeboxexpress@theideafactory.us.com

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GET-WELL WISHES ...

ON THE MEND: Four months after being hit head-on in his squad car, Highland Police Officer John Swisher is on the mend. A recent graduate to a cane from crutches, Swisher sustained life-threatening injuries Dec. 10 when an intoxicated driver collided with his vehicle. In addition to daily therapy, Swisher (above right) has a regular lunch date with Cmdr. George Georgeff, Chief Pete Hojnicki and Asst. Chief Pat Vassar (left to right). “There isn’t a week that goes by that we don’t hear from a resident concerned to see how John is doing,” Hojnicki said. “He is grateful for the many thoughtful cards and prayers that have been sent, which are aiding his recovery.” [PHOTO PROVIDED]

TOWN THEATRE DEMOLITION ON HOLD UNTIL RESTAURANT FINDS NEW HOME

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro has been working overtime to help Maria’s Buena Cocina find a new home.

Located near the Town Theatre in a building owned by the town, Maria Curiel’s restaurant is caught between what was the Theatre District and a new vision for the property.

“We have been going through different buildings, mostly in the downtown, which is where we hope to stay,” Curiel said. “It took time to get a good following of customers. We want to stay local for them – and for us.”

Until that happens, plans are on hold for the razing of the Town Theatre and adjacent buildings, including Curiel’s.

“We’ve had nice offers from Schererville and Griffith,” she said. “We hope it doesn’t come to that. We want to stay in Highland.”

TOWN THEATRE BOARD
When the Town Theatre renovation became a nonstarter, members of the nonprofit Theatre Board had two options — stay or go.
The group decided to stay as a grassroots committee dedicated to supporting the arts within the community.
Theatre Board President Dawn Diamantopoulos said the new direction will include: scholarships for Highland graduates, support for local theatre productions and arts education opportunities, such as the Explorers program.

“We hope our residents will continue to support the arts through our organization,” she said.

Those who became members during the group’s fund-raising activities on behalf of the Town Theatre have two choices — leave their donation in place to support the arts or request a refund.

Details of the process will be forthcoming.
The Food Service Department of the School Town of Highland is accepting applications for part-time school cafeteria positions the 2017-2018 school year. This job calls for two to three hours per school day.

INFO: Apply at highland.k12.in.us.

NIRPC SURVEY TAKERS
The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) is looking for volunteers to conduct personal surveys on the Erie-Lackawanna Trail. Part of the 2017 Indiana Trails Study, nine trails throughout Indiana will be closely researched, with data on users counts, preferences and economic impact being measured. NIRPC needs volunteers to work two-hour shifts three times of day — 7 to 9 a.m., noon to 2 p.m., and 5 to 7 p.m. NIRPC will provide training and all materials. Survey takers will be located at a trailhead or at a nearby grocery store to gauge a control group.

WHEN: 7-9 a.m., noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. the week of MAY 29, JULY 24 and SEPTEMBER 25

INTERESTED? Contact Mitch Barloga at NIRPC at mbarloga@nirpc.org.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Please join the Highland Historical Society for a special journey through time with Elmo Parlor, one of the town’s foremost historians. A descendant of the town’s first settlers — Michael and Judith Johnston — Parlor will share how he researches and documents the region’s past as well as some of his incredible finds, which include photos collected through the decades. Those who attend are welcome to bring historical mementos to share. Refreshments will be served.

WHEN: 7 p.m. MAY 25
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
INFO: Email Sue Douthett at highlandhistory@sbcglobal.net.

TOWN POET LAUREATE
Congratulations to Janine Harrison, who has been selected as Highland’s Poet Laureate for 2017. The published poet has taught poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction at Purdue University Northwest for the last decade. Harrison was selected from a field of four applicants by a panel of judges who have degrees in English Literature and are published poets.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA JOBS
The Food Service Department of the School Town of Highland is accepting applications for part-time school cafeteria positions the 2017-2018 school year. This job calls for two to three hours per school day.

INFO: Apply at highland.k12.in.us.
COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE
Do you enjoy shopping for rare items, such as comic books, sports cards, Hot Wheels, autographs and other memorabilia? Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will host the card show in conjunction with the Community Garage Sale, featuring household items, toys, books and more!

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. MAY 13
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
VENDOR FEES: $32.10 per 10’ x 10’ interior space or $53.50 per 23’ x 6’ wall space. Tables, chairs, and extension cords are not provided.
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

YOUTH TRACK & FIELD
This program is designed to benefit boys and girls of all talents and experiences. Team T-shirts included. Awards to top finishers. Volunteer assistants needed!

WHEN: 6 to 7:30 p.m. JUNE 7 - AUGUST 2
WHERE: Gavit High School outdoor track in Hammond. This is a temporary location for 2017 while Highland resurfaces its track.
FEE: $50 residents / $55 nonresidents
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: June 5
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

GOTR 5K REGISTRATION
This Girls on the Run course begins at 41st Street and Farmer Drive. Runners will proceed down 41st to Liable, then to Lincoln, down the bike path to the IH5 track.

WHEN: 8 a.m. Saturday, MAY 20
WHERE: Highland High School
FEE: $15 kids under 16, $20 adults through MAY 16 and $25 from MAY 17-20
ONLINE REGISTRATION: gotrofnwi.org.
INFO: Email Race Director Amy Kovacs at Amy.kovacs@girlsontherun.org.

10-WEEK SUMMER CAMP
Highland Parks and Recreation’s summer camp engages kids - ages 5 to 12 - in games, crafts, songs, drama, sports activities and field trips. Register your child today for an out-of-this-world camp experience.

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, MAY 30 - AUGUST 4.
Pre-camp hours are from 7 - 8:30 a.m.
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
CAMP FEE: $105/$110 weekly, $25/$30 daily
PRE-CAMP FEE: $30/$35 weekly, $6/$7 daily
PARENT MEETING: 6 p.m. MAY 30
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

SIX FLAGS GREAT AMERICA
Highland Parks has your ticket to summer fun: wild water slides and gravity-defying roller coasters at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, IL.
TICKETS: $46.50 for general admission tickets, $78.75 for a season pass, $34.50 for special Highland Parks and Recreation Week JULY 1 - 9
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

SUMMER THEATRE AUDITIONS
Calling all actors! Highland Parks & Recreation’s Performing Arts Group is looking for actors for this summer’s production of State Fair the Musical™ with performances scheduled in July and August. Bring a song to sing!

WHEN: 6 to 8 p.m. MAY 22-23.
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE
Join us for a presentation about our preschool program. Registration information for preschool and the Wiggles & Giggles program will be provided for parents of preschoolers ages 3-5. Program is free, but participants must register.

WHEN: 6 - 7 p.m. Wednesday, MAY 15
WHERE: Lincoln Community Center
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: May 8
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

FALL SOCCER REGISTRATION
Sign up to play soccer this fall in one of several age divisions: U8, U10, U12, U14, U16 and U19. Please bring a birth certificate to register.

WHEN: 9 a.m. - noon MAY 20 and 1 - 4 p.m. MAY 21 at Sheppard Park and 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. JUNE 3, 10, 17 at Lincoln Center.
FEE: $75 in person or online, $100 after JUNE 18. Early birds save $5. Nonresidents add $5.
INFO: highlandsoccer.org

BUS TRIP TO CUBS GAME
Come out and watch the Chicago Cubs take on the St. Louis Cardinals this summer at Wrigley Field. Let Highland Parks and Recreation take care of the transportation and seating.

WHEN: 3:30 - 11:30 p.m. JUNE 4
WHERE: Wrigley Field
TICKETS: $108 includes game ticket in Section 218-219, Row 22-23 and round-trip transportation. Limited tickets are available and can only be purchased in advance at the Lincoln Center.
TRANSPORTATION: School bus departs Lincoln Community Center at 3:30 p.m. and returns approximately 11:30 p.m.
NOTE: Attendees may be required to walk four blocks to the bus parking area after the game.
INFO: highlandparks.org or (219) 838-0114

ATHLETICS GOLF OUTING
It’s time to register for the Annual Highland Athletic Department golf outing. Proceeds benefit the entire Highland Athletic Department.

WHEN: 11 a.m. shotgun start JUNE 30
WHERE: Wicker Park Golf Course
FEE: $80 person/$320 foursome includes golf, lunch and dinner.
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: June 23
INFO: Contact Athletic Director Ryan Harrington at (219) 922-5611 or email rharrington@highland.k12.in.us.