

GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2022



[Josh Carlascio photo]

Ice skating new to Meadows Pond

On the last Sunday of January, Blake Gardner, 23, could have been doing a lot of other things where he would be warm and toasty. Instead, he grabbed his hockey skates, stick and net and headed to Meadows Pond.

Just minutes from home, Gardner (pictured above) spends as much time in the winter as he can on the ice. “My friends and I come here to skate as often as we can,” he said.

By all accounts January was ideal for skating — consistently very cold with a surface that didn’t get chopped up by winds as it froze. Cold temperatures are forecast to continue.

Recreation Director Dave Byers said the park department

[RINK HOURS]

Meadows Pond is open for skating from dawn to dusk — as long as the ice remains at least four inches thick, which is safe for skaters.

INFO: Call Highland Parks and Recreation at (219) 838-0114 or visit highlandparks.org.

checks every day to ensure the ice is at least four inches thick

With ideal skating conditions in the offing, Byers wants to get the word out about the opportunity to enjoy winter on the ice.

“We’d like to see even more residents come out and enjoy the ice,” Byers said. “Winter is a short season.”

Highland water rates lower than those proposed by Hammond

Highland Water Utility customers will be shouldering annual rate increases through 2030 that are considerably less than what the city of Hammond sought to mandate.

Hammond’s customer communities – Highland, Griffith, Munster, Dyer and Whiting fought back – and won. The 2022 rates went into effect with this February water bill.

Highland Water Board President George Smith said the settlement provides a not-to-exceed rate for Highland customers that is fixed for the next nine years.

“This agreement eliminates surprises for our residential and business customers,” Smith said. “As a water utility customer, I want to know what my monthly payments will be,” Smith said. “It is important that all of our customers know the entirety of the increase is being paid to Hammond. Although the town spends considerable resources building and maintaining the municipal water supply infrastructure, there is no new money for Highland in this increase.”

[FOR MORE INFORMATION]

Visit the town website – HIGHLAND.IN.GOV – to learn more about the new effective retail rate per 1,000 gallons and the final increase after town leaders fought for lower rates.

[TOWN LIAISONS]

In addition to boards and commissions, councilmen serve the following:

BERNIE ZEMEN: Town Executive, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Police Pension Fund

MARK HERAK: Budget Committee Chairman, Public Works, Building and Inspection Department

TOM BLACK: Redevelopment Department

ROGER SHEEMAN: Fire Department, Chamber of Commerce, IT Department



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NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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Town Council appoints new members to Highland boards and commissions

For the last six weeks, the Town Council has invested hours looking over applications and interviewing community members who would like to volunteer on a board or commission.

The town’s human infrastructure — made up of a small army of volunteers — invests countless hours vetting proposals for development, arguing with service providers to keep utility prices lower, ensuring continuity in development and even planning events that bring tens of thousands of visitors.

Many key decisions that impact the town begin with them.

“We have people who have been serving for decades as well as those who will be taking part in town government for the first time,” Council President Bernie Zemen said.

“Honestly, we couldn’t do all we do without them.”

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS: Matthew Thomas, who was appointed in 2020 to fill the unexpired term of Bill Leep, has been appointed to a full four-year term through 2025. Mark Herak serves as council liaison.

COMMUNITY EVENTS COMMISSION: Sandra McKnight appointed to serve through 2025. Mark Schocke serves as council liaison.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION: Mark Herak serves as council liaison.

LAKE COUNTY SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Councilman Tom Black (reappointed).

NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION: Clerk-Treasurer Michael Griffin (reappointed).

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD: Omar A. Torres has been reappointed to the Park Board to serve through 2025. Mark Schocke serves as council liaison.

PLAN COMMISSION: James Kisse reappointed to serve through January 2026. Legislative appointments Joseph Grzymiski, G. Douglas Turich and Bernie Zemen will continue their service on the commission.

POLICE COMMISSION: Danny Stombaugh is the newest appointment to the commission, while Larry Moes and Michael R. Danko — the longest serving members — have been reappointed to serve. Stombaugh will serve through 2023. Moes and Danko will serve through 2024. Roger Sheeman serves as council liaison.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION: Alex Robertson has been appointed to his first term on the commission. Robertson, along with reappointed Commissioners George Georgeff, Bill Leep and Sean Conley will serve through 2022. Vice President Tom Black serves as council liaison.

SANITARY BOARD: Laura Corpus has been reappointed to serve through 2025. Mark Herak serves as council liaison.

TREE ADVISORY BOARD: Richard Underkofler and Elizabeth Herrejon have both been reappointed to serve through 2024. President Bernie Zemen serves as council liaison.

WATERWORKS BOARD: Larry Kondrat has been appointed to serve through 2022. Curt Schroeder has been reappointed to serve through 2024. Vice President Tom Black serves as council liaison.

Essay Contest

CONTEST WINNERS TELL US WHAT THEY MOST LIKE ABOUT DOWNTOWN HIGHLAND ...

Ask Highland school children what they think of their downtown and they won't hesitate to say. Truth is, they had a great deal to say about how they love their downtown.

During the first-ever essay contest, sponsored by Highland Main Street and the library, dozens of children from kindergarten to 12th grade wrote about the flowers and trees that line the streets, piano lessons at HGS Music, bubble teas at Sakura Bowl, the sandwiches at Sip, ice cream at The Counter, the slides at Main Square and the reading programs at the library. That was for starters.

"We were lucky to see downtown Highland through the eyes of the children who live here," Miles Books owner Jim Roubos said.

[WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ...]

"Downtown Highland is great because I can walk there to explore all the beauty it has in store."

– Kiraina Brown, 3rd Grade, Southridge Elementary

"One of my favorite things is the summer carnival ... Every year, I go with my friends and family spending hours on the rides until the carnival closes."

– Kate Stephan, 7th Grade, Highland Middle School

"I love Downtown Highland. I love walking through the alleys, past the murals, and into Main Square Park. My friends and I walk through Downtown so often we have a whole route planned out."

– Maria Ignas, 12th Grade, Highland High School

[WINNERS]

KINDERGARTEN-3RD GRADE

Each entry will receive a bookmark and LCPL pencil.

- 1st place – Kiraina Brown (3rd grade)
- 2nd place – Emily Sipes (2nd grade)
- 3rd place – Julian Belli (age 8)

4TH - 6TH GRADE

- 1st place – Corina Ivy (4th grade)
- 2nd place – Danica VanderMeyden (5th grade)
- 3rd place – Kayla Pepelea (6th grade)

7TH - 8TH GRADE

- 1st place – Lila Holmquist (8th grade)
- 2nd place – Kate Stephan (7th grade)
- 3rd place – Lilly Lopez (8th grade)

9TH - 12TH GRADE

- 1st place – Maria Ignas (12th grade)
- 2nd place – Natalie Ziadat (10th grade)
- 3rd place – Anna Holland (9th grade)

A special shout out to Bibles for Missions, The Green Witch Café, Highland Library, Miles Books, Primitive Peddler, Sip Coffee House 2, Tradition's Restaurant, 2 Chicks Resale and YaYa Sisters for providing prizes. Please visit HIGHLAND.IN.GOV to read the winning essays and learn more about the prizes, sponsors and all who helped.

[BIDDY BOWLING]

Escape the snow and head over to Plaza Lanes for a day of family fun! Biddy Bowling with the Highland Parks and Recreation is open to children ages 4 to 11.

WHEN: noon to 1 p.m. Saturdays,

February 12-March 12

WHERE: Plaza Lanes, 8101 Kennedy

FEE: \$38 resident | \$41 nonresident

REGISTER BY: February 11

[SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL]

Registration begins this month for men's and co-rec softball teams. League format will depend on number of teams in division. Top teams receive cash (check) prizes. Rosters are limited to 20 players. Players must be 18 years or older.

WHEN: 6:30 p.m. weeknights, 5:30 p.m. Sundays. Season begins **April 18** (single) and **May 8** (DH).

FEE: \$650 per team

[COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT]

Enjoy the sounds of the season at the Highland Community Band's annual spring concert.

WHEN: 7-9 p.m. Thursday, **March 17**

WHERE: Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High School

ADMISSION: Free

[CALLING ALL VENDORS]

Do you have stuff you'd like to sell, but don't want people in your home? Register now for the community garage sale at Lincoln Center.

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. **March 12**

WHERE: Lincoln Center Banquet Hall

VENDOR FEE: Vendor fees are \$34 for 10' X 10' interior space or \$56 for 23' x 6' wall space. Table, chairs, extension cords not provided.

[DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE]

Dads and their daughters – ages 3 to 13 – are invited to enjoy dancing, light refreshments and DJ entertainment at the annual Daddy-Daughter Dance. Photographers provide one free 5" x 7" photo. Photo booth and extra photos are available for purchase.

WHEN: 6:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, **FEBRUARY 25**

WHERE: Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

RESERVATIONS**NOW-FEBRUARY 20:**

\$30 resident couple

\$35 nonresident couple

\$15 | \$17.50 each

additional daughter

RESERVATIONS**FEBRUARY 21-24:**

\$35 resident couple

\$40 nonresident couple

\$17.50 | \$20

each additional daughter

No tickets sold the day of the dance.

FOR MORE INFO:

Visit highlandparks.org or call (219) 838-0114.

**[MIDDLE SCHOOL BASKETBALL]**

Format determined by registration numbers. Teams chosen by player draft with the coaches. Everyone receives a team T-shirt. Grades 6-8.

ASSESSMENT: 6:45-8 p.m. **March 10**

WHEN: 5 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays, **March 30-June 1**

WHERE: Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

FEE: \$55 resident | \$60 nonresident

REGISTER BY: March 2

[HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL]

League format will be determined by number of teams registered. No individual sign-ups. First place team receives a team T-shirts.

ASSESSMENT: 6:45-8 p.m. **March 10**

WHEN: 5 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays, **March 30-June 1**

WHERE: Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

FEE: \$350 per team

REGISTER BY: March 2