



Meet our new Superintendent Mindi Ray, who oversees a large staff and 20 Highland parks and recreation spaces. [Josh Carlascio photos]



COUNCIL REVIEWS \$23 MILLION BOND FOR SANITARY UPGRADES

The Town Council met with the Sanitary Board in June to discuss future plans for improvements designed to eliminate overflows into the Little Calumet River during heavy rains.

Council President George Georgeff said central to the discussion was the need to replace the North 5th Street Pump Station with a larger building. Built more than 50 years ago, Georgeff said the three dry-weather pumps in the new building will continue to do the job of transporting raw sewage and wastewater 24 hours a day.

The expanded square footage will accommodate additional pumps that automatically turn on during significant rain events, such as those that overwhelmed the system at least a dozen times in June.

"This is a project that is much needed and an important next step for Highland," he said. "Replacing the pump station is required as part of the Consent Decree ordered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Justice Department."

[WHAT IS A CONSENT DECREE?]

In 2022, Highland, along with Hammond, Munster, Whiting and Griffith entered into an agreement with the federal government to update processes and facilities to eliminate illegal discharges into the Grand and Little Calumet rivers.

New Superintendent

Highland Parks and Rec leader proud of staff's work helping Merrillville residents displaced by tornado

Just four days into her tenure as the new Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Mindi Ray saw her new staff mobilize in moments to work with the Red Cross to convert Lincoln Community Center into a temporary home for Merrillville residents left homeless by an EF-3 tornado.

At its peak, there were 29 residents eating, sleeping and showering at the center.

"As a key staffer for both Lowell

and Cedar Lake, I had heard great things about Highland and how the staff opened their hearts to help," said the mom of two and step-mother of three.

"Nobody hesitated. They stepped up, helped our Merrillville folks while keeping the fitness center open for classes and recreation along with our childcare centers.

"It's been a great introduction," she said. "I already feel like I'm home in Highland."

[ADOPT A DRAIN]

Public Works Director Mark Knesek encourages residents to adopt a stormwater drain in their neighborhood to help reduce the amount of grass clippings, leaves twigs, pop tops and plastic ending up in the Little Calumet River.

“A clean storm drain prevents flooding, improves traffic flow and maintains pedestrian access, especially for children and the elderly,” Knesek said. “Clean drains improve water quality of drainage ditches and the Little Cal River. All it takes is a few easy steps,”

- ▶ Check storm drain grates frequently and keep them free of debris,
- ▶ Dispose of what you collect in the trash.
- ▶ Never remove the grate.
- ▶ Report issues to Public Works.

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Meet Highland's newest police officers

The Town of Highland welcomed a trio of region residents as the town's newest police officers when they took their oath of office June 22.

Mason Sannito comes to Highland after proudly serving for four years in the United States Marine Corps. The 24-year-old grew up in Dyer and is a graduate of Andean High School.

Sindel Keister grew up in Demotte. After graduating Kankakee Valley High School, the 25-year-old earned a Master's Degree at Purdue Global.

Andrew Gillett hails from Munster. The 33-year-old attended Indiana State University after graduating from Evanston Township High School.

The officers are attending the Northern Indiana Law Enforcement Academy in Valparaiso for 16 weeks of training. Cmdr. John Banasiak said the proximity of NILEA to Highland provides an advantage for officers to build relationships with their department while attending classes.



Mason Sannito



Sindel Keister



Andrew Gillett

Town may enact E-bike safety regulations

The Town Council will continue its discussion regarding the explosive growth of electric bikes and municipal laws that may be necessary to protect both the riders and pedestrians they bike alongside.

Council President George Georgeff said residents have been voicing concerns over bikes that are capable of traveling at 20-28 miles per hour.

“State law allows electric bikes anywhere a non-motorized bike can travel,” he said. “Town attorney John Reed is talking with other municipalities to see what local laws have been enacted or are being considered to keep everyone safe.”

[INDIANA RULES]

- ▶ Riders and passengers under the age of 18 must wear helmets when riding a Class 3 E-bike.
- ▶ Operators must be at least 15 years old to operate a Class 3 bike.
- ▶ E-bikes are generally allowed wherever regular bicycles are permitted including road, bike lanes and highway shoulders. Local officials may enact restrictions on multi-use or natural trails.
- ▶ E-bike riders must obey the same rules of the road as traditional bicyclists, which includes lights after dark.



The Highland Police Department's new drone will assist officers in searching for missing endangered persons, tracking suspects and documenting scenes as well as provide an additional set of eyes at community events.
[photo provided]

Highland Police Department receives \$7,000 grant for state-of-the-art drone

In the decade since drones became an essential tool in law enforcement, Highland Police have maximized their “eyes in the sky” to locate individuals and pets that have gone missing as well as locating evidence that has helped solve crimes.

Administrative Cmdr. Shawn Anderson said donations, such as the most recent gift of \$7,000 from Norfolk Southern Railroad, was used to purchase a DJI Matrice 4 TD drone, which came equipped with an upgraded onboard camera, night scene

mode and search light.

“Corporal Tom Manyek and Detective Frank Peckler, who are the manpower behind the Highland Drone Unit specialize with maximizing images provided by the drone,” Anderson said.

“In addition to searches, tracking suspects and documenting scenes, these two officers are on hand during community events to have that extra set of eyes. We are thankful for the support of the railroad for the donation that helps keep our residents safe.”

[HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY]

Make your environment safer by bringing your batteries, cleaners, oils, solvents, poisons, gasoline, pesticides, antifreeze, mercury thermometers, thermostats and fluorescent bulbs to the town garage from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, **July 25**.

Items not accepted: tires, asbestos, ammunition, explosives, medical/radioactive wastes, appliances, 30-gallon or larger containers.

Please note: Batteries cannot be dropped off at Public Works in advance of Hazardous Waste Day.

INFO: Call (219) 972-5083.



[ROTARY CORN ROAST]

Join us at Main Square Park from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday, **August 7** for all the corn you can eat plus two hot dogs or one sausage, chips, drink and dessert. Proceeds benefit Highland scholarships and park, fire and police departments.

TICKETS: \$8 in advance at Lincoln Center and Cakes by Karen or \$10 at the park on the day of event. Kids under 6 eat free.



[COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE]

Find the latest bargain or ultimate treasure at the Communitywide Garage Sale from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, **August 21** and Saturday, **August 22**. Participants can sign up for Saturday only or both days. Residents are solely responsible for setup/removal of sale items, method of payment and assume all liability for their location.

INFO: Visit highland.in.gov or Highland Council of Community Events on Facebook to register.

[MOVIES IN THE PARK]

Join us at dusk (around 8:30 p.m.) Friday, **July 17** for an evening at Main Square Park to watch Zootopia 2 on the big screen. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and snack under the stars. If inclement weather, concert will move to Lincoln Center.

INFO: highlandparks.org

**[WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE!]**

New Life Christian Reformed Church, 3010 Ridge Road, invites the community to attend its free family picnic from 5-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, **August 5**. Games and activities from 5-7 p.m.

INFO: (219) 838-0506

**[INDOOR GARAGE SALE]**

Do you have items you would like to resell, but don't want to invite people into your home to show your products? Join Parks and Recreation from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, **August 15** and reserve a booth at its indoor garage sale at Lincoln Community Center.

VENDOR FEE: \$38 for 10' x 10' interior space or \$60 wall space. Tables, chairs and extension cords are not provided.

INFO: highlandparks.org

**[LIVE FROM THE SQUARE]**

Grab a comfy lawn chair and head to Main Square Park from 2-9 p.m. Saturday, **August 15** for live music featuring The Sharks (2-4 p.m.), Carlton & the Soul Entertainers (4:30-6:30 p.m.) and Pawnz (7-9 p.m.).

INFO: highlandparks.org



FISHING DERBY

Meadows Park Pond

Join us from 8-10 a.m. Saturday, **July 18** for a fun morning at Meadows Park Pond!

Anglers – ages 6-13 – will compete in a catch-and-release tournament with prizes awarded in multiple categories. Please bring your own fishing pole, hooks, and bobbers. Limited bait will be provided.

Registration:

\$10 residents | \$13 nonresidents

Cost includes tournament entry, hot dog, chips and drink for each participant.

Additional food will be available for \$3 per person for family members.

Deadline to register is **July 15**.

[THEATRE IN THE PARK]

Join the Highland Community Theatre players for its summer production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."

Six quirky middle school students compete in a spelling bee where the pressure is high, the words are tough and the contestants' personalities shine. As they battle for the championship, hilarious and heartfelt moments reveal the ups and downs of growing up, friendship and finding the confidence on stage.

SHOW DATES: 8 p.m. **July 23-25** and **July 30-August 1** at Main Square Park Gazebo. VIP front row seating is \$3 a ticket in advance at Lincoln Community Center or \$5 a ticket at "door" – if available. All other seating is free.

PLEASE NOTE: Bring your lawn chairs, blankets and bug spray. Programs are \$2 and T-shirts are \$15 – while supplies last. All proceeds support the production.

INFO: highlandparks.org

**[RESTAURANT CRAWL]**

Join us for our Restaurant Crawl from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **July 28** in downtown Highland. Participating restaurants feature a special for \$7 or less, so that visitors can eat their way through downtown, stopping at their usual haunts and discovering new favorites along the way.

Highland Main Street will expand the Downtown Restaurant Crawl on the last Tuesday of the month in **August, September** and **October**. The town will close Highway Avenue from Kennedy to Fifth Street to vehicular traffic, beefing up the crawl with picnic tables and live entertainment.