

# FLOSSMOOR NEWS

Fall 2020  
Volume 30 / Number 1



PHOTO BY THOMAS PHOTOGRAPHIC.

## COPING WITH COVID

**Imani, Joshua, Camilo and Alexandra Green are photographed outside of their home as part of the Flossmoor Family Porch Photos project with Thomas Photographic.**

**Say Cheese!**  
Flossmoor families smile through COVID.  
*Page 3*

**Discover Flossmoor**  
New marketing campaign launches.  
*Page 4*

**Thriving Businesses**  
Outdoor seating lifts business community.  
*Page 8*

# village officials

**Paul Braun, Mayor**  
pbraun@flossmoor.org

**Brian Driscoll, Trustee**  
bdriscoll@flossmoor.org

**Perry Hoag, Trustee**  
phoag@flossmoor.org

**James Mitros, Trustee**  
jmitros@flossmoor.org

**Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager**  
bwachtel@flossmoor.org

**Gyata Kimmons, Trustee**  
gkimmons@flossmoor.org

**Joni Bradley-Scott, Trustee**  
jbradleyscott@flossmoor.org

**Diane Williams, Trustee**  
dwilliams@flossmoor.org

**Ananda Billings, Clerk**  
abilings@flossmoor.org

# village numbers

**Village Hall:** 798-2300

**Fire:** 798-3885

**Non-Emergency Police:** 957-4500

**Non-Emergency TDD:** 647-0179

**Public Works:** 957-4100

**Building Department:** 957-4101

**Emergency Only:** 911

# village meetings

## Village Board Meeting

1st & 3rd Mondays of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

## Plan Commission Meeting

3rd Thursday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

## Zoning Board of Appeals

4th Tuesday of the Month at 7:30 p.m.

## Public Art Commission Meeting

2nd Monday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

## Community Relations Commission Meeting

4th Tuesday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.

## Green Commission Meeting

3rd Tuesday of the Month at 7:00 p.m.



#Flossmoor365

Find us on social media! Look for updates, photos, videos and good conversation on Facebook and Instagram! We truly appreciate all the residents, business owners and visitors who have supported us and joined the conversation!

# calendar

flossmoor.org

## September 7

*Labor Day — Village Hall Closed*

## September 8

*Board of Trustees Meeting — 7:30 p.m. / Flossmoor Village Hall*

## September 21

*Board of Trustees Meeting — 7:00 p.m. / Flossmoor Village Hall*

## October 3

*Recyclepalooza! — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. / Parker Junior High Lot*

## October 5

*Board of Trustees Meeting — 7:30 p.m. / Flossmoor Village Hall*

## October 19

*Board of Trustees Meeting — 7:30 p.m. / Flossmoor Village Hall*



## Board Meeting Guidelines

The Mayor and Village Board of Trustees will continue to meet in-person and remotely via Webex until it is once again safe to gather in groups of more than 50 people. In keeping with proper social distancing practices, in-person attendance is limited to 50 people or less but the public is invited to attend the meeting using the Webex dial-in service. The dial-in number, access code and password can be found on that week's meeting agenda. All meeting agendas, dial-in information and meeting minutes can be found at [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org).

Masks and temperature screenings are required for in-person attendance and anyone with a temperature of more than 100.4 degrees will be asked to leave. As with all Village Board meetings, public participation will be permitted only during the Citizen Comment portion of the agenda. Members of the public are also invited to comment on agenda items by emailing to [info@flossmoor.org](mailto:info@flossmoor.org) by 6:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Please include "Public Comment for Board Meeting" in the subject line of the email.



## COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER THROUGH IMAGES

When the region came to a halt in mid-March due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the questions heavily outweighed the answers. As people shared photos of their children learning from home, images of hearts appeared on windows, and messages of hope were chalked along sidewalks and driveways, it became clear that Flossmoor and surrounding communities would not let COVID-19 shut down the connections that are important to the community.

One project that uplifted the community during the height of the pandemic was Thomas Photographic's "Family Porch Photos" series, in which the local photography company invited families across Flossmoor and Homewood to pose for photos with their families outside of their homes.

"It's a project we've done before and the response was really positive. So, when we started thinking about how we could reconnect with our customers, and the community at large, this project made total sense," said Angela Thomas, co-owner of Thomas Photographic.

With more than 260 final portraits taken between Flossmoor and Homewood, the project generated an enormous response from the community. Rachael Santos and her family, Flossmoor residents of four years, were among some of the last families photographed, which gave them the opportunity to see what other families had done to showcase joy and happiness during a challenging time.

"The pictures captured this unique time at home together and will always serve as a bittersweet reminder of this strange period," said Santos. "The photos captured a freeze frame of our family during this period of time when everything stopped except what is really important, the love of family and the feeling of home."

To plan the series, Angela and her co-owner, husband Colin started with the logistical details, with one especially important element: practicing social distancing. In order

to accomplish the photos, Angela and Colin spent around five minutes with each family, strictly outdoors and while wearing face coverings. The participants were required to plan their own poses with minor direction from Colin, and were encouraged to be as creative as possible. That creativity included families gathering cleaning materials and fighting COVID-19 as "superheroes", playing card games and board games in the front yard, kids using their parents as jungle gyms, and many families introduced their four-legged friends to the fun. While some of the images depict the chaos that many families felt while being sheltered at home (re: jungle gym parents), Colin said that letting people control the narrative allowed for a lot of fun and freedom.

"I really enjoyed when people had fun," said Colin. "It not only made the photos more enjoyable but I also had a lot of fun trying to light all the different poses. The technical side of it was really interesting."

Colin added that he enjoyed photographing parents with their newborn babies for the first time, as well.

For Angela, the project presented the opportunity that many in the community craved: "Going out and being able to say 'hi' to somebody." That was an important element in the project's inception and a big reason all involved felt it was a huge success. That success was especially surprising to Santos when she discovered that the project was completely donation based. While they did receive some tips, Angela said they knew early on that they wouldn't charge for any of the photos or the shoots themselves.

"We did this as a community project on our end. It didn't seem right to charge people when we were all in this together," said Angela. "Everyone was so thankful. For us, that was enough."

To view the entire photo series, visit [www.thomasphotographicservices.com/blog](http://www.thomasphotographicservices.com/blog).

# flossmoor faces & places



## Bee Keeping in Flossmoor

Beekeeping. It may not be the first thought when someone thinks of hobbies to embrace, but for the Bednarek family, it has become a way of life. Not only does it allow the family to connect over a shared hobby, but it's also a conservation effort for a declining bee population.



Chris Bednarek started beekeeping nine years ago in Chicago Heights, first operating hives in three different locations around Crete Township. He and his wife quickly became fascinated by the life of a bee and the function of a complex hive. That then led to the Bednarek family become one of the more

outspoken bee advocates in Flossmoor, which is why they wanted to establish Flossmoor's first functioning apiary in their back yard.

"We thought it would be a fun thing to try as a family. Not knowing what would happen, we ended up with 110 pounds of honey that first harvest," said Bednarek. "Bee keeping is super easy for us now with them being here."

T's Bees is the first of many, Bednarek hopes, functioning apiaries in Flossmoor following the Village Board of Trustees vote in February allowing beekeeping in Flossmoor. While Bednarek was understandably happy with the decision, he also thought it was an important move for Flossmoor residents to become strong advocates for bees.

As much as honey production is a nice side benefit to beekeeping, Bednarek said his beekeeping is much more about the advocacy of a healthy bee population in Flossmoor.

"Our beekeeping is as much about the advocacy of honey bees as it is a beekeeping hobby and our neighbors are excited to have the bees here," said Bednarek.

For other Flossmoor residents interested in picking up the beekeeping hobby, Bednarek recommends getting all of the equipment needed, including hives, frames, head veil and gloves, among other items, before getting started.

The Village also has a number of regulations that must be considered before an active nest can be installed. To review the municipal code on beekeeping in Flossmoor, visit [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org).

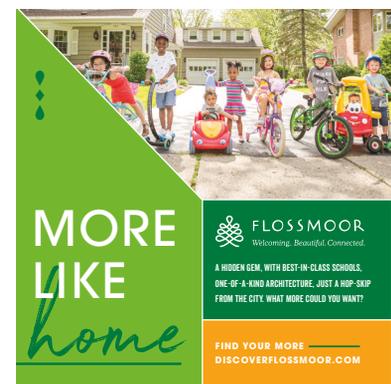
## The Village's Marketing Efforts with Discover Flossmoor Campaign

The jury is still out on whether the COVID-19 pandemic will drive city dwellers to the suburbs, but if or when they begin packing, the Village wants Flossmoor to be on their list. This summer, the Village launched the micro website [www.discoverflossmoor.com](http://www.discoverflossmoor.com) and a digital marketing campaign geared toward potential homebuyers. Recently, the Discover Flossmoor ads have appeared on the websites of Crain's Chicago Business and Chicago Magazine, as well as on Google, Facebook and Instagram. Planned ads on Metra platforms have been

delayed until the pandemic ends and commuter ridership picks up again. The feel of the campaign is warm and welcoming and evokes a place you'll want to call home.

To measure our efforts, the Village set a range of goals that will indicate whether or not the non-digital campaigns are effective, as the digital ads will provide specific insights to their effectiveness. The non-digital measurements include a decrease in the number of days a home is on the market, closing the gap between a home's list and sale

price, a reduction in home vacancies, lower foreclosure rates, and an increase in home sales between \$300,000 and \$500,000.



## Kaita Haynes is Flossmoor's Sign Fairy

When COVID-19 hit the region and Flossmoor families were forced indoors, Kaita Haynes said she felt a calling to spread love, joy, faith and hope to her neighbors. That came in the form of Hayne's project Lawns of Love, in which colorful signs displaying the message of love, joy, faith and hope area scattered about Flossmoor, even spreading beyond the region and into the heart of Chicago.

"When COVID hit, I worried that depression and uncertainty might happen. One night when I was sleeping, God came to me and gave me the vision for these messages of hope," said Haynes. "I wanted people to be able to look outside and find a reason to smile."

After initially installing signs in her own yard and neighbors' yards, Haynes started to generate inquiries from other residents in the Flossmoor Hills and Highlands Neighborhood. That eventually led to a huge response from people all around the surrounding communities. Lawns of Love now spans from the Homewood-Flossmoor area into the western and northern suburbs, as well as the north and south sides of Chicago.

A large reason for the rapid spread of the Lawns of Love signs was from the word of mouth of its participants. Haynes initially posted to social media asking if people were interested in receiving a free sign, but as the project has exploded in popularity, Haynes is now asking for donations for the cost of the signs.

"We've given out about 500 yard signs and delivered them directly to the houses that ask for them," said Haynes. "It adds up over time but we don't want to stop. There is no set price, but we are accepting donations."

The production and delivery of the Lawns of Love signs have earned Haynes' the nickname "sign fairy," which she gladly embraces. The name even inspired her to start delivering signs to homes on a whim.

"If I see a house that has a heart on the window or another sign in the yard, I'll put a Love sign or a Hope sign there," said Haynes.

With no plan to slow down production, Haynes is hoping to get a Lawns of Love sign in every yard in the community. The process is simple, she said, and the signs can be delivered within a week of the order

"As long as people want them and they keep making people smile, then they are doing their job," said Haynes.

Interested families are encouraged to connect with Haynes at [lawnslove2@gmail.com](mailto:lawnslove2@gmail.com).



**Lawns of Love creator Kaita Haynes.**

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## Connecting During COVID-19

One Book, One Flossmoor is a virtual reading campaign initially launched in March to connect the community around a selected book to share the reading experience, conversations and discussions surrounding the shared story. For the inaugural One Book, One Flossmoor the Village partnered with the Flossmoor Public Library in selecting *Year of Yes: How to Dance it Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person* by Shonda Rhimes.

The book was selected because of Rhimes' connection to the south suburbs in addition to the inspirational messages it delivered to the community during a challenging time. Rhimes is an American television producer, television and film writer, and author. Born in Chicago and raised, in-part, in Park Forest, Rhimes is a graduate of Marian Catholic High School. According to participants, the book club provided a special opportunity for Flossmoor residents to share a common experience when face-to-face interaction came to a halt. Because of the program's success, the Village and Flossmoor library are in the process of planning a second program for the fall. To learn more about One Book, One Flossmoor and know when the next book launches, visit [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org).

# NEWS TO USE!

## Brush Collection Continues

The Village of Flossmoor FREE brush collection service will continue to run once per month through October. This service is intended to provide an easy and convenient way for residents to dispose of tree branches from their property. The program is only available to single-family residential dwellings. Residents will be invited to put branches out for collection no later than 7:00 a.m. on Monday of the FIRST full week of the month. Collection will take place one week per month during Public Works regular work hours, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Guidelines for the program are below or visit [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org). Please note that brush generated by a private contractor is to be disposed of by the contractor. For additional information, contact the Public Works Department at (708) 957-4100.

### Items not collected by the village:

1. Root balls or stumps
2. Brush cleared or cut by contractors
3. Any yard waste including but not limited to leaves, grass clippings, compost
4. Any type of lumber, including construction lumber, landscape timbers, fence posts, or other processed wood products
5. Brush put in bags, boxes or containers of any kind
6. Foreign objects such as metal

### The remaining brush collection schedule:

- Sept. 7 to Sept. 11
- Oct. 5 to Oct. 9

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## Free Leaf Collection

Free annual leaf collection takes place during the month of November, starting the week of November 4. All residents of single-family homes are invited to place their leaves in 33-gallon biodegradable paper bags at the street curb no later than 6 a.m. on their scheduled collection days. No stickers are needed and there are no limitations on the number of bags that can be picked up. Plastic bags or rigid containers will not be collected. No grass clippings, tree branches or other landscape waste will be accepted.

Please visit [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org) for the 2020 fall leaf collection map. For additional information or questions contact the Public Works Department at (708) 957-4100.

## Referendum Question Coming November 3

Getting streets into good condition and keeping homes and businesses dry is a priority for the Village of Flossmoor. While the Village has spent millions of dollars over the past 20 years to improve stormwater management and maintain streets and sidewalks, the work is not done. The Village Board voted to place a referendum question on the November 3, 2020 ballot asking voters to approve the issuance of \$10 million in General Obligation bonds to finance needed improvements to the Village's streets, sidewalks and stormwater systems.

Specifically, the bonds will be used to pay for the resurfacing and reconstruction of streets and sidewalks village-wide, as well as improvements to stormwater infrastructure to reduce flooding in the Flossmoor Road Viaduct and upstream tributary areas of the Heather Hill and Old Flossmoor neighborhood. The flood prevention projects are expected to cost between \$5.7 and \$6.5 million. The Village has already applied for grants for the flood prevention projects and if the grants are awarded to the Village, more of the \$10 million in bond proceeds will be spent on streets and sidewalks.

If approved, the bonds will be paid off over 20 years and paid for through the Village's property tax levy. An existing bond issuance that paid for the construction of the Flossmoor Public Library will be paid off in 2021; as a result, the Village Board has been waiting for these library bonds to be paid off before approaching the voters about a new general obligation bond debt for these capital improvements.

This bond issuance will augment the Village's current spending on infrastructure and allow the Village to make significant progress toward upgrading the Village's streets and sidewalks in a short period of time. Last fiscal year (FY20), the Village spent \$451,367 on street resurfacing and rehabilitation. Over the years, the Village has used Motor Fuel Tax funding for ongoing street resurfacing projects, but these state-shared revenues have not kept up with the cost of the projects. For the current fiscal year, the Village has also budgeted \$450,000 (\$300,000 from MFT and \$150,000 from the General Fund).

If the referendum is successful, construction on the street improvements could likely begin as early as 2021 and the stormwater projects would begin as soon as the grant funding is known, which could also be as soon as 2021.

The Village is committed to providing residents with information to better understand the infrastructure needs and the financing. Stay tuned for a special newsletter explaining the referendum later this fall.

# school spotlight

## Education in a Post-COVID World

Life for students in the 2019-2020 school year took a drastic turn in the early part of March. As a mandatory stay-at-home order came in from the Governor's office, it became increasingly unclear what school would look like. But, thanks to the dedicated teachers of Flossmoor School District 161 and Homewood-Flossmoor High School, students were able to navigate the end of the school year.

Now, after months of deliberation, changes to initial reopening plans, and new state restrictions, school is back in session for the 2020-2021 school year, and it looks quite different than a traditional school year.

In mid-August, Flossmoor School District 161 Superintendent Dr. Dana Smith announced to parents that District 161 students would not return to in-person learning and would instead go to full remote learning.

"School districts received updated health and safety guidance pertaining to reopening schools from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Specifically, the new guidelines regarding the use of N95 fit-tested masks will require additional planning and preparation," said Smith. "Therefore, we will begin with all students in the remote program on Monday, August 24th."

With the announcement from Smith, in a community letter to parents, the District 161 Board of Education retracted its initial district reopening plan that would allow for parents to choose from a hybrid model of in-person instruction two days per week, independent activities two days per week, and live remote learning on Fridays or five days of remote learning with no on-site instruction. While the district launched the year with full remote learning, there is the potential that the Board of Education will reintroduce the in-person hybrid option later in the year.

Similarly, H-F High School started the school year with remote learning only, but may transition to offering a blended model that offers in-person instruction in smaller student groups, in addition to the remote model. This rollout will take place after reviewing the start of the school year, as well as what steps need to be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

"Although there is no way to eliminate risk altogether, we believe that by following the guidance and safety guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), we can significantly

reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 on our campus," said Dr. Von Mansfield, superintendent and Dr. Jerry Lee Anderson, principal, in a letter to HFHS parents. "Doing so, however, will require a partnership between home and



**Students in Flossmoor School District 161 thank their teachers virtually during remote learning in the 2019-2020 school year.**

school that is committed to taking care of ourselves and each other with care and compassion."

In both districts the priority will be on student and staff safety with a number of protections being implemented prior to any return to in-person instruction. The precautions include facility modifications with protective barriers, screening procedures for students and staff, COVID-19 training and response protocols, and a number of sanitization procedures.

While the safety procedures are based on the recommendations from the CDC, IDPH and the ISBE, they came highly demanded by the parents in the community. Both districts took significant input from the community in deciding how to start the 2020-2021 school year, which means the two will also be taking input throughout the school year on how parents and families are dealing with the alternative learning models.

"We are all on this journey together and I am confident that we will support and take care of each other," said Smith.

# business spotlight

## Dining Out in Flossmoor

When Illinois officially moved into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, Flossmoor businesses welcomed the news with open arms. After spending months only serving customers

Tracy Cairo, owner of The Bistro on Sterling. “Prior to COVID we had 4 small tables and chairs on the sidewalk, so having the additional picnic tables and tent has been such a help for business.”

Of course, as with every other Flossmoor business, reopening comes with a number of caveats as it relates to proper social distancing and additional sanitizing practices. While restaurants like Siam Thai have chosen to continue only serving customers via takeout, others like Kingsberry Waffle House have embraced social distancing measures to welcome patrons back.

In addition to spacing the dining tables appropriately, most restaurants have switched to disposable menus and condiments, wrapping all utensils in disposable napkins, sanitizing tables and chairs between diners, and requiring all staff to wear appropriate personal protection equipment.

Unfortunately, all of those preparations can't stop the most unpredictable of challenges with outdoor seating: Mother Nature.

“Our outdoor dining has been very good when weather permits. We do have umbrellas over most tables but some days the rain has caused people to either go inside or leave,” said Carolyn Armstrong at Flossmoor Station Restaurant and Brewery. “We are concerned that losing outdoor dining in the fall due to colder weather will obviously affect our business. Lots of unknowns keep me worried about the future.”

One good thing most businesses can rely on is the continued patronage of their takeout and delivery options. But, there are a number of other ways people can help support Flossmoor businesses as they continue to navigate the ongoing challenges associated with COVID-19.

Cairo encourages visitors to “Check in” on Facebook while dining, sharing photos and testimonial of the dining experience, and spreading the word to friends and family.

“Word of mouth and your experience is the best advertising,” said Cairo.

Additional outdoor dining options can be found at Dunning’s Market and Deli, Wiley’s Grill and Subway.



PHOTO BY MARCELLUS MARSH.

### Servers continue to practice safety procedures during outdoor dining at The Bistro on Sterling and other Downtown Flossmoor restaurants.

via delivery or carryout, Phase 4 once again allowed Flossmoor restaurants to welcome customers in-person, with one minor difference – they would be dining outdoors.

As decorative white tents popped up in Downtown Flossmoor, friends and families were once again allowed to enjoy their favorite eats while also having a seat.

“We are so grateful to the Village for providing the outdoor tent, lighting and picnic tables. We have added fresh flowers and candlelight to the dining tables to make the diner experience as comfortable and pretty as possible,” said

## Opulence Gallery: A Space to Celebrate

With more than 2,500 square feet of open floor space, Opulence Galley (3313 Vollmer Rd.) is the premier multi-use event space in the south suburbs. Opened in early July by mother-daughter combos Diana Doss and Mykhail Willis and Sharron Doss and Lauren Doss-Daniels, Opulence Gallery not only offers the physical space for social events, life celebrations, corporate/community meetings and entrepreneurial pop-ups, it also features a caterer prep area with refrigeration and additional space for food and beverage preparation.

"We wanted an upscale venue where people walk in and say 'wow,'" said Diana Doss. "The room is a transformable, open concept made to accommodate different styles and events. The room is made to allow for creativity when our guests think of what they can do with the space."

While the family is happy to finally have the business up and running, the challenges of COVID-19 certainly raised questions during the early phase of opening. However, the four women stuck together and rose above the challenge to bring their dream to life. It is especially

important at a time like this, said Willis, to create a space that allows the community to come together to celebrate, create memories and make connections.

"People shouldn't have to go all the way into the city to celebrate their milestones," said Willis.

Currently, Opulence Gallery is only allowing events of 50 people or less in accordance with Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan, but once the state reopens, the gallery can accommodate upwards of 100 guests.

Additionally, Opulence Gallery features a number of set packages and customizable packages that include different table variations, exclusive catering partners and event planners. Those features makes Opulence Gal-

lery a perfect setting for wedding receptions, baby showers, birthday parties, holiday parties and a whole lot more.



**Opulence Gallery is an event space for all gatherings, including this one-year-old birthday party.**

"It really came together better than we ever thought possible," said Diana Doss.

For booking information and to view available packages with Opulence Gallery, visit [www.opulcencgallery.com](http://www.opulcencgallery.com), email [info@opulcencgallery.com](mailto:info@opulcencgallery.com) or call (708) 277-9496.

## Little Fern Salon Perseveres

Little Fern Salon (2550 Central Dr.) is a full-service hair salon owned by talented artists Alysia Lambert and Nora Kornblum. Originally opened in Orland Park in 2019, Little Fern Salon relocated to Flossmoor in early April, amidst the state's stay-at-home order.

However, because of its popular social media following on Facebook and Instagram, the two business owners were able to generate continued support and excitement from their loyal customer base during the pandemic, while they put their signature spin on their new space in Downtown Flossmoor. The Little Fern Salon signature is warm, relaxing and invigorating, to create an experience that stands out from the rest. The salon officially opened to the public in June, 2020.

Little Fern Salon specializes in hair coloring, cuts and styles, product sales and special occasion hair styling. Little Fern Salon is an exclusive Davines hair salon, a global company that creates hair and skin care products that are cruelty free, environmentally sustainable, plant derived and thoughtfully created.

# fire & police updates

## Greg Berk Serves Flossmoor as Interim Fire Chief



**Interim Fire Chief Greg Berk**

Former Flossmoor Fire Chief Greg Berk reassumed his position as the leader of the department when he was named Interim Fire Chief in April. Berk filled the vacancy left by retired Fire Chief Chris Sewell. In Flossmoor, the position of Fire Chief is a mayoral appointment with a confirming vote by the Board of Trustees. The position reports daily to the Village Manager. The Village Board of Trustees unanimously selected Berk, who joined the Flossmoor Fire Department in 1967 and retired as chief in 2003.

“The Village Board of Trustees and I are very pleased and grateful to have the fire service experience and love for Flossmoor that Interim Chief Berk

brings back to the community during this difficult time for our community and the country,” said Mayor Paul Braun. “We look forward to having the assistance of Interim Chief Berk as the Village continues to provide essential fire protection and emergency medical services for the community.”

Prior to his retirement, Berk served the Flossmoor Fire Department as fire chief for 25 years, from 1978 to 2003. Berk joined the Flossmoor Fire Department in 1967 as a volunteer firefighter, eventually working his way up the ranks to the role of chief, having served as the Village’s first full-time Fire Chief. Following his retirement in 2003, he served as the Fire Chief of Wheaton for 10 years. He also served as the Interim Fire Chief in Roselle for six months in 2015.

Berk holds his Bachelor’s Degree from Northern Illinois University and his Master’s Degree from Governors State University. Berk also carries the Executive Fire Officer designation from the National Fire Academy.

“Having spent as many years in fire service that I have, I love the fire service. When you love what you’re doing it goes by in the snap of a finger,” said Berk. “Being back in with the firefighters, being back with the Village is an exciting challenge. I’m really looking forward to being back in Flossmoor, serving our residents and fulfilling the needs of the fire department.”

Chief Berk is expected to serve in the role of interim chief for up to 12 months.

“As the Village adjusts to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic ramifications that are expected to follow, the appointment of an interim chief allows us to ride out this storm, so to speak, before undertaking a full recruitment process for a permanent Chief,” said Bridget Wachtel, Village Manager. “I know that the impacts of this global crisis are especially difficult on first responders and I know that Chief Berk’s professionalism, experience and leadership will be a steadying force for all of us.”

## Please Park on the SAFE SIDE

Reminder to Flossmoor residents that parking is restricted to one side of residential streets, the safe side opposite of fire hydrants. Additionally, there is no parking on any Village street from 3 to 6 a.m., except with special pre-approval from the Police Department. Parking is also restricted on all Village streets after 2 inches of snowfall to allow for snow removal. With regard to the limitation of parking on the non-hydrant side of the street, keep in mind the following:

- School zone parking are still in effect. Those areas signed around Western Avenue, Heather Hill and Flossmoor Hills Schools continue to operate with the signage that is established to accommodate school drop off and pick up. Therefore, parking is allowed on the hydrant side of the street per that signage.
- Parking around churches and parks is regulated by today’s regulations and any signage that exists.
- There are several streets in the center of the Village that have time limit parking to dissuade commuters from parking on Village streets all day. That time limit parking still applies. However, there is no parking on the hydrant side of those streets, and the time limit regulation is in effect on the non-hydrant side.
- Private streets like Hampton Court, Pembroke Court, Acorn Lane, Dundonald Road, the Chestnut Hill subdivision, the Baythorne subdivision, Butterfield Circle, Huntington Court, and Gianna Dr. are not subject to the regulations.

# commission corner

## Recyclepalooza Rescheduled!

It's so easy being green in Flossmoor, thanks to the community-wide Recyclepalooza extravaganza! Due to COVID-19, we had to reschedule this annual event for the fall. Now, you have extra time to clean out your closets, garage, attic, basement and cupboards for all types of recyclable items and bring them to Recyclepalooza on Saturday, October 3 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot of Parker Junior High. COVID-19 rules: Please stay in your vehicle. Sort items by category, clearly marked and place in your trunk. Volunteers will unload contact free!

### Recyclable items include:

- TVs (\$20 per set)
- Electronics
- Metals
- Ink/laser jets
- Bikes
- Clothes (gently used)
- Sporting goods
- Eyeglasses
- American Flags
- Plastic Bags / Wrap
- Trophies
- Crayons & Markers
- Razors (used)
- Legos

Recyclepalooza is sponsored by the Village of Flossmoor Green Commission, HF Area Green Committee, H-F Chronicle, Homewood and Flossmoor Libraries and Homewood Disposal.

## Apply to Become a Green Commissioner!

The Village of Flossmoor is looking for applicants for the Green Commission. The Green Commission helps to create programs that promote green living and sustainable lifestyles for Flossmoor residents to adopt at home. Additionally, throughout the year, the Green Commission hosts and participates in key events like Community Clean Up Day, Arbor Day tree planting, educational STEAM participation with Flossmoor School District 161 and Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Recyclepalooza, an annual shred event and the Flossmoor Seed Library. The Commission may also receive special assignments from the Village Board from time to time. For those interested in applying for the Green Commission the application can be found at [www.flossmoor.org](http://www.flossmoor.org).



PHOTO BY MARCELLUS MARSH.

**Nina Harris, Barrel of Hope Artist**

## Sending Messages of Hope

Local businesses, organizations and artists have created original pieces of public art on six used bourbon barrels, that were donated by Flossmoor Station Brewery, with messages of hope and inspiration during a challenging year. The decorated barrels are now on display across Flossmoor at area businesses as a preview of the larger Flossmoor public art program fundraiser slated for the summer of 2021. Visit all six locations and take a photo of yourself. If you tag the Village in all six photos using #flossmoor365 or #artflossmoor, you will be entered to win a \$25 gift card! Keep an eye out for more opportunities to get involved. Want to sponsor or paint a barrel? Visit [www.artflossmoor.com](http://www.artflossmoor.com) to fill out an interest form.

## Village of Flossmoor

2800 Flossmoor Road  
Flossmoor, IL 60422

[flossmoor.org](http://flossmoor.org)

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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE



**Mayor Paul Braun**

Greetings Flossmoor families and friends. I hope that this message finds you well as we move forward adjusting to the new normal.

I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your patience, your resilience and the compassion that you have shown throughout all of the challenges we have faced as a community and as a country. From facing a global pandemic head on, to fighting and speaking

out against the injustices African Americans endure daily, I have never felt prouder to be your Mayor.

These are the things that make Flossmoor special and why we want more people to know about our wonderful community. As we continue to live through Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan, these are some of the steps that Flossmoor is taking to keep our community open and welcoming while at the same time, keeping our residents and Village staff safe.

Currently, Village Hall and the Flossmoor Public Works service center are open to the public. However, there are added precautions to ensure the safety of our visitors including touchless temperature screenings, required face coverings, and distancing of public seating. Additionally, we ask that residents who are experiencing any COVID-19-like symptoms to conduct their business with the Village remotely.

Phase 4 does not allow the Village to host gatherings of 50 or more people, which means sadly we were forced to cancel some of our favorite summer and fall events. We are especially saddened to say that Flossmoor Fest will not take place this year. So, for now, we look forward to seeing you at next year's Flossmoor Fest. Village staff and the Village Board are working diligently to plan alternative digital events that will allow for residents to stay connected with one another and with Village representatives. One event that was a

smashing success was the alternative Volunteer Fire Department Corporation's annual Fourth of July celebration. We hope that other Village events will generate the same level of excitement.

We are disappointed to hear that the Hidden Gem half marathon race will not take place this year. With such a fantastic turnout last year, we all were looking forward to once again welcoming new visitors to our community, but we are confident the Hidden Gem committee will not skip a beat in momentum for when the half marathon returns in 2021.

Fortunately, Flossmoor businesses are up and running with restaurant outdoor and indoor dining now available. Three new businesses have opened in the Village this year, Glow Salon and Opulence Gallery in Flossmoor Commons and Little Fern Salon in Downtown Flossmoor. Please be sure to show these two businesses as much love and patronage as we have to all of our Flossmoor businesses during this challenging period.

To address our significant infrastructure needs in streets, sidewalks, and stormwater/flooding prevention, the Village Board voted yes to place a referendum question on the November 3, 2020 ballot. The referendum question will ask voters to approve the issuance of \$10 million in General Obligation bonds to finance needed improvements to the Village's streets, sidewalks and stormwater systems. An existing bond issuance that paid for the construction of the Flossmoor Public Library will be paid off in 2021; as a result, the Village Board has been waiting for these bonds to be paid off before approaching the voters about a new general obligation bond debt for these capital improvements. Watch your mailbox for more referendum information.

Once again, please know how proud the Village Board and I are of the way the community has shown such strength and resilience. While the future may be unknown, I am confident that all of us will continue to be a community of love, understanding and compassion.

Be safe and stay well.  
Paul S. Braun, Mayor