



The Official Newsletter for Berkeley, Illinois

| DEC. – JAN. – FEB. 2021

BERKELEY CONNECTS

VILLAGE BOARD

Robert E. Lee, Jr.
Village President

Maria M. Rivera
Village Clerk

Sherry Graf-Stone
Village Trustee

Raymond Grenier
Village Trustee

L.W. Hammar
Village Trustee

Jerry Perez
Village Trustee

Diane Salemi
Village Trustee

Herb Washington
Village Trustee

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Rudy Espiritu
Village Administrator

Justyn Miller
Asst. to the Village Administrator

Timothy J. Larem
Police Chief

Michael Kuryla
Fire Chief

Joseph Wagner
Public Works Superintendent

From the Village President's Desk

Holiday Greetings Berkeley Residents and Business Owners

I hope that this correspondence finds you and your family doing well as we look to collectively and happily closeout the year 2020. Like many others, we anxiously welcome 2021 with the anticipation of great opportunities that are coming to the Berkeley community. Examples of these include the I-294 expansion project, School District 87 reconstruction of Sunnyside and MacArthur school buildings, the Berkeley Park District strategic plan as well as the Berkeley Public Library 5-year agenda for its planned growth within the community. We are certainly fortunate as Berkeley residents to have such forward thinking and positive planning management within our Schools, Park District and Public Library. The Village of Berkeley Board of Trustees is firmly committed to assisting our intergovernmental partners in any way that we can to help them achieve their goals, which is great for the entire community as well as our future successes.

The Village of Berkeley Board meeting of November 3rd featured our annual CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) by the independent outside auditing firm of Sikich LLC. The Village received the positive news of completing the fiscal year of 2019-2020 with a budget surplus of \$60,000. I would like to thank and credit the entire Village of Berkeley management team led by Village Administrator Rudy Espiritu, Chief of Police Tim Larem, Fire Chief Mike Kuryla, Superintendent of Public Works Joe Wagner and Assistant to the Village Administrator Justyn Miller for their continued fiscal responsibility while adhering to the budget passed by the Board of Trustees and continuing to provide our residents with the quality services that we all expect. The last three months of our fiscal year (February, March and April) included the beginning of the economic downturn as a result of the Coronavirus. The challenges will certainly be greater during our current fiscal year of 2020-2021 which, of course, is surrounded by the virus and all of the economic challenges that have been created by this crisis. The Village Board of Trustees and management team stands committed to our main responsibilities of providing for the public safety of the community while also being fiscally responsible with your tax dollars.

Before we discuss what is coming for 2021, I would like to invite you and your family to visit Berkeley Park during the month of December to enjoy our holiday festival of lights. The Berkeley Public Works Department, aided by Trustee Rusty Grenier and the Berkeley Park District, are teaming up to transform Berkeley Park during the holiday season to offer a destination of traditional holiday magic. Please enjoy at your leisure throughout the month of December and early January. Our goal is to improve upon our holiday magic with each passing season at Berkeley Park for the enjoyment of all. The official Christmas tree lighting will occur on Tuesday December 1st, at 6:00 pm, prior to the Village board meeting to be held at 6:30 pm. We will not have our typical Holiday Fest due to the increase of Coronavirus, but please join us on the Village's Facebook page, as we will livestream for your convenience.

The Berkeley Youth Baseball Association (BYBA) is the longest running continuous youth program in the 98-year history of Berkeley. For over 65 years, some 10,000 young boys and girls have participated in the BYBA program with most games being played at the ballfields located behind Sunnyside School at St Charles and Wolf Roads. In 2021, BYBA will mark the final opening day of baseball at this location due to the construction of the new District 87 School buildings scheduled to break ground in May of 2021. The new "State of the Art" school buildings are to be built where so many Berkeley youths learned and enjoyed Little League Baseball. This is great news for the future of our educational system in Berkeley District 87 and represents an opportunity for BYBA as well. The Village of Berkeley and the Village of Hillside are currently planning a combined Youth Baseball Program in order to continue to provide the opportunities for our youngsters to participate in a quality baseball program with games to be played at the Hillside Commons and also Berkeley Park on Electric Avenue. The Village of Berkeley owes a debt of gratitude to District 87, thousands of players, coaches, parents, sponsors and all who contributed to the success of BYBA for all of these years. A special opening day ceremony will take place in April 2021 to acknowledge the success of this program and celebrate its future partnership many years to come.

By now, you are likely aware of the I-294 expansion project currently taking place from 95th St. to the south to Balmoral Ave. to the north. The Village of Berkeley is and will be greatly impacted by this massive road project that cuts along our western border. Six homes have been purchased from their owners and demolished, two 230' tall electrical towers are now located right at our border for relocated electrical lines, one of our public works storage yards is being relocated as well as other impacts on our community that involve the revenue stream that the Village routinely receives from a billboard and cell towers located on Berkeley property.

The impact on Berkeley comes at a cost, yet it is a cost that the Toll Authority has assured us will make the Village financially "whole" while improving the I-294 Tollway for years to come. There are some complex issues at stake within the negotiation process that involve many partners, both public and private, as well as lease agreements, land acquisitions, terms and conditions. I say this to assure the residents that we, as your representative to the public safety and welfare of our community, are committed to holding the Toll Authority to their word and commitment of honoring the partnership that this project entails. The Berkeley Board of Trustees and management staff has fulfilled every obligation to the Toll Authority and fully expects the same in return from them as we move toward completion of our negotiations.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a safe, happy and healthy holiday season. Thank you for making Berkeley your home. 2021 will be a terrific year for Berkeley!!!!!!!

Respectfully,



Robert E. Lee, Jr. Village President, Village of Berkeley



Berkeley Code Enforcement/Property Maintenance

Winter 2020 -2021

This year has been challenging for all of us given the current pandemic situation. Please refer to our Village website and Facebook pages for updates regarding COVID-19 restrictions and assistance. Another helpful link for more information relevant to COVID-19 is: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Also, please don't hesitate to contact us directly at gbednar@berkeley.il.us (708) 449-8224 EXT: 2681 or alopez@berkeley.il.us (708) 234-2616 if in need of assistance or guidance. We are here to help and will get through this together.

Congratulations to all the Beautify Berkeley Homes of the Month that were chosen during the 2020 season.

As winter approaches the thought of snow and ice is inevitable. Let's keep in mind the following:

- In order for the Village to plow the streets effectively and efficiently, vehicles must not park on the Village Street when there is a potential of two (2) or more inches of snow, keep your garbage and recycling containers off of the streets so that the trucks can effectively remove the snow, keep the sidewalks shoveled and remember to not throw snow into the street.
- Avoiding accidents is always a priority. Sump-pump discharges are not allowed to discharge onto public property or cause a nuisance to a neighbor. Discharge should be maintained at least five (5) feet from any lot line. In cold months, discharging on to public sidewalks or the street will cause ice and the potential for accidents and injuries.
- As always, with extreme weather remember to check on children, the elderly and pets who are outdoors for long periods of time.

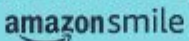
Berkeley Neighborhood Watch

Creating Community Awareness

- FUTURE MEETINGS at the Village Hall will be held on **February 10, 2021** and each second Wednesday each month beginning at 6:30 p.m. subject of course to Covid restrictions.
- Sergeant Len Norek continues to warn us about scams relating to COVID-19 including false information about stimulus checks, dubious medical treatments, and fake websites requesting donations to non-existent charities.
- Protect your family, pets and home by enrolling in [Smart911.com](https://www.smart911.com), a free service that will alert first responders about how to best serve you should you need emergency services.
- Our DOOR/WINDOW decals are FREE at the Village Hall and Police Station.
- Need a good unique mask? Thanks to Lisa Castor of our village, we have a limited number available by contacting us via email or Facebook.
- You can now help support us by purchasing through [AMAZON SMILE!!](https://www.amazon.com/s?ref=ast_sml) Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to us. Doesn't sound like much, but it adds up after a while!!
- Contact us at berkeleyneighborhoodwatch@outlook.com, Facebook, or through Sergeant Len Norek (708)449-8226
- STAY HEALTHY!!!



Help bring joy this season

Buy your gifts at AmazonSmile and Amazon donates


Berkeley Fire Department

Winter Fire Safety Tips



As the temperatures drop the Berkeley Fire Department wants to take this opportunity to pass along some winter safety tips. The following facts are eye opening:

- Half of all home heating fires occur in December, January, and February.
- 1 in 7 home fires are related to heating equipment.
- 1 in 5 home fire deaths are because of heating equipment.
- Move any combustible materials a minimum of 3 feet away from heating devices. This includes fireplaces, wood stoves, furnaces, hot water heaters and of course space heaters.
- In the event of a power loss make sure to keep all portable generators outside and away from windows, doorways, the attached garage or any place else that will allow fumes and carbon monoxide to drift into the home.
- Your home should have a working carbon monoxide detector on every level and test them at least once a month.
- When using an electrical space heater make sure it is the only item plugged into that outlet never overload an outlet this is a major electrical hazard.
- A yearly inspection and cleaning of your fire place chimney and firebox should be done. Always store cooled ashes outside the home in a metal container. This metal container should be off decks, porches and not in the garage.
- Please be aware of where you shovel or blow your snow. Do not cover the fire hydrants. If one is buried please attempt to clear it, this is a great help.

Any further questions or concerns please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at the following phone number 708-234-2645. Have a safe Holiday Season along with a Happy New Year! Let us all look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2021.

American Legion

Berkeley Post and Unit 1016

The **Berkeley American Legion and Auxiliary** have faced many new challenges regarding the COVID-19 virus which has limited our ability to hold regular in person meetings. The day to day business of the Post has continued through the use of conference calls. We would like to thank Commander Bob Owens for his service and we are pleased to announce that John Asaro has been voted to become our next Commander and Financial Officer for the Berkeley Post 1016. Congratulations to **John Asaro** for stepping up to lead the American Legion into the future.

Here are some of the projected upcoming events:

December

- **Gifts to the Yanks**—TBD Donations can be made to Berkeley American Legion Post 1016, P.O. Box 892, Hillside, IL 60162
- **December 11th** Post 1016 meeting at 7:30pm at Village Hall

January

- **January 8th** Post 1016 meeting at 7:30pm at Village Hall

February

- **February 12th** Post 1016 meeting at 7:30pm at Village Hall

The **Berkeley American Legion and Auxiliary** are committed to being a community minded organization. If you are interested in becoming a member please contact John Asaro at (708) 493-2303. Thank you for your support.

Berkeley Community Garden Club

2020 Growing Season Recap



The 2020 growing season proved to be a little different for the Berkeley Community Garden Club. We had to forgo our community fests and the fun social gatherings and BBQ's, but still we grew together. We continued our mission of growing and donating hundreds of pounds of pesticide free food for our neighbors in need. Our member plot renters and many volunteers had a garden escape from the COVID-19 isolation while staying safely distant. We were able to enjoy and share fresh food when the need has not been greater. Going forward we plan to keep up our good works and help our community be the wonderful place it is. We want to take a moment to give thanks to all of those folks that make our club run smoothly. We would like to say a special thanks to the Village of Berkeley, Roy Strom, our many community partners, and our Sharing Garden and administrative volunteers. As the 2021 growing season arrives, please consider joining us, your community garden club.

Grow Your Community!! Become a BCGC member in the 2021!

Like us on Facebook- BerkeleyGardenClub

For more information about membership, plot rentals, or you are just curious, feel welcome to email us:

BerkeleyCommunityGardenClub@Comcast.net or call 630-481-6442

Berkeley Public Library

Library Closings:

The Library will be closed on December 24th and 25th in observance of Christmas December 31st and January 1st in observance of the New Year, and January 18th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Message from the Director:

Next year will bring two milestones to your library: our 75th year of service to the community (!) and the 50th year since the ground-breaking for our building on Taft Avenue. As we look to the future, we want to make sure that we continue to provide exceptional service to this community. To that end, your library is currently working with Williams Architects of Itasca, Illinois to evaluate our facility and plan a series of updates that promise to put us in the best possible position to serve the community for many years to come. Specifics are still being determined, but we are currently looking at adding features you've asked for, including a permanent drive-thru service window, additional meeting and quiet study rooms, a dedicated space for all of Youth Services, and a community craft/workroom. We're very excited to see what the future holds and to show off updates to all of you as they happen!

Winter Programs: Social Distancing will be practiced at all Programs.

Teen and Adult DIY Crafts. Dec 5, 11:30-1:00. Need a Christmas gift for someone special? Come join us in making individual mug candles! Registration required, limited space.

Nintendo Gaming. December 22nd & 29th, 3:30-5:30. Looking for something fun to do before the holidays? Join us for some socially distanced Nintendo Gaming! We'll be playing Super Smash Bros. Ultimate and Mario Kart on the library's Switch. If you have a controller, please bring your own!

Teen Book Club. Jan 29, Feb 26, 4:00-5:30. Looking for some new reads? Want someone to talk with about your favorite books? The Teen Book Club is for you! This year, the Berkeley Library is starting a new book club just for teens. We will be reading various YA titles, discussing them, and ending with watching something that goes with the book or playing on the Nintendo Switch. The first book will be Pan's Labyrinth by Cornelia Funke and Guillermo del Toro. Books will be available at the circulation desk. Registration is required, limited space, ages 13-18.

SAT Study Group. Jan 9, 23, Feb 13, 27, 12:30-1:30. SAT is coming up! Registration requested, limited space.

Recurring Programs:

Adult Book Club. Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 17, 7:00-8:00. **Create Club.** Jan 15, Feb 19, 4:00-5:00. **Tea and Mystery.** Dec 4, Jan 8, Feb 8, 10:30-12:30. **D&D.** Dec 12, 26, Jan 9, 23, Feb 13, 27, 2:00-4:30. **Senior Mon.** Dec 14, Jan 11, Feb 8, 10:30-11:30.

**** Please check out our website (www.berkeleypl.org) or join us on Facebook at (<https://www.facebook.com/berkeleylibil/>) for more information on programming!**

Village of Berkeley

ELECTRIC LIGHTS FESTIVAL

December 1st through January 9th

FREE walk through holiday experience along a portion of the historic Illinois Prairie Path!

BERKELEY PARK – 5819 ELECTRIC AVENUE, BERKELEY



BERKELEY

EST. MAY 20, 1924

#ElectricLightsFest



WWW.BERKELEY.IL.US



@OFFICIALBERKELEYIL

**FREE FRESH
PRODUCE
DISTRIBUTION**

**DISTRIBUCIÓN DE
PRODUCTOS FRESCOS
GRATIS**

Queen of All Nations Parish at St. Domitilla Church

**Queen of All Nations Parish along with the Greater Chicago
Food Depository is organizing a produce distribution
La Parroquia Reina de Todos los Pueblos y el Greater
Chicago Food Depository está organizando esta
distribución**

**When/Cuando 1st Saturday of every month thru September 2021
Primer sábado de cada mes hasta septiembre del 2021
10 am - Noon**

**Where/Donde 4940 Washington St.
Hillside, IL 60162
St. Domitilla Parking Lot/
En el estacionamiento de St. Domitilla
Walk up or Drive up/Caminando o Manejando**

**Who/Para Quién Open to anyone who needs the support!
Disponibile para quienes necesiten ayuda!**

**Food will be given away on a FIRST COME/FIRST-SERVED basis,
until supplies last, distribution will take place "rain or shine".
Los productos serán ofrecidos POR ORDEN DE LLEGADA hasta
donde alcancen. Se hará bajo cualquier condición de clima.**

*For more Information contact/Para obtener más información contacte
Greater Chicago Food Depository at 773-247-FOOD or chicagosfoodbank.org*

DEC. 2020

Dec. 01	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 03	Recycling East of Taft Ave
Dec. 10	Recycling West of Taft Ave
Dec. 15	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 17	Recycling East of Taft Ave
Dec. 24	<u>Village Hall Closed –Xmas Eve</u> Recycling West of Taft Ave
Dec. 25	<u>Village Hall Closed –Xmas Day</u>
Dec. 31	Recycling East of Taft Ave

JAN. 2021

Jan. 01	<u>Village Hall Closed –New Year’s Day</u>
Jan. 05	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 07	Recycling West of Taft Ave
Jan. 14	Recycling East of Taft Ave
Jan. 18	<u>Village Hall Closed –</u> <u>Martin Luther King Day</u>
Jan. 19	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Jan. 21	Recycling West of Taft Ave
Jan. 25	Administrative Hearing – 2:00 p.m.
Jan. 28	Recycling East of Taft Ave

FEB. 2021

Feb. 02	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Feb. 04	Recycling West of Taft Ave
Feb. 11	Recycling East of Taft Ave
Feb. 16	Board Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
Feb. 18	Recycling West of Taft Ave
Feb. 22	Administrative Hearing – 2:00 p.m.
Feb. 25	Recycling East of Taft Ave



Village of Berkeley
5819 Electric Avenue
Berkeley, Illinois 60163
708-449-8840
www.berkeley.il.us

LETTERS TO SANTA*Drop Box for Letters to Santa*

As part of this year’s *Electric Lights Festival*, the Village of Berkeley is happy to provide a drop off box for **Letters to Santa**. We invite children to use this location along with their parents to reach out to Santa this holiday season. We encourage participants to take photos with this feature and share them online with the **#ElectricLightsFest** tag to share your Christmas spirit!

**COVID-19***Coronavirus Safety Tips and Precautions***STAY HOME****SAVE LIVES****Help stop coronavirus**

STAY home as much as you can

KEEP a safe distance

WASH hands often

COVER your cough

SICK? Call ahead



The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Learn how COVID-19 spreads and practice these actions to help prevent the spread of this illness.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, everyone should:

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Put distance between yourself and other people (at least 6 feet).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily.

Monitor Berkeley Coronavirus data by going to the Village of Berkeley website and click “Coronavirus Dashboard”