

Meet the Newly Elected Officials



Mayor Lora Vitek

We wanted to offer a brief introduction of the newly-elected Mayor and Aldermen who recently were sworn in at the May 3 City Council meeting. We asked them each the same three questions. Read their thoughts below:

What are you looking forward to in your new position as Mayor?

I am very much looking forward to continuing all the great work that was already started by the former Mayor, Council and staff. As we come out of COVID, I think there will be some great opportunities ahead. Development is happening, our community is growing, entertainment and outdoor gathering will be back and part of everyday lives, we have very exciting times ahead. I am also looking forward to getting to know people in our community that I have not yet. Most of my time being the 4th Ward Alderman was spent in the downtown area—I am looking forward to getting to know businesses and residents on the east and west sides as well.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

Mostly because I am very excited about some of the projects we have started—First Street Plaza Expansion Project, Riverfront projects that includes the old police department site, The Arcada (East Side Entertainment District), former Pheasant Run Resort site. I am very motivated to see these projects through and continue the momentum for our City.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

I see public-private partnerships as such and we have seen success with the St. Charles Initiative taking on the First Street Plaza Expansion Project. We continue to fundraise to make that happen and we have a lot of dedicated people working on this to ensure its completion. I think there are so many projects and opportunities to apply this concept. It's about tapping into our community's interest and their support.

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Ask Us

Have a question you would like to ask? Send it to info@stcharlesil.gov, and it could be answered in an upcoming issue.

Meetings

To see a complete list of upcoming public meetings, including City Council, Committee and Commission meetings, visit our website at www.stcharlesil.gov/meetings. Agendas are generally posted the Friday prior to the meeting. Minutes are posted after they are approved.



Heritage. Community. Service. Opportunity

Contact Us

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Ronald Silkaitis
Re-elected Alderman
Ward 1

What are you looking forward to in your new term?

I am looking forward to continue engaging with residents and businesses. I have always valued their input and look forward to continuing these conversations. I look forward to seeing St. Charles continue to be a family-friendly city with many leisure, recreational, dining and entertainment choices.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

I have always enjoyed serving the city, its residents and businesses, and I wanted to continue to serve on their behalf. I also wanted to see the city continue to retain its beauty and character, and preserve its history.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

For years, I have been excited about current and potential developments in St. Charles. I am glad the First Street Development has come so far, and I hope to see it through completion in my coming term. I look forward to working on redeveloping the Pheasant Run and Charlestowne Mall properties, as well. These locations have much to offer St. Charles, its residents, and its visitors, and I hope the City Council is able to make good progress on these projects.



Ryan S. Bongard
Elected Alderman
Ward 2

What are you looking forward to in your new position as Alderman?

Let me start by saying how honored I am to serve as Ward 2 Alderman. The election is only a few weeks old but seems April 6th was just yesterday. I appreciate all the hard work put in by so many residents who offered their name in service to our city. I look forward to connecting with current and previous members of City Council as well as city staff to continue the positive momentum throughout St. Charles. I look forward to learning from their experiences while bringing my own perspective to make sure we are doing all we can for residents, our business community, parks & green space and more.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

Choosing to run for council was a decision made easy thanks to the encouragement and support of so many Ward 2 residents. It's important we have new energy and a proactive approach to ensure our community is as strong as possible. Change is important in our representation, it makes us stronger and keeps our city moving forward. Ultimately that's what fueled my decision to run.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

That's an easy one—everything. As we make our way through the challenges of Covid-19, it's important we remember just how much opportunity is on the horizon. Yes, the last year has been incredibly challenging for residents and the city alike. However, there are a number of great opportunities ahead—redevelopment of Pheasant Run, continued investment to First Street, how we increase resident engagement, finding a solution for Charlestowne Mall and so on. The future is bright for St. Charles thanks to residential, commercial, recreational opportunities ahead.

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Paul D. Lencioni
Elected Alderman
Ward 3

What are you looking forward to in your new position as Alderman?

There is so much to look forward to, however, as a new Alderman I'm looking forward to learning to be the best representative I can be. I'm looking forward to meeting all the people at the City of St. Charles who make the infrastructure of our city run. I want to engage with as many other active leaders as possible to hear their take. It's impossible to do well in any leadership role before you can understand the perspectives of those who have been making decisions longer than you and who will be working by your side.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

I was inspired to run for Alderman by my drive to help connect the different elements of our community. We live in my absolute favorite place on this planet. Our landscape is breathtaking and our neighbors are the absolute best. I have been fortunate to see our community through many different lenses. I grew up in St. Charles in a family that owned a supermarket. I have always had the chance to meet many of our neighbors who are passionate people leading and creating. Because of that, I had the chance to get very involved with many of these folks and help with their projects and ideas like local clubs, the arts, and many local businesses. I can tell you, there is tremendous passion and energy out there. It has helped me see how much opportunity there is for so many people. But, none of us can make it alone. I very much want to help more people find their opportunities to help or to grow. Most importantly I want to connect with people to help them realize how much our community has to offer them. I have been lucky to be in a place to see it for myself. I have to share that.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

St. Charles can go as far as all of us together can dream to take it.



Bryan Wirball
Elected Alderman
Ward 4

What are you looking forward to in your new position as Alderman?

I am looking forward to continuing to engage and build relationships with the residents in the 4th Ward and to learn more about their neighborhood needs and vision for moving our city forward. I am also excited about the opportunity to join a dedicated group of Aldermen that are committed to serving our community. I am also eager to get to work, along with our new Mayor, Aldermen, and city staff.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

St. Charles is a wonderful place to live, work and play. My wife and I love St. Charles; it is our home. As an Alderman I want to make sure we continue to advance our city in a way that enhances the quality of life for everyone while also including community input—I am passionate about staying connected with residents so their voice is represented at City Council.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

I believe we have a great opportunity to move our city forward in a balanced and thoughtful manner that also maintains our unique charm and quaint identity. St. Charles is filled with possibilities, from our vibrant downtown, beautiful riverfront to our wonderful historical buildings. The future is bright, and I look forward to bringing the voice and vision of our residents to City Council.

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Steve Weber
*Elected Alderman
Ward 5*

What are you looking forward to in your new position as Alderman?

I am looking forward to being able to represent the people of the 5th Ward and being a part of our great history.

Why was it important for you to run for your position?

I felt as though I could be a part of our great City Council to help lead St. Charles into the future at this pivotal time we are in. Both in assisting current residents and business along with good sound decisions that will improve our city for years to come.

What do you see as a good opportunity in St. Charles?

St. Charles has so many good things going for it. I don't want to stifle growth or miss any opportunities for us to truly separate ourselves from all of the surrounding cities. We need to truly create a great family environment and use all of our assets to do that. Riverfront and walking, biking paths as well as diverse entertainment options for all to enjoy. I want to be able to have year-round entertainment venues.

A Farewell to

Lucy Gruber

Arthur J. Lemke

Maureen Lewis

Chuck Amenta

Jo Krieger

The City of St. Charles Thanks You!

We Want to Hear What You Think about *The Den*

Take Our Survey!

The city is conducting a survey to gather feedback about *The Den* newsletter. Please take a few moments to share your feedback. Give us your thoughts on the content, appearance, format, and overall quality.

Take the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X6CPRCD>

The survey is open through May 26, 2021. Your feedback can help improve *The Den*!



Take The Den Enewsletter Survey!



Remember Bicycle & Skateboard Safety Rules

The weather is nice and school will be out soon for the summer. Please remember city regulations regarding riding a skateboard or bicycle downtown. (See Ordinance 10.11.2370 – Riding in business district).

Riding a skateboard or bicycle is not allowed on the sidewalk or other city property generally within the area bounded by 5th Avenue on the east, 5th Street on the west, Prairie Street on the south and the railroad tracks/bridge to the north. (See map.) And bicyclists remember to follow rules of the road as applicable to vehicles.

We appreciate your cooperation in adhering to these ordinances to ensure all have a safe and enjoyable experience while visiting our beautiful downtown.

The Latest Crime Prevention Newsletter is Out

The crime prevention newsletter from the St. Charles Police Department, offers helpful crime prevention tips, public safety information, quarterly stats, and police news. [Read it here.](#)

Outdoor Cooking Safety Tips

When the weather warms up, that means it's time to get grilling. Following these simple safety tips to avoid the risk of injuries.

SAFETY TIPS

- Place grill well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area
- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

CHARCOAL GRILLS

- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid (not gasoline) liquid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container. Never empty coals directly into a trash can.

PROPANE GRILLS

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
 - If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill
- More at** https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/Grilling_safety_Tips.pdf



Brush Collection Schedule

The complete schedule and more details about brush pick up is at www.stcharlesil.gov/services/brush

EAST SIDE OF RIVER

May 17

WEST SIDE OF RIVER

May 24

**Refuse Collection
Delayed One
Day due to
Memorial Day**

Yard Waste & Composting

Yard waste & compost are picked up on your regular refuse days. More information is at www.stcharlesil.gov/services/seasonal-services/yard-waste-collection

If you have any questions about these programs, contact Public Works at 630.377.4405 or pwadminstaff@stcharlesil.gov.

Westside Treatment Groundbreaking



Members of the City Council are joined by City staff, the engineering consultant and contractor for the groundbreaking on the West Side Waste Water Treatment Facility Expansion April 26.

The City recently broke ground on an expansion of the Westside Wastewater Treatment plant. The expansion will support development along and west of Randall Road, and improve water quality in Mill Creek and the Fox River.

Project Highlights

- Expand treatment capacity from 700,000 gallons per day to 1.05 million gallons per day
- Upgrade pump station for increased plant efficiency
- Biological and filtration treatment upgrades will remove 60% more nitrogen and 65% more phosphorus. An improved disinfection system will result in improved water quality on Mill Creek and the Fox River

- Improved stormwater management on the site, aiding flooding control
- Construction of an onsite sludge handling building and storage will improve the biosolids product. The City's biosolids are reused on local farm fields improving crop production and reducing the use of supplemental fertilizers

The City has a \$17.6 -Million-dollar contract with Vissering Construction Company. The project is fully funded by the IEPA Low Interest Loan Program and loan repayment comes from the wastewater user fees.



PUBLIC WORKS NOTES

2021 Street Rehabilitation Project Underway

The City of St. Charles has contracted with Geneva Construction for the 2021 Street Rehabilitation Project. This year’s project locations are as follows:

STREET NAME	FROM	TO
Renaux Boulevard	Deville Ln	Voltaire Ln
St. Germain Place	Renaux Blvd	Peck Rd
Oak Street	Randall Rd	Fairgrounds Entrance
N. 5th Street	State St	Mark St
Fox Glen Drive	Fox Glen Ct	Glenbriar Dr
Fairfax Road	Huntington Rd	Dunham Rd
Forest Ridge Road	Sterling Ct	Fairfax Rd
Hunt Club Drive	Stonehedge Rd	IL Route 64
S. 13th Avenue	Indiana Ave	Adams Ave
S. 11th Avenue	Adams Ave	Madison Ave
S. 12th Avenue	Madison Ave	Ronzheimer Ave
Jewel Avenue	S. 13th Ave	Forest Ave
Jay Lane	Jewel Ave	Pleasant Ave

Work is anticipated to start early May. All roadway work is scheduled to be completed in mid-August with parkway restoration to take place by September. For residents on streets scheduled to be resurfaced, keep an eye out for a letter from Public Works with additional information. If you receive an orange parking pass, work is anticipated to impact access to your driveway.

Please visit the [2021 Street Rehabilitation Program page](http://www.stcharlesil.gov/projects) on the City’s website at www.stcharlesil.gov/projects for construction updates each Friday, outlining work to be performed the following week. Look under 2021 Street Rehabilitation Project.



CITY NOTES

Lawn Maintenance

It’s springtime and new buds and shoots will be sprouting up all over town. Please remember to keep your lawn and landscaping well-groomed. According to [ordinance \(8.28.020\)](#), grass must be kept at a height of 8 inches or less.

The Problem with Balloons...

Submitted by the Natural Resources Commission

Balloons are part of both joyous and poignant events. As happy and festive as they appear though, they're basically flying litter just waiting to land. Once on the ground, deflated balloons can harm birds, turtles, fish and other wildlife.

In recent years several environmental groups, like Balloons Blow in Jensen Beach, FL, as well as regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have started to draw attention to the harm just one balloon can cause. A string or ribbon can strangle or entangle. A deflated balloon can look like a worm or some other sort of soft and non-threatening prey, and an animal may swallow it. Even if a wayward balloon isn't ingested, they often end up as trash, like a coffee cup or cigarette butt tossed from a car.

Each year (except last year—due to COVID) 25,000 orbs of future trash hit the skies before the start of the Indianapolis 500. Then there's the practice of releasing balloons as a memorial or tribute. Planting a tree, its branches reaching skyward, can create a more lasting effect, with zero risks to the environment.

To be fair, the balloon industry is well aware of the reputation its product has acquired. The Balloon Council, a Trenton, NJ-based trade organization devotes much of its website (www.balloonhq.com) to the defense of balloons and balloon releases, pointing out many times over that balloons are made of latex, a natural product, and are biodegradable.

In a never-published paper, "A Study of the Effect of Balloon Releases on the Environment," one of the conclusions reached was that "the balloon samples appear to be degrading at about the same rate as oak tree leaves and about three times faster than small pieces of wood (oak and pine)."

It's true, the oak leaves on our woodland floors today are nearly leathery as they were last fall. They are, however, slowly decomposing, adding nutrients back to the soil as they go.

But balloons? They really are just flying litter, waiting to land.

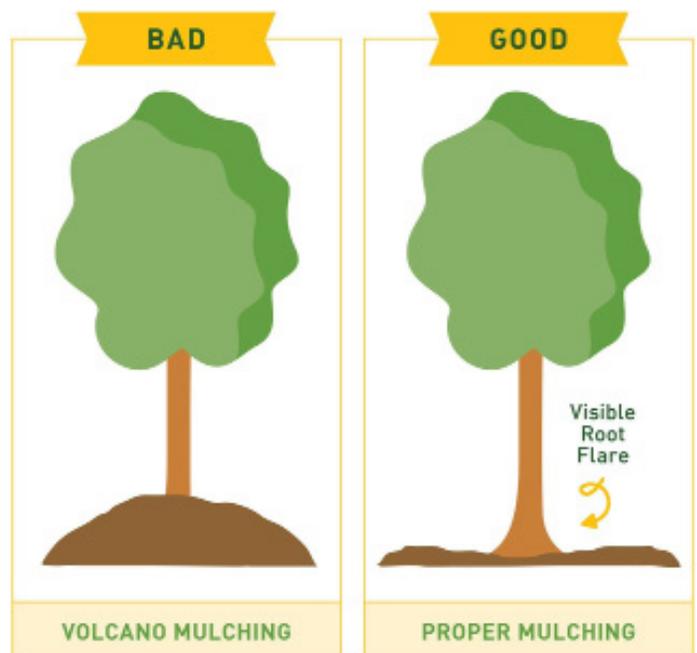


More Mulch Isn't Always Better

As the weather warms up, most of us will head outside to work in the yard.

Be aware that piling a mountain of mulch around your trees actually may be harming them.

[Take a look at this information from the University of Illinois Extension on proper mulching techniques and keep your trees healthy.](#)



A Sedge for All Reasons

Submitted by Natural Resources Commissioner Lee Haggas

The typical suburban homeowner lives in thrall to his or her lawn. The mowing, the fertilizing, the aerating, the maintenance—it can all add up to hours and dollars that could be better spent elsewhere. For those ready to chuck the mower and ditch the seeder, there is a species of native plant that could be the time—and environment—saving solution to those grassy woes.

Sedges are members of the Carex family, a grass-like group of plants that are hardy, native alternatives to typical suburban lawns, especially in those areas where cultivated grasses do poorly. And unlike their boring, one-look-fits-all counterparts, sedges come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from arching and spiky to mounded and compact to airy and open. They can grow as tall as 2 feet or stay close to the ground at 1 to 2 inches, and with dozens of native Carex

species, there will undoubtedly be a specific variety of sedge suitable for any suburban microclimate, from dry and sunny to moist and shady.

Best yet, sedges inhibit weed growth, produce seeds preferred by many bird species, and provide food, shelter and habitat for native insects such as beneficial moths and butterflies. And sedges are a plant for all seasons, sending up insignificant flowers in the spring, fruits in the summer, fabulous colors in the fall, and striking stalks and seed heads that provide interest through the winter. Some popular sedge varieties are Oak Sedge, Tussock Sedge, White-tinge Sedge, Gray's Sedge, Wood Sedge, Sprengel's Sedge and Star Sedge. Many varieties of sedges can be viewed at the Native Plant Demonstration Garden behind the St. Charles Park District Community Center at Pottawatomie Park and at Hickory Knolls Discovery Center.



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Public Service in the Spotlight in May

From police to public works and most every public position in between, May is the month that public service is in the spotlight.

In 2020, COVID shined a light on the essential services public workers routinely provide. The tasks usually are not very glamorous. But public service employees often are working around the clock so you can rely on those ordinary services that make your everyday life better:

- Flip a light switch and you know the lights will come on.
- Turn on a faucet and you know clean water will pour out.
- Flush the toilet and wastewater is sent to a treatment plant.
- Drive on roads that are paved, plowed, and in good condition.

- Call 911 for help and you know qualified police, fire or medical services professionals arrive within moments.

How many times a day do you use one or more of these services? When you are confident that these services will perform as they should and don't give them a second thought, we know we've done our jobs well. At the City of St. Charles, we are all grateful for the opportunity to continue to work for you.

When you're out and about enjoying springtime in St. Charles and you see a public works crew, police officer or firefighter, be sure to give them a wave—they will appreciate the gesture.

St. Charles Fine Art Show

May 29 & 30, 2021

Downtown St. Charles, Riverside Ave. & Main St.



The St. Charles Fine Art Show showcases the original, juried work of over 80 fine artists in mediums including clay/ceramics, digital art, drawing/illustration, fiber (non-wearable), jewelry, photography, glass, mixed media, oil painting, watercolor painting, acrylic painting, printmaking, sculpture, and wood. All are exhibited and available for sale during this outdoor and free event. Details at <https://www.stcharlesfineartshow.com>

Job Opportunities with the City

The City has openings for three full-time positions. For more information about these jobs and to apply, visit www.stcharlesil.gov/jobs.

Public Works Division Manager - Environmental Services/Wastewater

This position is responsible for planning, scheduling, coordinating, and supervising the operations, maintenance and analytical activities of the wastewater treatment facilities and lift stations. **Apply by May 16, 2021.**

Certified Wastewater Operator

This position is responsible for a variety of tasks in the operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plants and lift stations. **Apply by May 16, 2021.**

Benefits Coordinator

This position is responsible for the administration and legal compliance of the City's employee benefits and workers' compensation programs. The position has significant interaction with internal customers and outside partners. **Apply by May 23, 2021.**

Illinois on track to reopen

Barring any significant reversals, the state is projected to advance on the following dates:

Details at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/bridge-phase>

May 14

Bridge Phase

June 11

Phase 5

State of Illinois
COVID-19 Update
May 6, 2021

There is No Memorial Day Parade this Year