

# GAZEBO EXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • MARCH 2024

## Exciting upgrades on tap for Parks and Rec

The Highland Parks and Recreation Board has a host of projects on tap to enhance safety, upgrade facilities making them ADA accessible and expand recreation space at Sheppard Park. Park Superintendent Alex Brown said the board uses available funds and grants to their fullest while maximizing the construction season to keep moving the parks forward.

### [ ADA CONCESSIONS ]

By the end of construction season, the six park-based concession stands will be ADA accessible.

The concession at Meadows has already been retrofitted to make it wheelchair accessible.

While there may be other modifications to concessions at Main Square, Sharp Athletic Complex, Homestead, Markley and Sheppard parks, Superintendent Alex Brown said the focus is on accessibility at the service windows.

### [ NEW HAWK SIGNAL ON KENNEDY AVENUE ]

A Hawk signal is expected to go out to bid this year with installation to follow in 2025 on Kennedy Avenue where it intersects with the bike path. The signal is unique in its responsiveness to pedestrian and bicycle traffic crossing the heavily traveled Kennedy Avenue. Unlike most traffic signals, the Hawk operates only when a pedestrian pushes the crossing button. It is Highland's second signal. The first was installed at 45th Avenue and the bike path.

Parks Superintendent Alex Brown said the downtown crossing on Kennedy is considered the most dangerous in the local trail system. As a result, the Indiana Department of Transportation will be paying 90 percent of the cost.

### [ SOCCER FIELDS AT SHEPPARD PARK ]

The 2.5 acres of fallow land contiguous to Sheppard Park is being surveyed for wetland issues in anticipation of adding soccer fields at the park between Liable and Kleinman roads. "Soccer is wildly popular in Highland with more than 600 kids playing on teams," Superintendent Alex Brown said. "Sheppard is a great location to meet the needs of our soccer enthusiasts."



[ CRIME WATCH ]

Join us 6:30 p.m. **March 14** for a Crime Watch meeting in the Community Room at the Highland Police Department, 3315 Ridge Road.

Learn about what’s going on in your neighborhood as well as Highland’s total criminal activity in 2023, which is one of the lowest on record.

**QUESTIONS?** Please email Crime Watch Coordinator, Officer Justin O’Malley, at [jomalley@highland.in.gov](mailto:jomalley@highland.in.gov).



**WARD 1**  
**GEORGE GORGEFF**  
[cplgeorgeff@yahoo.com](mailto:cplgeorgeff@yahoo.com)  
(219) 545-8530



**WARD 2**  
**DOUG TURICH**  
[dturich@highland.in.gov](mailto:dturich@highland.in.gov)  
(219) 516-9649



**WARD 3**  
**ALEX ROBERTSON**  
[arobertson@highland.in.gov](mailto:arobertson@highland.in.gov)  
(219) 230-6116



**WARD 4**  
**TOM BLACK**  
[tblack@highland.in.gov](mailto:tblack@highland.in.gov)  
(219) 301-2077



**WARD 5**  
**PHILIP SCHEERINGA**  
[pscheeringa@highland.in.gov](mailto:pscheeringa@highland.in.gov)  
(219) 741-2841



**CLERK-TREASURER**  
**MARK HERAK**  
[mherak@highland.in.gov](mailto:mherak@highland.in.gov)  
(219) 838-1080

**NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?**

Send your suggestions to:  
[gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com](mailto:gazeboexpress@theideafactory.us.com)

The Gazebo Express is produced by:  
The Idea Factory • [www.theideafactory.us.com](http://www.theideafactory.us.com)

Printed by Lithographic Communications  
9701 Indiana Parkway, Munster, IN 46321



## Parkway Drive project nears completion

Highland has substantially completed a construction project providing street, water main and storm sewer improvements along the 8600-8800 blocks of Parkway Drive and the 2000 block of Kenilworth Avenue.

This project was a joint effort of the Highland Water Works Board, Town Council and Sanitary Board, with 50 percent grant funding from INDOT and a \$250,000 grant from Lake County.

The new 8-inch water main was installed under the sidewalk along the east side of Parkway Drive, replacing a failing 4-inch asbestos pipe. The size was increased to improve water quality and additional hydrants were installed to improve fire protection.

“This is a great example of what teamwork can accomplish,” Public Works Director Mark Knesek said. “Later this spring, trees will be planted to complete the project.”

[ BRANTWOOD PARK ]

Councilman George Georgeff is losing patience with NIPSCO, which he says is dragging its feet and threatening the footprint of nearby Brantwood Park.

“The utility is not being a good neighbor to Highland,” he said. “Highland wants to install new playground equipment and resurface the tennis courts at this park. NIPSCO is delaying us at every turn and now working to dramatically reduce the size of the park. NIPSCO is impacting our community in a negative way.”

Georgeff said he’s not giving up.

“This park is a priority for the Brantwood community and I will continue working to keep our park the focal point it has been for the community for the last 60 years.”

## Bookmaker says Highland hottest place to buy homes

Six months after Crain’s Chicago Business reported Highland was the sixth hottest housing market in the country, WISH-TV in Indianapolis is reporting our town is considered the first when it comes to hottest places to buy homes in Indiana and 29th in the nation. Griffith and Dyer were listed as second and third – respectively.

BuyOhio.com performed similar comparisons for the other 49 states using realtor.com data.

Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra said the spotlight is good for the town.

“It’s nice to know others are taking notice,” said Becerra. “We are ideally situated – close to Chicago, great jobs, a national park and beaches. Highland is a fabulous community with great housing at every price range. Prospective buyers can buy a starter home, upgrade if their families grow and retire without ever leaving the community they call home.”



# Golden Afternoon

For the first time in decades, Highland has its own downtown florist. Once a virtual flower and unique gift shop, owner Cameryn Friederichs is already promoting the bricks-and-mortar store, which is scheduled to open this spring.

Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra is thrilled to see the addition to the downtown line-up of restaurants, retail shops and professional offices. "This is a unique business that will help drive shoppers to the downtown," Becerra said. "I can't wait to shop there. It's a great addition to Highland."

**INFO:** 2817 Highway Ave. | [GoldenAfternoonBlooms@gmail.com](mailto:GoldenAfternoonBlooms@gmail.com)

**IN OTHER BUSINESS NEWS:** A new Grindhouse Café is coming to town. Owners of the coffee chain, which has locations in Griffith and Whiting, have purchased the building at 3805 Ridge Road, the former home of Bone Dry. Stay tuned for the grand opening!

## [ JULY 4<sup>TH</sup> FESTIVAL ]

Save the date – July 3-7 – for Highland’s Annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival, which features carnival rides, live entertainment, food vendors, crafts and the popular beer garden.

This year’s fireworks will be moved because of construction at Homestead Park. The Town Council and Community Events Commission have been exploring options and will be announcing a new location soon.

The entertainment lineup includes:

- ANTHEM – CLASSIC ROCK AND BEYOND
- The DAM Band
- Dick Diamond and the Dusters
- PAWNZ
- The Smiley Tillmon Band
- Together
- Stern Approval
- Crossthreads
- Visions of Santana
- SMALL TOWN – John Mellencamp Tribute
- Mr. Funnyman
- Nomad Planets
- Kashmir – Led Zeppelin Tribute
- Mike Green
- JUMP – Van Halen Tribute
- Eli and the Elements
- I’m With Frank
- Jim Bulanda – Frank Sinatra Tribute
- ELVIS Tribute with The Change of Habit Band



## [ RESTAURANT CRAWL ]

Join us for our popular Restaurant Crawl from 4-8 p.m. Tuesday, **March 26** in downtown Highland.

The concept is simple: 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. Several retail businesses will also be open late so diners can shop in between courses or while waiting for food.

**[ YOUNG REMBRANDTS ]**

Our elementary-age curriculum (ages 6-12) is designed to teach basic to advanced drawing skills, art techniques and vocabulary. We believe that drawing is the bedrock skill required for future artistic success. We give your student the skills to express their creativity and believe that all children can – and should – learn to draw. You'll see increased art abilities, learning skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.

**WHEN:** 5:30-6:30 p.m. Fridays, **March 15-April 12** (off March 29)  
**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center  
**FEE:** \$52 residents | \$57 nonresidents  
**INFO:** highlandparks.org

**[ SKATEBOARDING CAMP ]**

Learn the fundamentals of skateboarding or elevate your riding with group instruction from nationally ranked competitive riders while connecting with local skateboarders and making new friends. Anyone – ages 4+ – with a skateboard is welcome! Build proficiency in balance, pushing and riding, agility, ollies, and use of park obstacles.

**WHEN:** 10 a.m.-1p.m. Monday-Friday, **March 25-29** (Spring Break)  
**WHERE:** Sheppard Skate Park  
**FEE:** \$90 resident | \$105 nonresident  
**INFO:** highlandparks.org

**[ ADULT SOFTBALL ]**

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

**WHEN:** Season begins **April 28**  
**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center  
**FEE:** \$730 per team - 50 percent deposit required to reserve spot.  
**INFO:** highlandparks.org

**BREAKFAST WITH THE EASTER BUNNY**

Join the Easter Bunny and his furry friends for a continental breakfast. The event features a bike drawing, basket raffles and photos with the bunny.

**WHEN:** 9-11:30 a.m. **March 16** – first seating is 9-10 a.m., second is 10:30-11:30 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Highland High School cafeteria  
**TICKETS:** Purchase \$7 tickets online at hgchamber.org. Click on the Upcoming Events tab and navigate to the March calendar. Tickets are first-come, first-served.  
**INFO:** Call (219)923-3666.

**EASTER EGG HUNT**

Grab your basket and head to Wicker Park for the annual North Township Easter Egg Hunt. Children ages 1 to 10 are invited to hunt for filled eggs until the last egg is found! DJ music and a visit from the Easter Bunny will be part of the day's activities.

**WHEN:** 10:30 a.m. **March 23**  
**WHERE:** Wicker Park Pavilion  
**INFO:** Call (219) 313-3934.

**[ COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT ]**

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

**WHEN:** 7-9 p.m. Thursday, **March 21**  
**WHERE:** Highland High School Monbeck Auditorium  
**ADMISSION:** Free  
**INFO:** This band of volunteers is open to anyone from the area high school age or older. To join, contact Greg at [maestroflute@att.net](mailto:maestroflute@att.net).

**[ COMMUNITY 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? Rent a booth space at one of our garage sales!

**WHEN:** 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **March 16**  
**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center  
**VENDOR FEES:** Vendor fees (includes 7% sales tax) are \$38 for 10' X 10' for an interior space or \$60 for 23' x 6' for a wall space. Table, chairs, extension cords and moving carts are not provided.  
**INFO:** highlandparks.org

**[ ROCK 'N' ROLL FOR TINY SOUL ]**

This music class with Miss Caitlin is for babies, toddler and children to experience with a caregiver. The class will focus on singing, lap bounces, finger plays and simple instrument play with rhythm sticks, shakers, and drums. We will also have tons of movement, bouncy balls, bubbles and parachute time! All music will be developmentally appropriate to support child's development. Please, only one parent or caregiver to attend, per child – ages newborn to 4 years.

**WHEN:** 9:45-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays, **April 3-May 8**  
**WHERE:** Lincoln Community Center  
**FEE:** \$100 residents | \$105 nonresidents  
**REGISTRATION:** Deadline is **March 31**  
**INFO:** highlandparks.org