

Community

NEWSLETTER

For the 5th Ward

CONTACT INFO

44 E. Downer Place
Aurora, IL 60505
Alderman's office:
(630) 256-3020

E-mail:
cfranco@aurora-il.org
Cell #: (630) 631-4296

 Alderman Carl Franco

In this issue..

Upcoming Meetings

Shredding Event

Street Repairs

**Neighborhood
Cleanup Day**

Trash Containers

2016 City Events

**5th Ward Grant
Program**

Dear 5th Ward Residents,

This is the second all-ward newsletter I have sent out since becoming alderman. The first one in June was well received and mentioned some of my goals and aspirations. Some goals have been realized, some are in the works, but others are moving frustratingly slow. As many of us know, government can be a methodical process where various layers hamper expeditious movement of ideas. This is not all bad. There are times that scrutiny of a subject by a number of departments and committees provide for a better finished product. I mention this because I do get questioned often as to why things take so long. I have been satisfied, in most cases, with the reasons given for the length of time to complete a project or task. I have addressed those that I did not feel were reasonable with city staff with the intent to mitigate these delays in the future.

There are some 5th Ward accomplishments that have gone as scheduled. We have formed two neighborhood groups with the help of the City and some of our more involved residents. The goal is to have residents more involved with their community in order to help with crime prevention and neighborhood appearance and integrity.



This is a product of the old neighborhood watch programs. More people out and talking to their neighbors in addition to having a better communication process with the City and its services results in a better environment. The two groups, "West Aurora Concerned Citizens" and "Washington Neighbors" meet either monthly or bimonthly. At these meetings I give an update of things happening in the 5th Ward and a City staff member gives a presentation about their particular subject, such as Property Standards, which has been in high demand to speak at the neighborhood meetings. Community police officers are also there to give updates. Questions are asked and answered and opinions and comments are shared with the group. I am in the process of recruiting a leader in the Aurora University area for a third group. I also have suggested that the various Homeowners Associations invite me and City staff to their meetings.

Upcoming Meetings

① All Ward Meeting

When: Thursday March 31st at 6:30pm

Location: New Main Library, 101 South River Street.

② West Aurora Concerned Citizens

When: Each month on the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30pm

Location: Washington Middle School's Tech Center

③ Washington Neighbors

When: odd number months on the 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm

Location: Washington Middle School's Tech Center

Please check the FACEBOOK page titled "Alderman Carl Franco" for changes or updates.

Shredding Event

The 5th, 4th, and 6th Wards are sponsoring a free paper shredding event on May 21st from 8:00 am until noon at Jefferson Middle School located at 1151 Plum Street. All unwanted documents will be shredded on site. Please bring proof of residency to the event.

Dear 5th Ward Residents Continued..

While on the subject of communication, I originally wanted to send this newsletter out quarterly. However, one of the things I have learned is the cost of mailings and printing. The cost is prohibitive, even with the free graphic designing, so I have adjusted to either annual or semi-annual mailings. There will be mailings of postcards and other items for garbage clean-up days and other events. You can also find updates and info about upcoming events and ward happenings on a Facebook page titled "Alderman Carl Franco."

Another accomplishment that I am happy to announce is a grant program for the 5th Ward. While all the alderman are given a budget to spend on various things in their wards, it is surprisingly difficult and time consuming to appropriate money. The program I established allows for residents and non-profits to apply for grants up to \$15,000 for ward enhancements. The applications are screened by me and a six person committee of 5th Ward residents to determine if the criteria is met. A total of \$25,000 per year has been budgeted for this program. The inspiration for this was the success of financial incentives for Kingdom Impact Center on Plum Street. They were mandated by the City to put in new curbs, sidewalks, sewer system and parking in order to utilize the building they moved into. The finished product was a great enhancement to the area and its neighbors. While some ward funds were appropriate for partial reimbursement, there were a number of hurdles and "red tape" to navigate. Hence, we created a vehicle to make it simpler and quicker to reward those wishing to reinvigorate our neighborhoods.

Finally, I want to address economic development. Last year the City set a record for the number of business licenses applied for. The Premium Outlet Mall saw great expansion.

In the Downtown, the new library opened, the Paramount Theater and RiverEdge Park announced record attendance, a new restaurant opened called Gillerson's Grubbery, more condos and apartments are being built, and a tech support firm bringing 100 employees will utilize the old Main Library.

Here on the west side there will be a new restaurant this spring in the old Colonial building on Prairie Street, called the Spartan House. School District 129 is moving their main office to the Dreyer medical complex on Galena. In addition to an administration office at the new SD 129 location, there will be an early childhood learning facility and a technical training facility. This will provide the "foot traffic" that will be lost when Dreyer moves into their new facility on Sequoia Drive. Pittsburgh Plate and Glass (PPG) will be opening a 300,000 square foot facility on Orchard Gateway. A 60 unit assisted living complex is opening on Orchard and Galena. Aurora Bank and Trust will be opening on Galena just east of Orchard. There are also plans for a sandwich shop, ATI physical therapy and possible pizza parlor on Indian Trail, just east of Orchard. This is all good, but not enough. Cosmopolitan Market Place closing is a step backwards. I have been meeting with Invest Aurora, our economic development partner, to try to recruit new business here. I have personally contacted a number of upscale restaurants to consider opening on the west side. I have also contacted those associated with bowling alleys and movie theaters.

With the old Cub Foods building owned by St. Paul's, the old Hobby Lobby, and now Cosmopolitan available we have three spots that could house that type of entertainment. We will continue to pursue businesses that energize and makes sense for our community.

Sincerely,

Carl Franco
5th Ward Alderman

Street Repairs

Each year the Public Works Department determines, through an independent audit of all Aurora streets, which ones are the most in need of repair. There will be a number of streets patched again this year. That list is not available yet. We do have a list of the streets that will be resurfaced in 2016. In addition, we will have a few new sidewalks installed. There will be one on Galena, 4 blocks west of West High and one tentatively scheduled on Kensington Place. Also, on the corner of Kensington and Glenwood Place there will be partial corner sidewalks installed. This is the southwest corner of Freeman school. I have been out to this area a number of times and the lack of sidewalks for the kids walking to and from school is a dangerous situation. The combination of children walking in the streets while parents pick up/drop off their children is an accident waiting to happen. This will help mitigate a potential hazardous situation.

Neighborhood Clean-up Day

As in years past, there will be a neighborhood clean-up day for those 5th Ward residents residing north of Galena. Last year's event was for those living south of Galena. It will be held this spring but the exact date and locations have yet to be determined. A mailer will be sent out a month prior to those residents included with the date and locations. I ask that each household participating have proof of residency when arriving at the site. Last year there were some not residing in the 5th Ward who were turned away. There is a significant cost involved so I monitor who is eligible closely.

If you are interested in volunteering to help on the Neighborhood Clean-up Day **contact me at (630) 631-4296.**

The list of streets to be resurfaced are as follows:

- GARFIELD AV from EDGELAWN DR north to DOWNER PL
- SCHOOL HOUSE LN from CONSTITUTION DR to DOWNER PL
- WINIFRED DR from ALSCHULER DR to GARFIELD AV
- FOX DR from CANTERBURY RD to CANTERBURY RD
- PEBBLEWOOD CT
- WILD CHERRY CT
- ASHWOOD LN from FOXCROFT DR to FOXCROFT DR
- ASH CT off of ASHWOOD LN

** Please contact me if you observe a road in your neighborhood in need of repair. Each alderman has the ability to have additional streets repaired.*

Trash Containers

The new trash program implemented last summer has, as many of us know, been somewhat confusing and controversial with the costs, options and implementation. This is not unusual for a significant change. The dust has settled somewhat and most people are content with the new process. There is, however, a lingering concern voiced to me by several residents. The storage and visibility of the containers. It is a violation if the containers are visible from the street when they are stored. The City was not diligent in enforcing this originally as they wanted to ease into the program and give residents an opportunity to figure out where to store their containers. Mid December they amped up their enforcement which will continue going forward. Unfortunately, this is not easy to enforce due to the nature of containers going out weekly. A violation letter goes out to those not complying and then they get re-inspected 7 days later. This may not result in long term compliance by some. Staff is looking at more effective ways to deal with violators. Having said all that, I would encourage all 5th Ward residents to be considerate neighbors and store their containers in a manner that reflects positively on the neighborhood. I understand that a container could be visible if placed behind a small bush or such, or not visible from one street but visible from another if you live on a corner. There are a variety of factors. At a minimum please make an attempt to comply with the spirit of the ordinance. We have a great ward and at times we need to take it upon ourselves to keep it that way.

L

2016 City Events

1

First Fridays

When: First Friday of every month, 5pm to 2am

Location: Downtown Aurora

2

Farmers Market West

When: Wednesdays, July 13th through September 28th, Noon to 5pm

Location: West Plaza Shopping Center, 1901 W. Galena Blvd

3

Farmers Market Main

When: Saturdays, June 11th through October 15th, 8am to Noon

Location: Aurora Transportation Center, 233 North Broadway

4

4th of July Parade

When: Monday, July 4th, 10am

Location: Downtown Aurora

5

4th of July Fireworks Display

When: Monday, July 4th, Dusk (9:30pm)

Location: Veterans Island

6

Free Electronics Recycling

When: Dates to be determined

5th Ward Grant Program

AURORA WARD 5 RESIDENTIAL AND NONPROFIT GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

A Committee comprised of a group selected from 5th Ward residents (Ward Committee) and their Alderman, shall receive and approve requests for grants for community enhancements and/or improvements in the 5th Ward. The program, without limitations, will be geared around the following:

- Enhancements and/or improvements, such as, landscaping or infrastructure projects for public use.
- Demonstrate a benefit for the immediate area.
- Promote the character and integrity of the neighborhood and community.

The Ward Committee may also consider other information when approving or denying grant requests such as previous approvals, past history, and future development plans.

Qualifications:

Applicants must be residents of Aurora's 5th Ward or a nonprofit organization conducting business in the 5th Ward. The nonprofit organization must be a registered 501(c)(3) entity.

Grants will not be considered for public improvements or enhancements if applicant is also utilizing an existing city program whereby applicants are receiving assistance or compensation from said program. Grants are not meant for commercial use and hence requests for such will not be considered.

The program will allow for an annual budget amount not to exceed \$25,000.00. No applicant may be awarded more than \$15,000.00. Projects must not fall below the \$1,000.00 minimum threshold.

Applicants shall be responsible for all applicable permits from the City. Neither the City nor the Ward Committee will be responsible to ensure that the contracted work is done to the applicant's satisfaction. The Ward Committee will confirm with the City staff via Aldermen's Office, to ensure there are no violations or liens against the property or entity where the enhancements/improvements are to be completed.

Upon notification of the grant approval, the applicant will proceed with the project.*

A representative from the Ward Committee will verify that the work has been completed and forward the appropriate documentation to the City. The applicant shall submit the appropriate invoice(s) to the 5th Ward Committee and their Alderman for reimbursement.

Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, and distributed based on availability of annual funds at the discretion of the 5th Ward Committee and their Alderman. Any application(s) received after the funds are depleted, will be placed on a waiting list. Every four years, after City Council approval of the program, the waiting list will be refreshed and the program will be re-determined. The grant period is based on calendar year and funds will not be carried over from year to year.

Payment(s) will be made to the applicant who is solely responsible for payment to the contractor(s).

** Applicant may request grants for projects already completed provided the application for said enhancement/improvement is submitted no later than 6 months from the completion date. All requirements as previously mentioned shall apply.*