

Winnetka Report:



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**Public Hearing
Village Of Winnetka
Village Council**

**Notice Of Meeting
January 11 – 7:30 p.m.**

On Tuesday, January 11, the Village Council will consider the question of whether to place a *referendum for Home Rule status* on the ballot for the April election. The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers on the second floor of Village Hall, 510 Green Bay Road, Winnetka, Illinois 60093.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend this meeting.

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Post Office Committee Appointed

At its December 7 meeting, the Village Council appointed the following members to the Ad Hoc Post Office Committee: Julian D'Esposito (chair), Paul Dunn, Nan Greenough, Pete Henderson, Louise Holland, Maureen Mitchel, Christopher Rintz, and Roberta Rubin. The Committee's mission is to define the issues for the redevelopment of the Post Office site, to obtain thorough community input, and to recommend a strategic plan to the Village Council for the redevelopment of this property.

Meeting dates and agendas of this Committee will be posted on the Village's web site, www.villageofwinnetka.org, or you may call the Village Manager's office at 847-716-3541 for this information. All interested Winnetkans wishing to attend or comment are encouraged to do so.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan, *Winnetka 2020*, has identified this property as, "perhaps the single most important land use issue in the Village." The Plan envisions the following:

"The Post Office lease will expire in 2009 and the site will revert back to Village control. This strategic location could accommodate a mix of commercial uses capable of attracting users into the area and ensuring the viability and vitality of the District.

"At present, apart from the Village Hall, there is no central visual focal point in the Village. There appears to be widespread consensus that the redevelopment of the Post Office site, coupled with other streetscape improvements, presents the Village with an opportunity to create a special central core area that could accomplish many goals at once: aesthetic, economic, parking and social."

On November 1, 1982, the Village purchased the Post Office site and building for about \$127,000. With this purchase, the Village inherited a lease with the Post Office that will expire on April 30, 2009.

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***Elevator or Ramps at Elm Street Train Station?* Council to Discuss at February 8 Meeting**

In 2001, the Village approached Metra to discuss upgrading the Village's train stations. At that time, Metra performed an assessment and determined that both the Elm Street and Hubbard Woods stations were in need of rehabilitation within the next five years, but the condition of the Indian Hill station did not justify a major renovation project. Metra presented the Village with preliminary project descriptions and indicated that it intended to seek funding for these major projects.

Metra agreed to implement some immediate repairs and improvements, including the installation of benches, freshening up of the waiting rooms, and renovation of the toilet facility at the Elm Street station. Also, Metra proceeded with the first phase of the total renovation by rehabilitating the roofs and masonry work of both stations.

Metra has prepared preliminary plans for the second phase of the renovation of the Elm Street station. These preliminary plans anticipate the removal of the two elevators, which have presented continuous maintenance and reliability problems, and the construction of two ADA compliant, heated, pedestrian ramps located on each embankment. Although Metra has consistently expressed a strong preference for the ramps, they have indicated that they would install new elevators if that were the Village's choice. They, however, have indicated that they will not install both ramps and elevators.

Metra's plans were reviewed by the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Plan Commission, and the Design Review Board, and their comments were discussed by the Village Council at its October 21 and November 9 meetings.

At its meeting on Tuesday, February 8, the Village Council will once again discuss the proposed renovation and rehabilitation of the Elm Street train station, in particular the proposed replacement of the existing elevators with heated ramps. An artist's rendering of one *possible* design is shown on the front page.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Village Hall, 510 Green Bay Road. *All interested individuals are encouraged to attend this meeting.*

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Moffat Mall Receives Award

Moffat Mall in Chestnut Court was selected to receive an *Excellence in Landscape* Gold award from the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association. In a letter notifying the contractor of the award, the Association included a synopsis of the judges' comments, as follows:

"Great job! A wonderful example of public space and design. Impressive attention to detail.

"The project looks well aged even though it's new. Precise crafts-manship is obvious. The detail of the brick edge is great. You should be proud of this installation ... A nice use of materials."

The project to rehabilitate Moffat Mall was a joint public-private partnership undertaken by the Winnetka Garden Club and the Village. It included replacement and realignment of paved and planted areas, replacement of plant materials, hardscape surfaces and street furniture, and a new decorative fountain and decorative surround.

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Vehicle and Dog License Reminder

Village vehicle licenses (displayed on your windshield), dog licenses, and parking permits for the commuter train stations expired December 31.

If you have not already purchased your 2005 licenses and/or permits, you can buy them at the Cashier's Counter at Village Hall between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on Saturday from 8:30 until noon.

If you would like additional applications mailed to you, please call (847) 501 - 6000.

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Questions and Answers Regarding the Village's New Curbside Recycling Program

- **What day will my recycling be collected?**
Recycling collection is now performed on Wednesdays, regardless of where in the Village you live. Containers must be placed at the curb by 7 a.m. on Wednesdays to assure collection.
- **What materials are collected for recycling?**
Included are newspapers, magazines and catalogs, envelopes, computer paper, junk mail, phone books, corrugated cardboard no larger than 2'X 2' pieces, chipboard, paper towel roll cores, shoe boxes, clear & colored glass bottles and jars, all metal food and beverage cans, aluminum foil and pie plates, and #1 through #5 plastics.
- **Can I still use my blue bins?**
All recyclable collections will be made from carts. Exceptions for blue bin use will be permitted on a case-by-case basis in the event that medical conditions or other similar circumstances prevent cart use. Onyx Waste Services will no longer collect recyclables from blue bins unless cleared in advance by the Village. Please contact the Public Works Department at (847) 716-3568 for additional information.
- **Now that I have a cart, what should I do with my blue bin?**
You may keep your blue bin for your own use, or you may bring your blue bin to the Village Yards, 1390 Willow Road, where blue bins will be recycled.
- **Do I still need to pre-sort my recyclables?**
Pre-sorting is no longer necessary. You may place all of your recyclables in the cart. In order to conserve cart space, bulky items like 2-liter soda bottles, milk bottles, and cardboard boxes should be collapsed before being placed in the cart.

- **How can I get a larger or smaller cart?**

If you initially requested a smaller cart and have determined that you need a larger one, or if you have determined that the larger cart you originally received is too large and you want a smaller one, please contact the Public Works Department at (847) 716-3568 to request a different cart.

- **Where should I place my cart for collection?**

Carts should be placed curbside, within 4 to 5 feet of the curb. Residents who live on a through alley (i.e. accessible from both ends) may place their carts either curbside or adjacent to the alley for collection.

- **My recyclables don't fit into the cart. Can I get an extra one?**

The Village has contracted with Onyx Waste Services for one cart collection per property per week, thus no additional carts will be provided. The Village is working with Onyx to develop a subscription service for residents who desire additional carts; however, as of this writing, details have not been finalized. In the meantime, please make sure that you crush or break down bulky items like cardboard boxes, milk bottles, and soda bottles, in order to conserve cart space.

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On-Street Parking During Snow Events

A reminder: Give the Public Works Department snowplow crews a hand.

Please do not park vehicles on Village-owned streets after a 2-inch snow fall and until Village streets are cleared. With your help, snow plow crews can have the snow cleared from streets sooner.

Vehicles parked on Village streets during a 2 inch snowfall will be ticketed (\$125 fine) and relocated or impounded at their owners' expense.

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Are Your House Numbers Clearly Visible, Day or Night?

If your guests have difficulty finding your address at night, then so would the Fire and Police Departments. It could be critical if you're injured, your house is on fire or intruders are on the premises!

It's important for fire and police department personnel to be able to find your home quickly!

Be sure that your house numbers are clearly visible from the street. Numbers should be a minimum of 3-inches high (but not exceed 1-1/2-square-feet in area). They should be mounted on a contrasting background.

Please help your fire and police departments by taking a close look at your house numbers from the street and making certain that they can easily be seen. Consider lighting to make them visible at night. (Outdoor lighting is a deterrent to burglars too!)

If you have questions about this or any other fire safety concerns please call the Winnetka Fire Department at (847) 501-6029.

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Christmas Tree Pickup

Christmas trees will be picked up from the curbside for shredding, chipping, and composting from Monday, January 3 through Wednesday, January 19. After January 19, a \$2 refuse sticker will be required to ensure pickup.

What Happens When You Call

9-1-1 From Your Mobile Phone?

Wireless telephones are programmed to reach the closest available wireless tower. Ideally your call would reach the tower in the city/village you are calling from; however, due to the way that wireless towers are configured, this does not always happen. If the 9-1-1 call-taker doesn't automatically tell you what city you have reached, ask him/her which 9-1-1 center you are speaking with before you report your emergency. If you need a different city/village, the 9-1-1 call-taker should be able to transfer your call to the correct location.

Remember that cellular phone calls are different from calls made from a home or business. 9-1-1 operators cannot automatically identify your location. Please take a few moments to learn the proper procedure to follow to have your call handled expeditiously.

- **Where are you?**
Know your location, address, or landmark. If you're in a vehicle, and it is safe to do so, pull over and stop. Dial 9-1-1 and give as much location information as possible, such as address, intersection, city, county.
- **Who is calling?**
Give your name and cellular phone number.

- **What are you reporting?**

Describe the nature of the emergency. Give a description of the emergency; i.e traffic crash, other type of accident, individuals(s) involved, injuries, if any, etc. (but don't put yourself at risk to obtain this information).

If you have any questions, call the Winnetka Fire Department at (847) 501-6029.

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Be Aware Of Your Responsibility

Remember, hosts are responsible for their guests.

Don't allow anyone to drive away if they appear to be "under the influence." If you think someone has had too much to drink, take their car keys away; have someone else drive them home or call a taxi. Have them stay overnight, if necessary.

In Winnetka, homeowners are also responsible for insuring that no minors are consuming alcoholic beverages on their premises. This is true even when homeowners are not personally present.

Home Rule 101

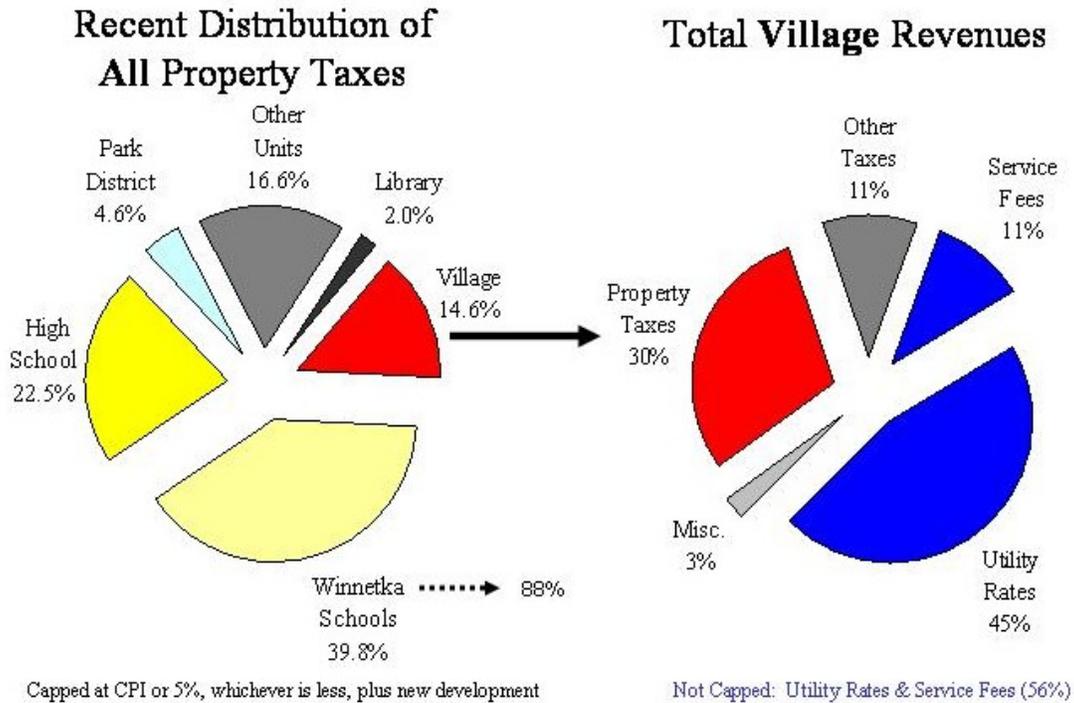
Home Rule and Village Finances

This is the third in a series of Winnetka Report articles regarding Home Rule

As Winnetkans continue to study the Home Rule question, it is important to understand that the Village does *not* need Home Rule powers in order to balance its budget. As a non-Home Rule Village, the Council currently has the necessary authority to raise additional revenue from various sources.

Currently, as a non-Home Rule village, Winnetka is subject to property tax caps that limit the increase in the tax levy to the Consumer Price Index or 5%, whichever is less. In addition, the Village realizes additional property tax revenues from gains in assessed valuation due to new development (i.e., new homes, additions to homes, and new commercial developments).

14.6% of a Winnetkan's property tax bill goes to the Village. This 14.6% share accounts for about 30% of all Village revenues. Unlike Winnetka School District 36 where property taxes account for the vast majority of revenues (about 88%), the Village's revenues sources are very diversified.



Service fees (e.g., building permit fees, yard bags, etc) and utility rates (e.g., electric, water, and sewer) account for 56% of all Village revenues and are not capped. If the Village needs to raise revenue to balance the budget, the Village Council could raise utility rates, increase service fees, or authorize new service fees. If, for example, the Village were to experience a \$250,000 budget gap due to an increase in actual expenses that exceed revenue, the Council could consider imposing an annual residential garbage collection fee. A \$60 per household, or \$5 per month, garbage collection fee would enable the Village to fill that gap. Northfield and Wilmette currently charge an annual fee for residential garbage service of \$168 and \$162, respectively.

If Winnetka chooses to become a Home Rule unit, the Village would no longer be subject to property tax caps, but only the Village’s 14.6% share of the “property tax pie” would be removed from tax caps. New Trier High School, School District 36, Park District, and Library District would continue to be subject to property tax caps.

As a Home Rule community the Village Council could consider filling that \$250,000 budget gap with an increase in property taxes. The resulting tax increase for a \$1,000,000 home would be approximately \$45 per year. Interestingly, the \$45 property tax increase would be a deductible item when calculating Federal and State income taxes, whereas a new \$60 garbage collection fee would not be tax deductible.

As a non-Home Rule village, Winnetka could increase its sales tax rate. However, State Law specifies that these additional funds can only be expended on public infrastructure improvements or property tax relief. Any increased sales tax revenue could not be used to pay for Village services, such as police and fire protection, snow plowing, leaf collection, etc.

Home Rule would permit the Village to increase its sales tax rate without a referendum and would give the Village more flexibility regarding the expenditure of these funds, which could be used to offset operating expenses, capital improvement expenditures, and police/fire pension obligations as mandated by the State Legislature. By raising sales tax, part of the tax burden would be paid by non-residents, thereby shifting it away from Winnetkans. The following table summarizes sales tax rates in the area:

Area	Total Sales Tax	Village	Village's Share
Northbrook Court	8.25%	Northbrook	1.50%
Old Orchard	8.75%	Skokie	2.00%
Winnetka	7.75%	Winnetka	1.00%

The Illinois Department of Revenue estimates that a 0.5% (one-half of one percent) increase in Winnetka's sales tax rate would increase Village revenues by about \$400,000.

If Winnetkans vote in April to authorize Home Rule, the Village Council could *not* authorize a real estate transfer tax, which is essentially a sales tax on the sale of real estate. Such a tax would need to be authorized by Winnetkans in a separate, future referendum.

Regardless of whether Home Rule is enacted or not, the Winnetka Village Council will continue its long tradition of being fiscally prudent. This is evidenced by:

- The Village has become more efficient and cost effective. In 1989, there were 178 full time employees; today there are 165. This reduction has been achieved without diminishing Village services.
- The Council has restrained increases in operating expenses. Recent union settlements have authorized a 3.75% increase in wages. Early retirement incentives have **not** been authorized.
- The Village has maintained its AAA bond rating.

The tradition of fiscal prudence will be continued because:

- The very nature of Winnetkans is fiscally conservative. They demand fair value from their tax dollars.
- Winnetka has a special blend of grassroots democracy (e.g., the Caucus, the annual Village questionnaire, a tradition of public hearings on major Village issues before decisions are made) and representative democracy.
- 50% of the Council members are elected each year and Council members serve a maximum of four years. This assures that the decisions of the Council reflect the wishes of Winnetkans.

Regarding Home Rule taxing authority, academic research has concluded:

“In short, there is no economic data that supports the contention that property taxes necessarily or even usually increase faster in Home Rule communities than in non-Home Rule communities.”

“There is no evidence in the record that Home Rule taxing powers are being misused.”¹

¹ Source: “Do Home Rule Communities Levy More Property Taxes?”, By James Banovetz and Thomas W. Kelty, Illinois Municipal Review, April 2003, page 15.

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Crime Alerts

Protect your property.

Recently four male subjects were arrested for a series of garage burglaries committed in Winnetka and Wilmette. In almost all cases, they entered open garages and stole unsecured items, both from the garages and from unlocked vehicles that were parked in them.

Many of these burglaries could have been prevented had garage overhead and service doors simply been kept locked!

Help keep our community safe by securing your homes, vehicles and valuables.

Protect your good name.

Cases of identity theft have been reported to the Winnetka Police Department.

If your identity is stolen and used by identity thieves, recovering your good name and good credit record could take years and result in significant financial loss.

Be alert to signs that someone may be fraudulently using your identity, such as not receiving bills or other mail, receiving credit cards for which you did not apply, denial of credit for no apparent reason, receiving calls from debt collectors or companies about merchandise or services that you did not order.

Order a credit report once a year.

More information about identity theft can be obtained by contacting the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-438-4338, or at their Web Site: www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Pickpockets and purse thieves have been active in local shopping malls.

Keep a tight grip on your purse at all times – never leave a purse or wallet unattended on a store counter or in a shopping cart.

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Fire Extinguishers: “Your First Line of Defense”

When used properly, a portable fire extinguisher can save lives and property by making it possible to put out a small fire or controlling it until the fire department arrives.

Choose your extinguisher carefully!

Listed below are some guidelines for purchasing and maintaining portable fire extinguishers:

- Extinguishers should bear the seal of an independent testing laboratory. (Underwriters Laboratories or Factory Mutual)
- The operator must know how to use the extinguisher. There is no time to read the directions during an emergency!
- The extinguisher must be within easy reach, in working order, and fully charged.
- The extinguisher must match the type of fire you are fighting.
- The best household extinguishers are “Multipurpose,” A-B-C Models, labeled for use on all three classes of fire.
- Disposable fire extinguishers can be used only once and must be replaced after use.

Extinguishers require routine care. Read your operator’s manual to learn how best to inspect and service your fire extinguishers. If you have a question or concern, please feel free to call the Winnetka Fire Department at (847) 501-6029.

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Residential Fire Sprinklers Save Lives

Members of the fire service across the country know that home fire sprinklers save lives. Many of them have seen fire’s devastation firsthand and know that smoke alarms alone can’t always save a person’s life. The good news is, there’s some-thing that can. Home fire sprinklers and smoke alarms together – as opposed to having only one or the other – can reduce the risk of home fire deaths by 82 percent.

Fires in American homes have taken a high toll of life and property. Each year approximately 4,000 people are killed in house fires, nearly 17,000 are injured, and more than \$5.5 billion in property is destroyed.

Residential fire sprinklers can save thousands of lives, prevent large numbers of injuries, and prevent hundreds of millions of dollars in property losses.

Advantages of home fire sprinklers include assurance of a safer environment for your family, protection of your investment and irreplaceable family possessions, lower insurance rates, along with peace of mind.

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Adopt a Fire Hydrant

The Winnetka Fire Department needs your help.

Deep snow can cover a main link in the firefighting chain: **The Fire Hydrant!**

In an emergency, valuable seconds can be lost trying to locate and uncover fire hydrants.

Please adopt a hydrant near you and shovel it out during heavy snow periods. Keeping it clear will help firefighters find it quickly and make it accessible from the street.

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Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Telephones Have 9-1-1 Limitations.

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phones are increasingly being used by residential and business customers across the country and here on the North Shore. These services, from many different providers, including Verizon, Vonage and Charter, use the Internet instead of more traditional direct wireline or cellular services to route telephone calls. These calls seem indistinguishable from "regular" phone services for the most part as they have the same features users have come to expect from traditional telephones, such as Caller ID, Call Waiting, etc. Their voice quality has improved recently, adding to the appearance of "regular" telephone service.

VoIP provides features that make it more attractive than wireline or wireless service. One is the ability to choose just about any area code. This allows people to have, for example, a New York telephone number while they are actually located in Chicago. Another feature is the ability to have more numbers assigned to an account, and these can all have different area codes. Some VoIP customers may also use their VoIP phones to make calls while travelling. As long as they can connect to the Internet they can use the phone.

While this all sounds great, there are serious public safety concerns. What happens when you call 9-1-1 in an emergency using a VoIP phone? On wireline phone service (the service that most people have had in homes and offices for decades) the name, address and phone number shows up on a screen at the 9-1-1 center so that 9-1-1 Operators know where to send help, even if the caller doesn't. Since the phone wires go directly to a specific location from the phone company, it is fairly simple to locate the caller. On cellular ("wireless") calls, many 9-1-1 centers have equipment that will show them a fairly accurate location for most calls. Some centers, however, are only able to determine the location of the cell tower nearest the caller and the direction of the call in relation to the tower. In either case the call back number is usually known.

On VoIP 9-1-1 calls location or call back information is not provided, if 9-1-1 even works at all. Most services provide a recording to VoIP customers that dial 9-1-1 advising them to use a wireline or wireless phone to access emergency services. With services that actually do forward calls to 9-1-1 Centers, these calls have no location data transmitted with the call. Whether or not the call is routed to the correct 9-1-1 Center is hit or miss. If the caller has registered his location with his VoIP provider and that provider has set up a way to forward 9-1-1 calls to the local 9-1-1 Center the call may be completed. This depends on all parties knowing the correct 9-1-1 Center that serves the customer and that 9-1-1 Center being equipped to accept VoIP calls. Often these calls are routed to incorrect 9-1-1 Centers or to wrong numbers within the 9-1-1 Center. Many

9-1-1 Centers have refused to accept VoIP calls, as VoIP services do not participate in established 9-1-1 Cost Recovery systems or provide the location data used on Wireline or Wireless systems.

For example, if your VoIP phone has a New York phone number, your 9-1-1 call could be routed to your home's

9-1-1 Center or to some facility in New York. What happens when you need 9-1-1 when you are calling via the Internet? Will the call go to the local 9-1-1 Center or be routed back to the center serving the registered address?

VoIP providers are working on standards that may help 9-1-1 Centers locate callers in emergency situations. This technology is still months or years away, if it ends up working at all.

In Winnetka, the 9-1-1 Center has established a telephone line to which VoIP 9-1-1 calls will be forwarded. This number, released only to VoIP providers, is reserved solely for VoIP calls and will be equipped with Caller ID. Customers with VoIP service are encouraged to contact their VoIP provider and request that 9-1-1 calls be forwarded to this number. VoIP providers should contact the Winnetka Police Department to obtain routing information.

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This is the second in a series of articles regarding Stormwater Management and Pollution Prevention.

Pet Waste Management

Besides being a nuisance, when pet waste is not properly disposed of, it can wash into the stormwater conveyance system. In Winnetka, stormwater ultimately drains directly into either Lake Michigan or the Skokie River. Untreated animal feces can become a significant source of runoff pollution. As pet waste decays in a body of water, it uses up oxygen, sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can be detrimental to the health of fish and other aquatic life. Pet waste also contains nutrients that promote weed and algae growth, which can render a body of water unsuitable for recreational activities. Pet waste also carries bacteria, viruses and parasites that can pose risks to human health and threaten wildlife.

Pet waste can be managed in several ways. The two preferred methods of disposal are to either throw it in your regular trash, in plastic bags, or to flush it down the toilet by itself.

(Watch for more information about stormwater management and pollution prevention in future issues of the Winnetka Report.)

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