

Meeting & Event Dates

WPRA:	WPRA - No Dec Meeting 3rd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m.* Jan 15 & Feb 19
City:	City Council - 2 & 4th Tuesdays @ 7:00 p.m.* Finance - 1st Tuesday @ 5:30 p.m.* Land Use - 3rd Wednesday @ 6:30 p.m.* Plan Commission - 3rd Tuesday @ 5:30 p.m.* Public Safety - 3rd Wednesday @ 5:30 p.m.* Transportation - 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m.*
Around the Town:	Cub Scouts - 4th Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.** Boy Scouts - every Monday @ 7:00 p.m.** Garden Club - 3rd Monday @ 7:00 p.m.* Lions Club - 2nd & 4th Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.** Neighborhood Watch - 3rd Thursday @ 6:00 p.m.* Township - 2nd Monday @ 7:30 p.m.*
What's Next:	WPRA Christmas Party - December 7***
Location:	*City Hall **United Disciples Christian Church ***See Article

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WPRA New City Garage

Since the 1993 incorporation of the City of West Peoria, the city had used the garage at the rear of the West Peoria Township Building. The garage was used for storage of Street Department equipment and related supplies.

The major snow storm of December 1, 2006, resulted in a loss of a building for West Peoria Township and the loss of a garage for the city.

As it seems in life that every disaster can result in an opportunity, the city has, during the past year, constructed a new city garage, which should meet the needs of the city for many years to come.

Constructed at a cost of \$387,000, the garage not only stores trucks and equipment but also has a "washing bay" where salt and debris can be removed from trucks and equipment, thus increasing their useful life by many years.

Recently the site was used successfully as a polling place. The site is at 1322 Hillside near the gravel pit. The city is in the process of making plans to build a new West Peoria City Hall. These buildings are meant to provide city services for many years in the future.



President's Corner

by David Pittman

For over twenty-five years our goal has been to offer our residents ways to enjoy living in West Peoria. The West Peoria Residents' Association is proud of its efforts to prove that good things can happen when neighbors come together for a common cause. During the last twelve months, the WPRA:

- Increased membership to over 200 households
- Increased the publication of the *West Peoria News* to every other month
- Entered a float in the Fourth of July parade
- Sponsored the West Peoria Beautiful Award Contest
- Sponsored the West Peoria Christmas Party
- Participated in the West Peoria Jamboree
- Held a Spring Parking Lot Sale
- Collected money from our members to replace street flags
- Asked the District 150 board to reconsider their decision to reduce student class hours
- Asked District 150 to help improve student computer access at Calvin Coolidge Middle School
- Worked with the Peoria Park District staff to establish night lighting and snow removal on the walking track and to gain wireless computer access at the Franciscan Recreation Center (FRC)
- Purchased and installed the fourth "Welcome to West Peoria" sign at Sterling and Manor Parkway
- Featured several political candidates at our membership meetings and hosted a very well-attended Meet the Candidates' Night

As the WPRA president, I am especially pleased that the *West Peoria News* is now published six times a year instead of four. The newsletter remains nearly self-sufficient financially because of the ad revenue that comes from our great advertisers and because of the volunteer *West Peoria News* committee (Loretta, Maggie, Nancy, and Sharon). I believe their efforts have produced a product that is getting better and better with each issue. The "Remember When" section is always great.

The *West Peoria News* has proven to be our best communicator. For example, the October issue featured full-page stories and pictures—both pro and con— about the Ox Bow development proposal on



Heading Avenue.

Once again this year, the WPRA worked closely with the Neighborhood Watch to support its Blockwatch neighborhoods and its Night Out Against Crime. Guest speakers at our WPRA membership meetings have led to greater communication with organizations that serve West Peoria. For instance, the improvements at FRC (listed above) were the result of Park District Board Member Jackie Petty's visit.

One of WPRA's goals this year will be to continue seeking private grants to purchase and donate wireless capable computers to the park district for partial public access at the FRC.

I hope you have noticed the wonderful new sign you can now see as you enter West Peoria from Sterling by the Madison Golf Course. Thanks to all for their steady persistence in making this happen. Hopefully, in 2009 we will again have beautiful, well-maintained plantings at the intersection of Sterling and Rohmann Avenues. Volunteers are especially needed for this project.

Please mark your calendar for the WPRA's next event—the Christmas Party—to be held on Sunday evening, December 7, at the FRC. Maggie Moore has planned even more live entertainment and Santa will be back. This is a wonderful family event and I hope all of you will come.

My personal favorite

**Knights of Columbus
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WPRA accomplishment of 2008—also popular with everyone else—is the guarantee that our monthly membership meeting will end promptly at 8 p.m.

In 2009, we hope you will join us as we continue our traditional programs and work on new projects. We will continue to schedule a variety of speakers for our meetings. Please contact me if you have any suggestions.

We are pleased that the work of the WPRA helps make our city stronger. In the coming year we will again be involved with our local schools and other area groups that support our community in our efforts to make it a safe and beautiful place to live and to offer a variety of social activities. Please contact us or visit the website at www.westpeoriaresidents.org to offer your suggestions or to volunteer your help on any WPRA committees.

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Educational Excellence Committee

Responses to the October issue of the *West Peoria News* indicated that several schools attended by West Peoria students had been left out. The list below is a more complete accounting of where West Peoria students go to school. Enrollment figures at all the schools were difficult to ascertain because West Peoria addresses are all designated as Peoria 61604 addresses. Consequently, all schools, including District 150, remain relatively unaware of the impact that West Peoria makes on their enrollment. Both Hollis Consolidated Schools and Peoria Christian (elementary – high school) were unable to provide figures because of time constraints in identifying West Peoria addresses.

A total of 355 West Peoria students attend District 150 schools (153 in preschool-4th grade, in 122 middle school, 80 high school). A total of 120 West Peoria students attend the other schools listed below (85 in preschool-8th grade, 34 in high school)

Enrollment figures for West Peoria students at the following schools are:

Preschool and Primary age

- 140 at Whittier (Kindergarten-4th Grades)
- 13 at Valeska Hinton (Preschool – 1st Grades)
- 5 at Holy Family (1st – 4th Grades)
- 24 at St. Mark (Kindergarten-4th Grades)
- 7 at St. Philomena (Preschool – 4th Grades)
- 3 at St. Thomas (Preschool-4th Grades)
- 2 at Peoria Christian

Middle School age

- 116 at Calvin Coolidge (5th-8th Grades)
- 5 at Washington Gifted (5th-8th Grades)
- 1 at Manual (7th & 8th Grades)
- 1 at Peoria Academy (8th Grade)
- 1 at Holy Family (8th Grade)
- 4 at St. Philomena (5th – 8th Grades)
- 25 at St. Mark (5th-8th Grades)
- 3 at St. Thomas (5th-8th Grades)

Primary and Middle School Age

- 10 at Christ Lutheran (1st – 8th Grades)

High School age

- 55 at Manual High School
- 7 at Peoria High School
- 17 at Richwoods High School
- 1 at Woodruff High School
- 34 at Peoria Notre Dame High School

If our readers know of any other schools attended by West Peoria students, please contact Sharon Crews (676-8109) or SharonCrews@hotmail.com.

Meet Your City Council Members - Ward #4

TOM DWYER, 108 North Fairway Drive, 673-3310.

PHILLIP ROBERTS, 2126 West Heading Avenue, 676-4386

From City Hall:

Stay informed about what's happening in West Peoria by checking out the city calendar at www.cityofwestpeoria.com. The calendar gives the dates and times for all West Peoria City Council and Committee meetings—all of which are held at City Hall and are open to the public. (Also listed on the *West Peoria News* front page.)

From the Code Enforcement Officer:

Target Areas: From now until cold weather sets in, the City Code Enforcement Officer and a P.A.W.S. Officer will be visiting West Peoria neighborhoods to survey the area, to issue violation notices and fines if necessary, to provide resources, and to answer residents' questions.

To make a complaint or to report a code violation, please phone 674-1993 or send email to code-zoning@cityofwestpeoria.com. All information is confidential. Callers are not required to give their names when reporting violations, etc.

From the Street Department Manager:

The Street Department Manager reminds residents:

- Not to shovel the end of driveways until the plows have been down the street—doing so will require reshoveling.
- Not to shovel snow into the streets—doing so is against City Code.
- Not to blow or shovel snow, leaves, or debris into or onto any city street. Doing so can result in a fine between \$50 and \$500.
- To observe the parking ban on all West Peoria streets whenever two or more inches of snow are predicted (City Ordinance #2006-17)

Section 3-3-3 of the City Code (regarding snow routes) reads as follows:

"All streets within the corporate limits of the City of West Peoria are hereby designated as emergency snow routes. It shall be unlawful to park any vehicles on these streets at any time within twelve (12) hours after a snowfall of two (2) or more inches. Where

there has been a snow forecast of two (2) or more inches for any calendar day, it shall be unlawful to park any vehicles on any of these streets for that calendar day."

The Street Department Manager is authorized to take the following actions when vehicles are parked on the streets during the above mentioned times:

- Tow away the vehicles in order to permit the clearing of snow from the snow routes.
- Require the vehicle's owner to pay all charges incurred as a result of the towing.
- Fine the owner or lessor of the vehicle up to \$25 for the first offense, \$50 for the second offense, and up to a \$750 maximum for multiple offenses. These fines will be in addition to or in lieu of towing the vehicle. In all events, each day the violation exists shall constitute a separate offense.

From the City Clerk:

Any West Peorian who wishes to seek a position as a City Council Alderman must file a petition by January 26, 2009. The election will be held on April 7, 2009.

One alderman from each of West Peoria's four wards will be elected for a four-year term. Prospective candidates for these positions should contact City Clerk Carole Stephens (674-1003) at West Peoria City Hall in order to pick up the packets. October 28 was the first day to begin circulating nomination petitions.

January 19, 2009—the official first date for filing petitions—is, as required, the 78th day prior to the April 7 Consolidation Election. Offices that are closed on January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King's birthday will begin filing on January 20, 2009. However, the last day to file in all offices will be January 26, 2009.

January 20, 2009, is the last day to file petitions for referenda to be placed on the April 7 ballot.

To view the complete text of city ordinances, visit http://www.cityofwestpeoria.com/new_ordinances.asp.

Contact West Peoria City Hall (674-1993) with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Lions Club

The West Peoria Lions Club provides Christmas baskets every year for those less fortunate and would appreciate receiving the names of any families who could benefit from this program. Please call 673-6207 by December 5.

The Lions Club also furnishes eye glasses and hearing aids to West Peoria residents and others in surrounding communities through their fundraising efforts.

Now the Lions Club needs new members to help continue these humanitarian services to this community. Newcomers are cordially invited to come to a meeting at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month at the United Disciples Christian Church. Call Carolyn McCarter at 673-6207 for more information. Why not join a win-win organization for a life-enriching experience and an opportunity to improve the lives of young people and of the hearing and visually impaired.

DID YOU KNOW??

- Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization—made up of a network of 1.3 million men and women in 200 countries and geographical locations.
- Last year Lions donated approximately US \$449 million and 76 million hours of service to their communities—the equivalent of 3,100 people working full-time for one year.
- Lions Clubs International Foundation was recently ranked the Number One non-governmental organization (NGO) in a study by the *Financial Times*.
- Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a Lion, just nominated Lions for the Nobel Peace Prize.



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Moms in West Peoria

West Peoria moms—working moms, stay at home moms—are invited to gather together with those who have something in common: Kids!

West Peoria Moms would like to provide opportunities for moms to meet each other and to establish networks for sharing ideas and tips on topics that relate to parenting, etc.—and, of course, a chance to get out of the house.

West Peoria Moms had their first meetings on Wednesday, October 29, and on Tuesday, November 25, at 7 p.m.

Still in the planning stages, the group has not decided on when or how often to meet. Also, suggestions for possible activities are welcome.

Any West Peoria moms who are interested, please send an e-mail to west.peoria.moms@gmail.com with your contact information so that details for the next meeting can be sent to you.



309/ 676-4021
2801 W. Farmington Road
Peoria, Illinois 61604

Holiday Lighting Contest

Nomination forms for West Peoria's Holiday Lighting Contest can be picked up at Haddad's Market, the Medicine Shoppe, or West Peoria City Hall. Houses in only West Peoria and in Madison Manor are eligible.

A winner for each of the following categories will be selected: Simplicity, Vegas Style, Religious Theme, Holiday Theme, and Judges' Overall Favorite.

Judging will begin on December 6, and winners will be announced on December 20. Prizes will include a plate of cookies and a gift certificate from Haddad's Market and a gift basket of assorted goods from the Medicine Shoppe.

String up the Christmas lights and put up the decorations to show off West Peoria's holiday spirit.

Neighborhood Watch

'Tis the season! Don't be a victim of Christmas theft. West Peoria Neighborhood Watch would like to remind residents to take these precautions to keep the holiday season safe:

- Keep your doors and windows locked day and night.
- Don't be an easy target for a "purse snatcher." Never put your purse in a shopping cart. Instead tuck it under your arm or carry it in front of your body or under your coat or jacket. Men, don't carry your billfolds in your back pockets. Remember—a "purse snatcher" grabs and runs.
- Don't be a victim of car theft. Warming up your vehicle unattended is an invitation for vehicle theft.
- Always be alert.

Always and immediately report to the police anything that seems suspicious, wrong, or dangerous—no exceptions!

All West Peoria residents are invited to be a part of the Neighborhood Watch program of neighbors watching out for neighbors by attending meetings with Deputy Watkins on the third Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

Calvin Coolidge - New Principal

Calvin Coolidge Middle School's new principal, Tom Blumer, is interested in building a relationship with West Peoria as well as with students. As he states, "I am privileged to be a part of the West Peoria community. Calvin Coolidge has been an important component in the quality of life here. I'd like to continue to grow its role in making West Peoria a vibrant place to live."

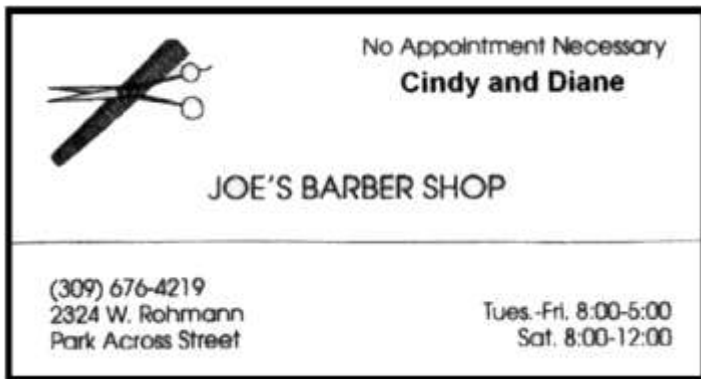


He already began this relationship with West Peoria early in the school year when he cordially invited the West Peoria City Council to hold one of its meetings in the Calvin Coolidge gym and greeted West Peorians at the door.

Blumer spent his early years as an educator in Chicago for three years and later in Houston, Texas, for three years.

He has spent thirteen years with District 150's Columbia Middle School, Von Steuben Middle School, and Trewyn Middle School. For several of these years, he has served as an administrator first at Von Steuben and then at Trewyn.

Blumer and his wife Michelle—who is a teacher at Columbia Middle School—have three children, all of whom attend District 150 schools.



No Appointment Necessary
Cindy and Diane

JOE'S BARBER SHOP

(309) 676-4219
2324 W. Rohmann
Park Across Street

Tues.-Fri. 8:00-5:00
Sat. 8:00-12:00

St. Mark School News

St. Mark School is anticipating a visit from Santa on December 7 for breakfast and a cookie walk from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Everyone is welcome. Tickets will be available at the door.

St. Mark School will be hosting Bishop Jenky on December 12 at 2 p.m. to pray the rosary in Spanish in celebration of the Feast of Guadalupe.

St. Mark students and staff wish everyone a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

PARTY WITH THE PARK DISTRICT!

An Action-Packed Birthday at Franciscan Rec. Complex

This private two-hour party includes 1 1/2 hours of open gym time for floor hockey, basketball, flag football, soccer, scooters, hula hoops, tumbling equipment and more! During the last 1/2 hour, you'll have a private room for cake and ice cream. FRC provides a 1/4 sheet cake with your choice of decoration and 1/2 gallon of ice cream. The party includes cake, ice cream, plates, napkins, candles, drinks and forks.

 The Franciscan Recreation Complex
908 Sterling Avenue in West Peoria.

For more information call 677-6705.

Around the Town

Heading Avenue Franciscans

The Heading Avenue Franciscans are currently selling their 2008 Rolan Johnson Christmas ornament. This year's ornament is titled "Going to Bethlehem" and sells for \$31. In West Peoria the ornament is available at Geier Florist and Immaculate Conception Convent, both located on Heading Avenue. A limited number of ornaments from 1998-2007 are also available for sale. For more information, contact Rhonda or Sharie at 674-2005.

Founded in 1891, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Immaculate Conception have called West Peoria their home since 1912. Today they serve the Dioceses of Peoria and Springfield in ministries that include but are not limited to prayer, care of the elderly (St. Joseph's HomeCare, Peoria and St. Joseph's Home of Springfield), campus ministry, adult literacy, pastoral care, education, spirituality, and diocesan offices.

What's Been Happenin'



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Heading Avenue Franciscans

Present: Your Table is Ready!

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For Donations or Questions:

Rhonda or Sharie @ (309)674-2005



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Remember When

The History of West Peoria

By Sharon Crews

West Peoria Government From 1993-1995

Soon after the November 1993 victory that made West Peoria a city, the leaders of this new community settled down to the hard work of governing.

There could be no elected officials until 1995; therefore, a committee of citizens appointed the interim mayor and aldermen. Rewarded for his tireless work in bringing about incorporation, Bryant DeFrance was appointed as the city's first mayor. On Tuesday, November 9, 1993, Peoria County Judge Barra swore into office this new mayor and eight new aldermen/alderwomen: Joseph Cooper, John Couden, Charles Howard, Dan Kerns, Linda Capps, Mark Lang, Verne Powley, and Dennis Kroll. Michael Mohr, the city's first treasurer, and Nancy Powley, the city's first city clerk, were also sworn in.

In the spring and winter 1994 issues of the West Peoria newsletter, Mayor DeFrance outlined the following first-year accomplishments of these appointed officials:

- Established working committees and set their goals and objectives.
- Adopted ordinances to address the immediate concerns of citizens.
- Reviewed planning, zoning, and building code issues.
- Appointed a seven-member citizen commission to create a more comprehensive body of ordinances that would meet the needs of the community for the future.
- Established a City Street Department, purchased road equipment and materials from the Township, purchased a new Elgin street sweeper, leased garage and office space from the Township, and hired a Street Department Manager.
- Hired a part-time city administrator.
- Studied options for a sidewalk replacement program.
- Purchased the 2506 W. Rohmann building to serve as city hall.

The city had a bit of financial trouble because the Illinois Department of Revenue had sent about \$97,000 in state income tax and other tax revenues to Peoria County instead of to the new city of West Peoria. Finally, in August 1994 after several months of legal discussions, the Peoria County Board agreed to pay West Peoria \$61,000 in six equal monthly installments. According to the *Peoria Journal Star* (*PJS*), County Board Chairwoman Sharon Kennedy stated, "It's money we owe them because we were given this money in error by the state."

Offering a financial helping hand, Fred Haddad, Jr., set aside \$2,547 (one percent of Haddad Market's January

1994 receipts) to give to the newly formed city. Haddad stated (*PJS*), "It's just my way of paying West Peoria back."

No governmental body escapes criticism; the young West Peoria was not an exception. According to a *PJS* article—before the 1995 election—some West Peoria officials accused other city officials of holding secret meetings and rushing decisions through the voting process without adequate public notice or public input.

Elected Officials Since 1995

In time for the 1995 election, a whole new slate of possible city leaders emerged. Running against Mayor DeFrance, Jim Dillon—a businessman and 14-year township trustee—stressed the need for more public input into policy issues, suggesting that (as quoted in the *PJS*) "Any new proposed ordinances should be publicized, so that the citizens are aware of them." His platform included attention to issues such as the improvement of streets, sewers and sidewalks, the need to retain and attract businesses, crime prevention, and the stabilization of the city's housing stock.

With a vote of 1,037 to 679, Dillon became the second mayor of West Peoria and has retained that position through the last three mayoral elections (1999, 2003, 2007). Only Dan Kerns (Ward 3) and Dennis Kroll (Ward 4) moved from appointed status to elected officials. After having served from 1993 until May 1995, West Peoria's appointed officials gave up their positions when the first elected officials took over. The West Peoria City Council consists of eight aldermen who serve staggered 4-year terms with two aldermen representing each of West Peoria's four wards. In order to stagger the terms of



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Remember When

office of the first council members, the newly elected aldermen drew from a hat to determine the length of their terms. The four-year terms went to Ward 1 Hazel Thomas, Ward 2 Mark Lang, Ward 3 Doug Simmons, and Ward 4 Kathy Crusen. The two-year terms went to Ward 1 Jim Flynn, Ward 2 Merlin (Rocky) Mathewson, Ward 3 Dan Kerns, and Ward 4 Dennis Kroll.

With an election of aldermen every two years, there have been seven elections from 1995-2007. By ward, the following council members (with dates of service in parentheses) have served West Peoria:

Ward 1 –Hazel Thomas (1995 to the present), Jim Flynn (1995-1997), LeRoy Dohm (1997 to the present)

Ward 2 – Merlin (Rocky Mathewson (1995 to the present), Mark Lang (1995-1997), Kim Hanks (1997-1999), Gus Bohlman (1999-2001), Brian Hoehne (2001-2006), Jerry Meismer (2007 to the present)

Ward 3 – Dan Kerns (1993-2001), Doug Simmons (1995-1999), John Venzon (1999 to the present), Brian Ganson (2001 to the present)

Ward 4 – Dennis Kroll (1993-2000), Kathy Crusen (1995-1999), Suzanne Bowles (2000-2001), Dana Johnston (1999-2001), Phil Roberts (2001 to the present), Tom Dwyer (2001 to the present)

A few aldermen (Lang, Hanks, Bohlman, Bowles, Johnston) did not complete their full four-year terms. Kroll left in 2000 before the 2001-end of his last four-year term.

The following elected officials who have served West Peoria since 1995 are:

City Treasurer: Joe Cooper (from 1995-1999), Brian Wake (from 2000-2007), Jennifer Main (from 2007 to the present).

City Clerk: Guydeen Roos (1995-1999), Lori Simmons (2000-2006), Carole Stephens (October 2006 to present).

Although not an elected position, the City Administrator **plays an important role in conducting the city's business.** The following four people have served as City Administrator for West Peoria:

David Strohl (October 1994 – February, 2000), Paul Heisig (from May 2000 to February 2001), Linda McClellan-Wright (from April 2001 to June 2002), John F. Carlson (from June 2003 to the present).

City Council Meeting Place and City Hall

In 1993 the newly appointed city council immediately designated regular meeting times to be on the second and fourth Tuesdays in the basement of West Bluff Christian Church, where its first meeting was held on Tuesday, November 9, 1993. As of July 11, 1995, the council changed its meeting place to the West Peoria Township Building at 1322 N. Hillside Court. Since the

winter of 2006 after the collapse of the West Peoria Township building, the city council has held its meetings in the back area of city hall.

There was no city hall until the spring of 1994, when West Peoria purchased the brick building at 2506 W. Rohmann to serve as the West Peoria City Hall. The building originally constructed as a variety store later housed the Charm Beauty Salon for many years and later an insurance office. Just prior to becoming city hall, the building had been occupied by the city's Oriental market with which the new city hall shared space for a short time. For a while, after the city took over the whole building, one wall was a plastic tarp behind which major construction was taking place. In the interim, the city clerk, city administrator, bookkeeper, and zoning officer crammed their desks into a rather small space. In 2002 the L-shaped counter at the entrance to the building was added.

Since the computer age was well under way by 1994, city hall was equipped with brand new computers. By 1998 plans were underway for the city's website www.westpeoria.com at a cost of \$900, and e-mail access to the city staff was established. However, the city of West Peoria had yet to learn one rather hard lesson about computer protocol. In 2000 by some mishap or misunderstanding (*PJS* account), six years of documentation and research were wiped out. All that was left was the old-fashioned paper copies of resolutions, ordinances, manuals, budgets, grants, research, and other documents the city had produced since its incorporation in 1993. Needless to say, the city soon set up a policy about maintaining and backing up electronic records, etc.

City Council Actions

As might be expected in any typical city, land use and zoning issues produced most of any conflict experienced during these first fifteen years of incorporation.

The new city in August 1994 lost its opposition to a parking lot at 211 N. Arthur, where Jumer eventually leveled a two-story house to provide space for an additional thirty vehicles. Alderman Dan Kerns (*PJS*) complained that "Jumer's has already cut down a 100-year-old tree on the site of the proposed lot. This is the entry way to our community." Mayor DeFrance (*PJS*) argued, "A parking lot "goes against the comprehensive plan of Peoria County and will go against our West Peoria plan. It should be residential." The young city had not yet developed a zoning ordinance of its own at the time.

In July 1995 West Peoria did not yet have zoning authority because a comprehensive plan and zoning code

Remember When

was not finished. However, the Peoria County Board agreed with the West Peoria City Council's desire to reject a plan to rezone a residential piece of land at 417 N. Western Avenue (at the site of the former Ernie's Dairy Dream) to allow the Illini-Swallow Lines to set up a station for four or five 40-foot-long buses to stop every day on a route from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Davenport, Iowa. According to the *PJS*, about thirty-five residents had turned out at a special West Peoria City Council meeting to oppose the plan because "a bus station shouldn't go into the residential neighborhood because the buses would create too much noise, spew diesel fumes and threaten the safety of children." Mayor Jim Dillon added, "I think it would be a nuisance to the neighborhood."

In December 1999 another conflict arose over a zoning issue. Upgrade, a not-for-profit housing organization, proposed building a 48-unit senior apartment complex on a seven-acre vacant lot near the Rohmann and Swords intersection. To accommodate the project, rezoning from medium density residential to multifamily residential (with a special use clause added) would have been required. According to the *PJS*, residents were less than trusting because "a similar development next door to the proposed site suffered mismanagement problems and changed hands over the years until Lutheran Social Services opened there." Despite the objections and pressure from about twenty-five West Peorians, the city's planning commission voted 4-2 to recommend the rezoning.

Continued concerns—including added density and traffic congestion—led to a petition containing more than 200 names. Finally, in late February 2000, the City Council voted to reject the rezoning that would have made this project a reality. Today a similar conflict is ongoing.

Certainly, these situations reveal that during the first fifteen-years of incorporation West Peorians have proven their desire to control their own destiny—the mantra that led to the 1993 victory to become a city.

The sidewalk replacement program—the impetus that launched the incorporation efforts—has been a success. One of the greatest proofs of success is the Rohmann Avenue reconstruction project to provide street resurfacing, new sidewalks, new storm sewers, and new bike paths. The project—paid for by the city of West Peoria, Peoria County, and a \$100,000 Illinois First grant—was completed in three phases: Western to Sterling, Sterling to Ashland, and Ashland to Swords, the final phase just recently completed.

West Peoria continues to be a community with a small town atmosphere where neighbors help neighbors. That community spirit is most noticeable when snow or wind storms cause damage and/or inconvenience in the city.

In 1998 after a windstorm, Mayor Dillon commented (*PJS*), "I was out working with the street crew that night, and people were coming out of their homes to help," said Dillon. "They were picking up branches and getting their saws to cut up trees in neighbors' yards. I'll never forget that." That's West Peoria!

(Thanks to City Clerk Carole Stephens for helping with the research for this article.)



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TO JOIN WPRA, CONTACT MAGGIE MOORE			

Membership is open to all residents of West Peoria as well as those nonresidents who have an interest in supporting this community.

The West Peoria Residents' Association is a private, nonprofit community organization registered with the Illinois Secretary of State.

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Sunday, December 7th
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Franciscan Recreation Center

Co-sponsored by the West Peoria Residents' Association and the Franciscan Recreation Complex.