

REPORTER & JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS

Nadig Newspapers Serving . . . Edgebrook, Wildwood, Sauganash, Indian Woods, Lincolnwood, Niles

Volume 50
Number 16

Glenn Nadig, Brian Nadig, Publishers
4937 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago—(773) 286-6100
www.nadignewspapers.com

April 19, 2014

50 Cents Per Copy

Aldermen give state of ward speeches

by **BRIAN NADIG**

Installation of a traffic signal at Devon and LeMai avenues, where a bicyclist was killed in an accident 2 years ago, is contingent on finding the funds for the project.

“We think this intersection meets the criteria for a signal, but it does not mean we’re going to get a signal,” Alderman Margaret Laurino said at the April 10 meeting of the Edgebrook Community Association. “Signals are very costly.”

Both Laurino and Alderman Mary O’Connor (41st) gave their “state of the ward” address at the meeting.

O’Connor said that speeding is a problem in that area in part because there is no traffic signal on Devon between Central Avenue and Cicero Avenue. Laurino and O’Connor have been working with state Representative John D’Amico (D-15) and the Illinois Department of Transportation on the traffic signal project.

Plans also are being made to install a back-up battery for the traffic signal at Devon and Caldwell Avenue due to “consistent” outages that have caused traffic jams in that area, O’Connor said.

The battery will cost about \$65,000, and staff at both aldermen’s offices are working on a long-term plan improvement plan for the intersection’s traffic signals, O’Connor said.

Both aldermen said that they have worked to attract new businesses to the commercial area and that, unlike other areas of the Northwest Side, Edgebrook would not qualify for a tax increment financing district because the area is not considered blighted. TIF districts allow property tax revenue to be set aside for infrastructure improvements and to subsidize developments in the district.

Creation of a special service area, which recently was done in Sauganash, also was considered for the Edgebrook commercial district, but it was decided to delay action on the matter, the aldermen said. Efforts are being made to improve the district through the Edgebrook Chamber of Commerce, O’Connor said.

In a special service area, local property owners form a taxing body and make decisions on how to spend the property tax revenue that the SSA collects. The funds can be used for items such as planter boxes, security, marketing materials and sidewalk shoveling. O’Connor said that one problem with a special service area is that the tax can become a burden on the owners of larger parcels in the commercial district. “It would have a huge impact on Happy Foods,” she said.

The aldermen also said that they have introduced an ordinance calling for an advisory referendum on the Nov. 4 ballot asking for a change in the criteria used in allocating federal funds for sound insulation for home owners experiencing jet noise problems over their property. “It has not been changed since 1965,” O’Connor said. “Our job is to get the attention of the FAA on the subject.” Residents have complained about an increase in jet noise, especially at night, over Edgebrook because of new runways at O’Hare Airport, but the Edgebrook area does not qualify for insulation funds.

Laurino said that she appreciates the Edgebrook neighborhood because rather than complain about problems in their neighborhood, residents offer solutions and their assistance.

O’Connor said that her biggest challenge in her first term as alderman has been the severe weather, including rain and snow storms and long periods of below-zero temperatures, and that her staff has been working hard to make sure streets are repaired but that funds are limited.