



# Edgewater Neighborhood

Neighborhood Newsletter | Summer 2016



## Neighborhood Association Officers

**President & Alderman**  
John Beck 815.289.4787  
[john.beck@rockfordil.gov](mailto:john.beck@rockfordil.gov)

**Vice President**  
Tim Moore

**Treasurer**  
Dick Berman 815.877.4975

**Secretary**  
B.J. Alexis

## Board Members

Barb Berman  
Michelle Bowman  
Michael Goddard  
Mark Podemski  
Lucretia Ristin  
Bill Simpson  
Jennifer Smith  
Drew Williams

## Community Services Officer

Jesse Washington  
779.500.6627  
[jesse.washington@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jesse.washington@rockfordil.gov)

## Here Comes Summer!

Sunny days and warm nights, green grass and lots of great activities, summer in Edgewater is a great time to get out and enjoy all that Rockford has to offer! There are two major Edgewater events coming up in June and July:

1. **Edgewater Neighborhood Garage Sales:** Saturday, June 11.

More details and sign up will be available at [www.RockfordEdgewater.org](http://www.RockfordEdgewater.org) very soon. All residents are encouraged to participate, either by holding a sale or finding some great stuff at your neighbors' sales!



2. **4th of July Celebration:** A family-friendly event that includes a kid's bike parade, face painting, snacks and beverages for sale, and a fireworks display provided by the Rockford Country Club! All activities are held at Oxford Park. Snacks and activities begin at 5:30, bike parade at 6:30, and fireworks at dusk. Kids of all ages are invited to decorate your bikes and join the parade; all participants receive a goodie bag and are entered for great door prizes. Don't miss it!



We are very grateful to the Rockford Country Club continuing to provide the fireworks and for the Park District for providing support for the other 4th of July activities.

Check out page 4 of this newsletter for information about some of the other great summer events coming up in our community. Get out there and enjoy!

## Essex Plant Development Information

Last week there was extensive news coverage of the ribbon-cutting at the Essex plant on North Main. Alderman Beck has provided details from an interview with John West from West Block Development, who is partnering with two other developers to undertake the Essex plant redevelopment.

### **For our readers can you state your name and role in the proposed Essex On Main development?**

My name is John West. I am partnering with Marino Development and A.W. Bennett Enterprises in a joint-venture to redevelop the Essex property. Billy Marino and Paul Bennett brought me in the deal to determine a best use design that is also financially feasible. A large part of that is to explore incentives municipalities put in place to encourage investment in their local communities where there wouldn't otherwise be.

### **So please describe what the development will entail?**

Essex on Main will be comprised of 240 market rate apartments, 11000 square feet of state of the art medical office space, 2 drive-through out lot buildings and 18,000 square feet of retail space. One of the apartment buildings will be reserved for 50 years and older residents. We plan to remove the Essex building by the end of the year and then begin vertical construction spring of 2017. For detailed information and project updates people can go to [www.essexonmain.com](http://www.essexonmain.com).

### **Can you share why you think the Essex building been sitting empty for so many years?**

In my opinion the property has been sitting empty over a decade for several reasons. As many people know America's manufacturing has been shrinking dramatically over the last 30 years, mostly because of trade deals with Mexico and other cheap-labor countries. To add to the challenge of finding a tenant is the building's design. It is antiquated with steel beams every 20 feet as part of the structure support. This greatly limits the layout and flow of the building. Most qualified tenants opt for tilt-up structures that are inexpensive and easily built-to-suit the needs of the tenant.

### **Many people want to know why someone hasn't removed the building and developed something new?**

That's a complicated question. The building and property has many complex issues that would deter most investors from removing the building. The simplest answer is to remove this kind of structure takes three things: lots of experience, very large machines and lots and lots of money.

### **Can you expand on that?**

First off, the building is a massive steel structure with extremely high ceilings. We are talking 50 to 60 foot ceilings which takes special skills and is very dangerous to demolish! So you rule out 90% of all demolition companies right here. There are probably only a handful of qualified companies that handle this size job in IL, my partner, Marino Development, being one of them. And we haven't even gotten into the creosol blocks, asbestos, tunnels and highly engineered concrete slabs that all need to be removed and disposed of yet. About half of the floors are covered in creosol wood blocks. There is over 300,000 square feet of concrete slab with rebar that has to be removed, crushed and transported. And asbestos covers most of the pipes throughout the building which is also very expensive to remove.



Pictured: John West, William Marino, Alderman John Beck, Mayor Lawrence Morrissey, Augie Pusateri, Andrew Wineberg. At the Essex On Main ribbon cutting event.

### **You and your two partners have asked for my support on creating a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) for this project. Can you talk a little about that?**

Sure. That's pretty straight forward. I know you are highly involved in what goes on in your district. So we wanted to start with you and get your input for what the community would like to see happen with the site. And as I described earlier, the prospect of renting Essex to another manufacturer is highly unlikely...

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## Road Project Information

Summertime means road construction, and this year our neighborhood will have some major projects happening nearby. Alderman Beck has reached out to Public Works and related departments to provide us some updates about two projects that are occurring adjacent to Edgewater. If you have any questions about these or other projects please contact John Beck, 12th Ward Alderman, Edgewater Neighborhood Association President [john.beck@rockfordil.gov](mailto:john.beck@rockfordil.gov) 815.289.4787.



### North Main Street Reconstruction

The North Main Street reconstruction project is underway. Over the last few weeks, motorists have seen tree removal occur as well as utility companies starting to relocate along the N Main Street corridor. It is anticipated that in June, William Charles will start installing water main from Yonge to Willoughby. In addition, the contractor will construct various sections of the roadway (including storm and sidewalks) in anticipation of the work and traffic shifts that will be necessary to perform work in 2017. These sections include the northbound lane from Fulton to Willoughby, and the northbound lane from the Railroad crossing to River Bluff Blvd.

The concrete reconstruction of North Main from Auburn to North of Riverside will be scheduled as follows:

- 2016: Utility relocation, water, sewer, temp staging pavement from Auburn to Riverside.
- 2017: New pavement construction and related roadway appurtenances from Auburn to Railroad tracks.
- 2018: New pavement construction and related roadway appurtenances from railroad tracks to Riverside.
- 2019: Area each side of the railroad crossing and the crossing itself will be reconstructed.

### Spring Creek Road Project

Population growth and related increase in sewer service to northeast Rockford has resulted in the need to replace the sewer trunk line running under Spring Creek road from North 2nd Street to just east of Alpine Road. The project will be put out for bid on May 18, 2016. Upon award, construction work will start in September/October 2016. Full project completion is not anticipated until Fall 2017.

Construction will occur west to east. The work scope for fall 2016 will involve pushing a casing pipe under the parking lot at Anderson Gardens. During this work, there will likely be a lane closure to the northernmost westbound lane to allow for construction staging.

The sewer work under Spring Creek will occur in roughly 2 stages: Ferrall to Westbrook, and then Westbrook to Alpine. The work zone will be the westbound lanes of Spring Creek. The road will remain open during the entire construction project, with some lane restrictions. The turning lane should be available throughout the project, and the whole stretch of road will not be impacted for the full project, only the section that is currently being worked on.

This project is a joint effort between the City of Rockford and the Water Reclamation District. There has been good cooperation and communication between these entities and they will work together throughout the project to implement any traffic control measures that become necessary.

**For housing news**

**Please visit...**

**Edgewater-homes.com**



**Keith Kelly**

**815-509-3655**

# Summer Community Events



## North End Farmers Market

Parking lot on the southeast corner of the North Main roundabout, 9am-1pm on Saturdays from May 14-October 29. Visit <http://www.rockfordcitymarket.com/northend/> for more information!



## City Market

Located at the intersection of Water St and Market St in downtown Rockford from 3:30-8:30pm on Fridays from May 20-September 30. Visit [www.rockfordcitymarket.com/](http://www.rockfordcitymarket.com/) for more information!

## Tuesday Evenings in the Gardens

Live music on Tuesday evenings in the grounds of Anderson Japanese Gardens, starting May 31. Learn more at <http://www.andersongardens.org/garden-events/tuesday-evening-2016/>



## Tunes on the Terrace

Free concerts featuring local musicians on the outdoor terrace at Nicholas Conservatory. Held Wednesday nights during the summer from 5-7pm. Don't forget your lawn chair! Visit [www.nicholasconservatory.com/tunes-on-the-terrace/](http://www.nicholasconservatory.com/tunes-on-the-terrace/) for more information.



## Sinnissippi Music Shell

Free live performances on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00pm, starting June 7. Sinnissippi Park Music Shell is located at 1401 N. Second St. Learn more at [www.rockfordparkdistrict.org](http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org)

## Art in the Parks

A two-mile, one-hour tour along the Rock River Rec path introducing residents to public art along the path. Departs every Thursday from mid-June through mid-August at 11am (weather permitting). Learn more and reserve a spot by calling 815.987.8858.



## Levings Showcase

Live at Levings and Domingo En El Parque! Located at Levings Lake, 1420 S. Pierpont Ave. Visit [www.rockfordparkdistrict.org](http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org) for more information!

**Rockford Coffee**  
**\$1 off ANY PURCHASE**  
 206 N. Main St. Rockford, IL

Continued from page 2 "Essex Plant Development Information"

Billionaire Ken Hendricks, who had a great track record as an industrial landlord, couldn't lease it out in the 7 years he owned it. Moreover, the removal of the structure is a very expensive and complicated endeavor. So without a commitment from the City of Rockford to create a new TIF for this project it wouldn't be financially feasible to do and the property would continue to be a local blight and economic drain for the North Main Corridor.

**Can you expand your thoughts on the Essex property being an "economic drain" on North Main Corridor?**

Well for example, the Essex property has dropped significantly in its tax assessed value since Essex Wire closed in 2002 and it became vacant. The current property tax assessed value is around \$350,000 and has been in that range for almost 10 years. This has resulted in higher property taxes and lower property values for other property owners in the area. We are optimistic that our proposed \$21 million dollar redevelopment will have a big impact on the economics of the North Main Corridor by way of lowering the property tax rate, increasing property values, creating jobs and replacing blighted old warehouse with a beautiful brand new mix use development. I think everyone wins here.

**Anything else you would like to add in closing?**

Just that we want to thank the City Council for their wise decision to remove all the telephone poles and bury all the cables along North Main Street. That was a key consideration when we were deciding if we wanted to do this project. We are hoping the streetscape investment and the Essex on Main development will be the beginning of a renaissance for the North Main Corridor and other investments will follow.

Thank you to John West for providing these details. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Beck, 12th Ward Alderman, Edgewater Neighborhood Association President  
[john.beck@rockfordil.gov](mailto:john.beck@rockfordil.gov) 815.289.4787



# Become a Member of the Edgewater Neighborhood Association!

The Edgewater Neighborhood Association was established in 1979 to create a greater sense of community and provide resources that help keep Edgewater a beautiful, safe, and inviting place to live. Your annually-renewable \$15 Membership fee supports:

- ⊗ Seasonal Neighborhood Activities including the Easter Egg Hunt, Annual Garage Sale, 4th of July Festivities in Oxford Park, and Luminaria (including Luminaries placed in public places like the Auburn Street Bridge).
- ⊗ Snow Plow Fund: The City does not plow Edgewater's many alleys, so as a neighborhood we pool our resources and contract with a plow service to keep those alleys clear all winter long.
- ⊗ Watering planters on Auburn Street and the north side of Auburn Street Bridge.
- ⊗ Postage for neighborhood mailings and printing of those mailings, as well as signs advertising neighborhood activities.

Thank you for your Membership and for helping Edgewater continue to be the vibrant, unique neighborhood we can be proud to call home!



Please mail your completed form with check (made out to Edgewater Neighborhood Association) to:



Edgewater Neighborhood Association  
 PO Box 515  
 Rockford, IL 61105

Prefer to pay by card?

Pay online with PayPal at [www.rockfordedgewater.org](http://www.rockfordedgewater.org)!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Used for Edgewater mailings)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Used for Edgewater information only)

Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Receive updates from our Alderman and Association President, John Beck)

Membership Dues **\$15**

Additional Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
 (to support snow removal and other neighborhood activities)

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_