

Year in review: The top Glenview stories of 2017



Glenview residents gathered by the Jackman Park Bear as they celebrated its 100th year on Sept., 17, 2017. (Mark Kodiak Ukena / Pioneer Press)

By [Alexandra Kukulka](#)
Pioneer Press

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In 2017, a Glenview student was fatally shot and another teen charged and sentenced in connection with her death.

The village saw proposals for a referendum and property tax increases and opted out of Cook County ordinances for minimum wage increases. Here is a look back at the top stories of the year.

Glenbrook South High School student fatally shot

A Glenbrook South High School student was fatally shot in July — before she was to start her final semester of senior year. Four months later, a 17-year-old boy was sentenced to juvenile detention in connection with the shooting.

The teen was charged July 12 with involuntary manslaughter in the fatal shooting of Angelique Morris, 17, at his home near Des Plaines. He pleaded guilty to the charge Oct. 30. On Nov. 6, his 18th birthday, he was sentenced to remain in the custody of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.

The exact length of his sentence is at the discretion of the juvenile department, officials said, but would not exceed his 21st birthday.

Authorities said the teen, whom prosecutors called Morris' boyfriend, shot her in the face while handling a gun.

Sheila Blaje, Morris' aunt, said Morris was set to graduate early, in January. She had worked with special needs students at Glenbrook South, Blaje said, and that had inspired her to go to college to become a special education teacher.

Morris was the youngest of six siblings, Blaje said, and enjoyed listening to music, eating and spending time with her family.

"She was such a funny, outgoing kid," Blaje said. "She was a beautiful soul inside and out."

At the teen's sentencing, his attorney read a brief statement the minor wrote, which was addressed to Morris' family in which he expressed his regret and spoke to her character.

"I am so sorry I put you through this nightmare," he wrote.

Glenview Park District referendum

The Glenview Park District proposed a referendum measure to pay for four construction projects, including a plan to either renovate and expand the Glenview Ice Center or build a new facility on the same property.

A 28-member Glenview Park District Citizen Task Force was created and charged with making a recommendation to the Glenview Park District Board of Commissioners on whether voters should be asked to pay for a new or renovated Glenview Ice Center, along with improvements to other facilities at The Grove and Sleepy Hollow Park and purchasing open space.

Originally, park district officials proposed a \$24 million referendum to pay for the four projects.

But after the committee reviewed resident feedback from mail and phone surveys and community meetings, the committee voted to recommend a \$17 million referendum for three projects.

The committee also recommended that the park district should renovate and expand the current Glenview Ice Center and remove a proposed indoor track and adventure play area from the facility plans. The task force cited resident responses stating that the \$24 million referendum proposal was too high and that the indoor track and adventure play area were too extravagant.

The task force also recommended removing the Sleepy Hollow Park project, which would have eased flooding in the park, from the referendum because community support was low. But the task force recommended building restrooms at the park, which the park district will pay for with other funds, officials said.

Community support was high for the proposed improvements at The Grove so the proposed referendum would cover the costs of all the improvements, officials said. The task force decided to keep \$1 million of the referendum funds to purchase open space after discussing the importance of expanding parks and trails in Glenview.

The total cost to complete all three projects is approximately \$33.1 million, said Katie Skibbe, park district deputy executive director. Officials plan to fund the projects with the proposed \$17 million referendum, \$10 million in alternate revenue source bonds and \$6.1 million in current district fund balances and potential community donations, she said.

The commissioners are considering two finance options for the referendum measure, officials said. In both options the proposed referendum measure would be paid off in 20 years.

In one option, residents would pay an additional \$35.69 a year on a \$500,000 home, said park district spokeswoman Jena Johnson. But taxes would decrease in 2024 when a tax increment financing district ends within the park district boundaries, she said.

In the second option, the amount of overall interest paid is \$3 million less than the first option, tax payers would pay \$34.62 a year on a \$500,000 home but taxes would not decrease in 2024 when the TIF ends, Johnson said.

On Dec. 21, in a 5-2 vote, the commissioners approved placing the \$17 million referendum on the March 2018 ballot.

Glenview resident plays with Green Day at Wrigley Field

Green Day super fan Richard Colman blew out the candles on his birthday cake three days before the band performed at Wrigley Field in August and made a wish.

Colman, 20, said his wish was simple: to perform on stage with the band.

“It actually happened, which has never happened to me in my life before,” he said. It was a night the Glenview resident said he’d never forget.

As a fan, Colman said he brought a sign with him that said “I can play guitar” because he knew that the band has a tendency to bring people up on stage.

At the concert, the band started playing “Knowledge” by Operation Ivy, when the lead singer, Billie Joe Armstrong, asked the audience if anyone could play the guitar.

After walking around the stage for a few minutes looking into the audience, Armstrong stopped in front of Colman, he said. Armstrong asked whether he knew how to play the guitar, and Colman said he nodded his head enthusiastically.

“You swear to God?” Colman remembered Armstrong asking, and he yelled back that it was true. Then, his wish came true.

From there, Colman said he just soaked the experience in.

“I didn’t think of the people in the crowd,” Colman said. “I went up there, and I just freaked out because Billie Joe Armstrong has been my idol since second or third grade.”

Colman, who learned to play guitar about six years ago, said he played with the band until the end of the song, and Armstrong let him keep his guitar.

New hires

The Glenview Board of Trustees unanimously voted to hire Matthew Formica as its next village manager in April.

In November 2016, village officials announced that then-village manager Todd Hileman would resign effective Jan. 31 to become city manager of Denton, Texas.

“We believe that (Formica) has the ability to perpetuate our current trend of innovation and continuing to challenge the status quo ... in order to provide the best service for our residents,” Board of Trustees President Jim Patterson said.

As village manager, Formica will receive a base salary of \$215,000, plus a \$25,000 bonus for his first year of work and a \$7,200 car allowance, according to his contract.

Formica was previously the village administrator for the Village of Lindenhurst, and he also worked for the Village of Grayslake in multiple positions and eventually became the assistant village manager, according to the report.

“I’m excited and honored to work in a town like Glenview,” Formica said when the board hired him. He said that he applied for the position because Glenview is a “premier community” and “a leader in innovation.”

The Glenview School District 34 Board of Education hired Dane Delli as the district’s new superintendent in January, and he started in the position July 1 under a three-year contract, according to the contract.

The approval of Delli’s contract, with an annual base salary of \$245,000, followed a six-month search to fill the position after former Supt. Michael Nicholson announced in May 2016 that he would resign. Griff Powell and Patricia Wernet served as interim superintendents for the 2016-2017 school year.

Delli, who has more than 25 years experience in education, served as superintendent for the River Trails School District 26 since 2007 before coming to District 34, according to a district press release. He previously

worked as a high school teacher, middle school principal, high school principal, assistant superintendent and university professor, it said.

“I feel very honored that you’ve chosen me and entrusted me in this very important role at this very important time in your school district,” Delli said when he was hired. “It’s a responsibility that I take very seriously, and I will not disappoint you.”

Village opts out of Cook County minimum wage laws

The move came despite calls from a number of residents for the village to participate in the new laws, which would increase pay for low-wage workers and enable them to accrue paid sick leave.

As a home rule municipality, Glenview could opt out of the ordinances. The board discussed and voted on the ordinance twice, and both times Trustee Scott Britton voted against opting out.

Britton said he supports the two ordinances because he said he worries that there are minimum-wage earning families in Glenview sitting around kitchen tables debating which bills not to pay so that they can feed their children.

Trustees who voted in favor of opting out of the Cook County laws said the ordinance would hurt local businesses.

Tax levy increases

In December, the Board of Trustees approved a \$250,000 increase to the village’s 2017 property tax levy, which would cost residents an additional \$13.94 a year for a \$500,000 home.

District 34 and Glenbrook High Schools District 225 board of educations approved increases to the districts’ 2017 property tax levies in December.

District 225 approved a 4.4 percent property tax increase, which would mean the district would receive approximately \$106.3 million in revenue split almost evenly between the 2017-2018 fiscal budget and the 2018-2019 fiscal budget, according to a board report.

District 34 approved a 2017 tax levy increase of 3.5 percent, which would mean the district would receive approximately \$50.1 million in revenue for the 2018-2019 fiscal budget, according to a board report. District officials estimate that the increase to a tax payer will be about \$41 for a \$300,000 home.

In November, the Glenview Park District Board of Commissioners approved a 2.28 percent increase in the district’s property tax levy. The increase will bring in approximately \$17 million in tax revenue, according to a district press release.

Resident taxes will increase by \$17.10 per year for a home valued at \$500,000, according to the park district press release. The park district also considered this year a \$17 million referendum option that would increase resident taxes by \$35.69 a year on a \$500,000 home over the next 20 years.

Glenview's bear turns 100

Glenview celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Jackman Park bear statue in September. The “Children’s Fountain,” now commonly known as the Jackman Park bear, was dedicated to the village on Sept. 15, 1917, officials said.

The statue was created by Edwin Jackman, who lived in the town of Golf. Though it is unclear why Jackman dedicated the bear to Glenview, the community embraced the statue, and “hug the bear” became the village’s motto, officials said.

During the event, village officials tried to recreate some aspects of the celebration held in 1917 when the “Children’s Fountain” was dedicated to the village. The event ended with a reenactment of the speech Jackman gave at the 1917 celebration.