

West Life

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Since 1959

BAY VILLAGE

High school seniors volunteer to work the polls on election day

By SAMANTHA ANN ILLIUS

Are you voting in person Nov. 7? If you're a Bay Village resident, you just might see some familiar faces at the polls! Eleven Bay High School students participated in the

Future of Democracy Student Poll Worker Program earlier in October. The students were trained by the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and will be working the polls on election day.

The Future of Democracy program

is intended to give high school students an "inside look" at the processes involved with American democracy. Student poll workers provide support to voters by working at polling locations. They are considered critical members of the

county's Election Day team.

"I think it's important to have civic engagement from a young age. I think it's important for a democracy to have that young voice in the

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ELECTION 2023

Our communities face many decisions on county seats, levies and Ohio positions. In the upcoming weeks, we are sharing those issues and Q & As with the many candidates.

Our communities

Avon National retailers seek Chester Road locations. **A11**

Avon Lake Council nixes parking lot plan. **A10**

Bay Village Walk will be held to aid in solving Amy's case. **A2**

Lakewood Madison Park master plan moves to its next phase. **A11**

North Olmsted Radisson Hotel acquired by new company, undergoing renovations. **A15**

Rocky River Parents call for termination of administration following several district scandals. **A10**

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NORTH OLMSTED



Provided photo

Christmas or Halloween?

Who knew Whoville was haunted? On Edgepark Boulevard, one homeowner has turned their front yard into a mash-up of Halloween and Christmas, with many lights and decorations all around, including the Grinch near the back.

NORTH RIDGEVILLE

New developments approved in flurry of activity in recent months

By SARAH MONAHAN

The continued construction of large housing developments in North Ridgeville has been a source of contention in recent planning commission and city council meetings.

In the past month, several developments were given preliminary approval to go forward with construction plans. Four developments are seeking approval while the

construction of Eagle Meadow at the corner Sugar Ridge and Bender continues with one house near completion.

The current law does not allow the city of North Ridgeville to deny property owners from developing on their land if they are zoned for residential and all building codes and city, state, and federal requirements are followed.

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AVON LAKE

Power plant update: Buyer interest in coal yard

By BARBARA MOONEY

The recent monthly update on the site restoration and redevelopment progress on the Avon Lake Power Plant revealed that there's interest from a buyer for a portion of the property that's south of Lake Road, adjacent to Walker Road.

While no names or details were disclosed, the site manager for the power plant property's owner said

that restoration of that part of the property, which includes a multi-use trail, is "90%" complete.

And a representative of the company that's marketing the former Avon Lake Power Plant property for redevelopment said that the sale of the portion of the cleaned-up property which was used as a coal yard is on track to be completed

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NORTH RIDGEVILLE

Egg drop on soupy day

The North Ridgeville Fire Department helped St. Peter School's eighth grade class test their egg drop projects. Students worked to design protective holders for eggs that were dropped from various heights.

Photo by Sarah Monahan



Photo courtesy Bay Village City School District

All participating students will be working the polls in their home wards, which is rare for poll workers.

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within two to four months.

The update occurred at a public meeting of Avon Lake's Community Improvement Corp. (CIC) on Oct. 13, where Dan Rogatto, the site manager for the property's owner, Avon Lake Environmental Redevelopment Group (ALERG), a unit of Charah Solutions, Inc., spoke. Also giving an update was Dick Shields, development executive with Avison Young, which is marketing the property.

The 41-acre plant, which opened in 1926 at a cost of \$30 million, closed in April 2022. Demolition and mitigation has been ongoing since then.

A phase one and phase two environmental assessment needs to be completed before any transaction happens. But the coal yard portion of the property has been remediated and ALERG has completed the yard's grading and put down grass seed. A bike and walking trail runs through the property.

Rogatto said the site restoration will include the Walker Road railroad crossing. The crossing should be fixed by the end of the year, he said.

Regarding the property north of Lake Road, which is the main campus of the former power plant, further environmental testing and evaluations won't be done until further structure demolitions, including the plant's large smokestacks.

The scheduled demolition of the two "precipitator" stacks is tentatively set for late February, but Rogatto said that it may occur sooner. The largest stack is scheduled to come down in mid-May; the three large boiler structures' demolition will be between late May and early January 2025 and the other large smokestack will be demolished in early March 2025.

According to the redevelopment plan, a single large stack will remain on the property when the project is done. The demolition



Photo by Barbara Mooney

The demolition of the smaller structures on the west side of the power plant property, as seen from Miller Road Park.

plant-wide is scheduled to be complete in April 2025, according to ALERG's schedule, and the site restoration is scheduled for completion on Aug. 31, 2025.

The project managers have said they don't want the smokestacks' demolitions, as spectacular as they may be, to become tourist attractions. They are also arranging major demolitions to avoid conflicts with events surrounding the April 8 eclipse, when hundreds if not thousands of people are expected to visit Avon Lake, specifically the adjacent Miller Road Park.

The city, along with Lorain County Metro Parks, continues to seek grant funding to be able to purchase portions of the property for public access along the lakefront. Grants pending include funding from the Ohio Department of Development and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

No news was shared about the success of the grant applications so far.

Contact this reporter at bemooney.83@gmail.com.

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polling stations," said Student Poll Worker James Cox, 18.

All participating students are Bay High School seniors. Participating students must be at least 17 years old. Eighteen-year-olds are required to be registered to vote.

The 10 other involved students include Brendan Spellman, Chloe Hoban, Dominic Minichello, James Cox, James Kelly, Joseph Palmowski, Mallory Kaminski, Margaret Buttrick, Maya Clark, Cleo Sinnema and Owen Appenheimer.

Students were required to attend a three-hour training class at Bay High School — and had to pass a test — in order to qualify as poll workers. The course was taught by a member of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections.

Cox was most surprised to learn how secure the polling process really is.

"I don't see any way anyone could get around any of the policies that we have on voter identification," Cox said.

A lot of what was taught in the course centered around how to verify identification, Cox said.

"We checked in some IDs and [explored] different scenarios, like what [voters] are allowed to bring in and what they aren't allowed to bring in," Cox said. "We were taught how to use the actual polling machines, and then we were also taught about some of the policies, like how, when checking in a ballot, you have to have two different people from two different political affiliations."

This effort was organized, in part, by Bay High School Social Studies Teacher Robert Grossman.

"Over the past few election cycles, the number of poll workers has gone down. So, in an effort to try to get more interest in working the polls, [the county is] offering it to younger people to hope that not only can they get more workers, but then it instills this idea of civic participation that then can last more of a lifetime," Grossman said.

The students who are participating in the program volunteered to do so.

The day before the election, students will report to their assigned polling station at 6 p.m. to help with set up. This lasts about two hours.

"We're picking up the machines and [putting] tape on all the sensors and all that stuff," Cox said.

On election day, students will report to their assigned polling location at 5:30 a.m., where they will stay until about 9 p.m. Polls close at 7:30 p.m. and all workers assist with closing procedures and tasks. The county does not offer partial shifts, so participating students are planning to be at the polls for the entire day.

Students are compensated \$220 for attending training, working the Monday Night Organizational Meeting and working on Election Day.

Students don't even have to miss class to participate. Bay schools are closed on Election Day — largely because some of the buildings are used as polling locations.

"With heightened awareness of school security, because some of our schools are used as polling places, it's easier to just give the students the day off," said Grossman.

Contact this reporter at sillius@westlifefews.com or 440-871-5797.



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