Village Quarterly Report  
Q1 (May-August), 2011/12

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Now that Labor Day is over, we are less than two weeks from the official beginning of fall. Looking back on this past summer, we should be grateful that the record-level hot and rainy weather had no more damaging impact on the Village than it did. The Village was very busy during this summer managing downed trees, plugged drains, downed power-lines, and traffic issues. Many of you sustained hardships from the stormy summer; but that is now behind us, and we look forward to a quiet fall to enjoy some pleasant weather.

This report is a few weeks overdue due to my shoulder surgery. Here are the actions and activities of your Board since the Mid-Term report.

FINANCIAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The Village Finance Committee, chaired by Trustee John Maier, has changed after the election and now includes Trustees Mary Brennan, Roger Lane, and Village Treasurer Nick Lucca. This Committee's key accomplishments for the first quarter of the new fiscal year:

- Increasing the Village’s bond rating by Moody’s up one level to Aa2.
- Sold $1.9 million Village bonds at an attractive low interest rate to replenish Village reserves used to purchase and improve the Oasis Openlands Park parcel of 17 acres. Twelve acres of this parcel have now been annexed into the village from unincorporated Lake County.
- Village reserves are robust allowing the Board to approve another year of Tax Rebates.
- Tax-rebate application forms were sent last month to residents.
- A bid-process was completed to select an Auditor for the Village for this fiscal year.
- Ending Q1 YTD was cash positive $142,500 and under budget.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The Public Works Committee, chaired by Trustee Armstrong, was augmented after the election with two new committee members: Trustee Tim Towne and Trustee Jeff Clark. This committee has been quite busy over the summer with not only responding to weather problems but also a number of Public Works projects. Here is an overview of their activities for Q1:

- **JAWA WATER EXPANSION**
  The Board has approved a contract with Gewalt Engineering for the Phase 1 engineering study for expanding Michigan water to the western and southern part of the Village. This study will produce a report on preliminary water routing and costs for the expansion system. We anticipate having accurate estimates later this year for the cost to each homeowner who wishes to connect to the new water system. The Village will be contacting residents to obtain their interest and/or commitment to be connected to the water system once the Phase 1 study is complete and we have accurate estimates of cost. Residents will not be forced to connect. During our meetings with residents later this year, we will discuss the various options, advantages and costs associated with connecting or not connecting to the expanded water system.
**VILLAGE ROADS**

- **Engineering Study:** After a bidding process, Ciorba Engineering was selected to do a Village-wide inventory and repair assessment of our roads. This report now gives your Board a longer-term view of repair priorities to maintain Village roads to standards. Following the recommendations in the report, the PWC is proceeding with these initial projects:
  - **Bonding- filler for roads:** A bonding/filler product was recommended as a way to improve road longevity and attractiveness on some roads. We have investigated several communities who have used this product with satisfactory results. Over the next month both Old School Road and Riverwoods Boulevard will be treated with this coating/bonder. Traffic interruptions should be light as the product cures within hours.
  - **Culvert improvements:** With the advent of increased record rain, certain culverts along our roadways have been compromised to a point where repair and grading work is required. Two specific culvert/drainage issues will be addressed this month: Old School Road and St. Mary's Road.
  - **Bradley Road rebuilding:** This road poses the most significant repair need. We will be doing core sampling to help us determine the level of rebuilding required for this road. Improvements to Bradley Road will not be accomplished until we have a better sense of the substantial costs and and grants available to make these repairs.

**VILLAGE TRAILS**

- **Scotts Crest:** Most of the regrading and grass/wild-flower seeding work has now been completed on the new trail at Scott's Crest. Unfortunately, much of the seeding work done this summer was washed away by several unusual downpours. More work is likely to be required next spring to bring this trail area up to plan; but the trail is solid and riders are already using this new trail.
- **Oasis Park Trail:** You probably have seen by now the tree clearing on the Oasis Park site. Since our recent acquisition and annexation of this property, it was determined that moving the Village trail slightly eastward would improve safety for trail riders who currently must ride too close to Bradley Road. This new trail will follow the landscaping approach we used on the new trail at Scott’s Crest. The Park is intended to be left "passive" for use only as an open-space parcel without playground development. We still anticipate harvesting hay from the park. It is our hope that through effective landscaping techniques the Tollway Oasis buildings will eventually become invisible from Bradley Road. More details on this project will be available as our planning becomes finalized and expenditures approved.
- **Bradley Road Trail Extension:** Not as easily seen, the new trail extension along Bradley Road, South of Riverwoods Blvd. should be complete by the end of the month. This trail will eventually link to trails near the Whippoorwill restoration area and connect to the current trails at Deerpath Farms.
- **MOLA donates split-rail fencing:** You will notice a new split-rail fence installed near the intersection of Bradley and Riverwoods Boulevard. Additionally, tallgrass was cut to improve the driver visibility at the intersection. We wish to thank MOLA for their donation and continued support of the Village.
- **Tindall Trail Sign:** We were pleased with the installation of two new trail markers along Old School Road. This section of Trail has been officially named in recognition of the many years of volunteering and sustained commitment to Village Trail planning performed by ex-Trustee, Jack Tindall.
- **Village Trail maintenance:** This year marks the first substantial trail improvements completed since the trails were installed some 10 years ago.
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

This committee, chaired by new Trustee Tim Towne, has as its members, Trustees Bill Armstrong and Roger Lane. With the addition of the Korhumel homesite as Village land and the new Oasis Park, this committee has been very busy with planning new trails and Village land utilization. Expect updates from this committee in the near future.

PUBLIC SAFETY

With the advent of a contract for permanent security patrols, we took necessary steps to evaluate our insurance liability and Commission structure to maximize utilization of the security service while reducing Village and personal liability. After this evaluation it was determined that a change was necessary on the management structure for Safety and Security for the Village. Therefore, I have appointed Jeff Clark to a new Board position of Public Safety Commissioner. Further, in an effort to reduce personal risk of volunteers, we decided it was necessary to remove the function of the Safety and Security Commission that has operated admirably for the past two years.

The Safety and Security Commission was chaired by Jan Pink and supported over the last two years by Commissioners: Diane Roth, Roberta and Dennis Bohm, Rick Kennison, Alan Shidler, and most recently Matt Miller.

This commission accomplished a great deal over the last 2+ years, especially in light of the fact that this function did not exist prior to the formation of this Commission. Two of their many program contributions will be visible this month in the Village. You will see the “Neighborhood Watch” signs installed in key locations in the Village along with the availability to add a no-solicitation sign at your driveway entrance or door. You should be receiving a mailing packet on this information soon.

NEW ZONING, PLANNING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION

For many years the Village has used two Commissions to manage and support the Village’s zoning objectives. These two Commissions were: The Plan Commission which had nine members, and the Zoning Board of Appeals, with seven members. These two Commissions met irregularly. Meetings were scheduled only when petitions were filed from residents or builders requesting zoning approval or exceptions. Over the past two years, I noticed it was often difficult for the Commissions to field a quorum necessary for the Commission to conduct Village business on petitions. In some cases, this quorum problem this led to additional work and cost for the Village and petitioner.

After investigation of how other Municipalities handle these Commissions, it made sense the Board and me to combine the two functions of these Commissions into one new Commission: the Zoning, Planning Board of Appeals Commission. The new ZPA is chaired by Ginny Bartholomay and includes the following commissioners: Joe Krusinski, Thomas A. Heinz, Liz Leonard, Bob Busscher, Orren Pickell, and Mark Meluso. We wish to thank these residents for agreeing to volunteer their time on this most important Village Commission.

We also owe a debt of gratitude for the many years of volunteer services contributed by the following commissioners. For many years they were the guardians of our zoning Ordinances.
Thank you to those who completed Mid-Term Resident Survey. We had a good response with 50 surveys representing up to 83 residents. The included survey report has the details shown as a percentage to the total responding population.

Judging from survey input on the topic of Transparency, residents want to make sure the Village keeps our financial house in order and helps reduce resident property taxes. Communications with residents was also judged very high as an activity deemed of value by residents.

As for Government Effectiveness the Village seems to be doing an effective job in dealing with resident issues and overall Village governance.

On the two questions Village Security and use of the Korhumel property: it was overwhelmingly clear that the residents supported our continuation of Village Security. On the question of what to do with the newly owned Korhumel property, it is unclear as to the wishes of the residents. Therefore, the Board has assigned Trustee Towne the responsibility of deeper evaluation, cost analysis, and alternatives in the use of this property. Once we have compiled all of the information, the Village residents will be invited to a meeting to discuss this topic before your Board takes a decision on the disposition of this property.

We wish to welcome Armin & Azita Gerhardt to the Village as our most recent new residents. The Gerhardt’s have purchased a home on Mettawa Woods Drive. We hope they will enjoy their new home and lifestyle available in Mettawa.

A new section added to the quarterly report will highlight those positions in the Village that support residents and Village.

The first position highlighted is that of the Village Clerk. You will note from the original position description below that the duties of the Village Clerk have significantly changed and increased over time. This position is critical to the operation of the Village. We are fortunate that a person as accomplished as Cathy Nelson (see sidebar) is volunteering her time for this most important position.

**CATHY NELSON**

Grew up in Wilmette and was an obsessive horse lover, rider and water skier. After attending Occidental College with a BA in music performance, she returned to live in Northbrook.

Before retiring she worked for Leo Burnett Advertising for 25 years where she produced TV commercials for major accounts including United Air Lines, Kellogg, Reebok, and Wilson Sporting Goods. Cathy received a CLEO for one of her commercials...so she was in elite company for her work. She was also the Sr. Producer in charge of children’s and teen advertising for McDonalds before leaving Burnett in 1996.

She and Mike have lived in Mettawa for the last 13 years along with their many children: Jack Russell Darby, Jack Russell Jojo, retired horses DD and Buzzy and Sicilian donkeys Beano and Oliver. Over time more than 25 horses have lived on the farm and adjacent property under their care.

A horse person all her life, Cathy rode Saddlebreds in her early years and competed successfully across the country winning several world championships.

When Cathy turned thirty she began a career riding Hunters and has competed and invested in many winners. Today, she keeps an investment hunter in training at Hidden Knoll Farm in Zion with trainer Sara Rhodes and rides almost every day.

In addition to working as Village Clerk, she has raised and trained young horses, competed and volunteered for both Midwest Therapeutic Riding and Partners for Progress. Donkey Beano has also been used for therapy and is a goodwill ambassador at the farm.

**PART-TIME VILLAGE CLERK DUTIES**

Clerk Duties by Village Ordinance *(originally designed)*:

- Keep Village Seal and attest and certify all documents as required by law.
- Record all documents with the County as required by law, such as plats, tax ordinances, budgets, easements, annexations, etc.
- Keep and file all Village records, which includes Ordinances, Board agendas and minutes
- Interface with Mayor and Village Attorney on Board meeting agendas and postings.
- Set up, attend and take minutes at all Board Meetings and Zoning meetings.
EXPANDED CLERK DUTIES (currently required beyond those above):

- Serve as Village’s Freedom of Information Officer: Receive, research and respond to all Freedom of Information Act Requests responded to within required five-day time period
  - Take/recertify FOIA training yearly
  - Answer any inquiries or complaints from the State FOIA attorney regarding compliance
- County Election Official for the Village
  - Handle all official aspects of Village elections, including receiving, verifying, certifying and filing all candidates
  - Receive, reply or forward all government document requirements, updates, etc., from the county and state
- Office: Set up and maintain Village “Office” in home
- File storage: Maintain files in off-site storage facility in Libertyville
  - Maintain all Village files
  - Maintain all Developer’s Letters of Credit...handle draw downs with Village Engineer and Bank, certify draw down and obtain check.
  - Maintain all Public Hearing transcripts
  - Maintain all Village Bond Documents
- Village phone: responding to all inquiries, forwarding when appropriate 24/7 including but not limited to:
  - Zoning/real estate questions, services, animal control and removal, traffic complaints, garbage pickup, new resident questions, outside supplier inquiries, solicitations, permits, village ordinance questions, security alerts and calls from Howe Security, responding to callers on all subjects.
  - Handle applications, documents, and approval of Real Estate Transfer Tax Stamps and give stamps and exemptions to applicants.
  - Compiled and keep logs of plats, maps, ordinances, contracts, resident contact information. Interface with County Sheriff and Village Attorneys on traffic violations and copy monthly reports from the county for distribution.
  - Interface with Legal and Engineering departments on issues coming into the office by phone and mail
- Mail: Pickup and delivery by hand from Hotel or electronic all mail sent to Village address.
- Sort invoices and deposits for Finance committee.
- Manage Resident mailings as required
  - Keep updated and supply information on residents, village supplies (envelopes, letterhead, etc.)
  - Keep contracts on file
  - Mail quarterly reports and other resident correspondence from the Mayor, or committees
  - Email alerts: sent out to residents as required
  - Assemble mail and collect tax rebate applications. Forward multiple phone calls on this subject from residents to Finance.
  - Assist in animal recovery, alerts and disposal for loose horses, cats, dogs, birds, to deceased raccoon/deer removal.
- Attend and serve as Secretary for minute-taking at Board, committee, and commissions meetings
- OTHER: Assist with requests, as needed and any other projects (like Whippoorwill Farm change over to Village) as requested by the Mayor.

In closing, we think our current and past Village Volunteers, and we encourage others to get involved through feedback, comments, and volunteerism.

Kind regards,

Jess D. Ray
Mayor
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