

MEMORANDUM

TO: STAFF

**COPY: VILLAGE PRESIDENT & BOARD OF TRUSTEES
DEPARTMENT HEADS**

FROM: Rich Nahrstadt, Village Manager

DATE: December 10, 2010

RE: STAFF BRIEFING

WEEK OF DECEMBER 6, 2010

PLAN COMMISSION

On December 7, the Plan Commission considered the following applications:

- At the request of the applicant, the Commission continued, to January 4, its consideration of a resolution recommending approval of a special permit request to allow Verizon to have a wall sign higher than the maximum height of 20 feet from the ground (Willow Festival). The applicant made this request due to the fact that three commission members were absent, and it appeared there were not the necessary five votes for the Commission to forward an affirmative recommendation.
- By a vote of 6-0, the Commission adopted a resolution recommending approval of an amendment to allow custom picture framing as a *permitted use* in the O-3 District. (The Great Frame-Up - 601 Skokie Boulevard).
- The Commission held a continued public hearing on special permit requests to allow the construction of a Chase Bank on a portion of the old Caravelle site (2370 Waukegan Road). After reviewing the applicant's changes to the site circulation and hearing their arguments for the need to clear-cut the entire site at this time, the Plan Commission adopted a resolution, by a vote of 6-0, recommending approval of the applicant's request.
- The Commission held a public hearing on a series of zoning and subdivision relief requests to allow the construction of an additional 5,500 square foot building for TD Ameritrade on the property at 400 Skokie Boulevard. A majority of the Commission members generally found the proposal and the requested zoning and subdivision relief appropriate, except for the requested building setback variation along Henrici Drive. The Commission continued consideration of this item to its December 21 meeting to allow the applicant time to evaluate revising its site plan to relocate the proposed building a little farther away from the Henrici Drive property line.
- The Commission held a public hearing on a special permit request to allow Auto Cars Import to have outdoor storage of automobiles at 1801 Holste Road. The Commission found the general request appropriate, but found that the existing vegetation did not provide adequate screening of the site. The Commission directed staff to prepare a resolution recommending approval of the application and to work with the applicant to come up with more acceptable screening of the outdoor storage areas. This item will be back before the Commission on December 21.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMISSION

On December 9, the Architectural Control Commission reviewed the request for a Verizon Wireless wall sign above 20' in height located at 840 Willow Road in the Willow Festival Shopping Center. The ACC had originally reviewed this sign at its last meeting and had asked the Applicant to send a revised design for a smaller sign (with a 20" letter height) electronically for comparison with the proposed sign (22" letter height). During its meeting on December 9, the ACC discussed the sign again and ultimately recommended approval, by a vote of 3-2 (with two members absent), to the Board of Trustees for a wall sign above the permitted district height with a 22" letter height. The Commission also approved two new single-family residential elevations.

STAFF PREPARES FOR NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH

Village staff has been busy populating the redesigned Northbrook website in anticipation of the January launch. On Monday, Dec. 6, staff held a Website Focus Group in the Digital Classroom at the Northbrook Library. During the hour-long session, ten Northbrook residents and business/organization representatives were tasked with a website “scavenger hunt.” Their comments on the navigation and ease of finding information were noted and discussed. Those participating had a variety of website skills, from the casual user to Library staff that recently redesigned their website. Staff walked away from the session with suggestions for some navigational changes and design modifications as well as ideas for additional pages and site features. In addition to the in-person focus group, an On-line Survey Focus Group with twelve participants was also conducted. The results of the on-line survey were fairly consistent with those of the in-person group, with suggestions for improving navigation and site organization.

While staff is planning for an early January launch, the actual date is not yet finalized. Therefore, it will likely be a “soft” launch in January, with the major press push done in February. Staff is hurriedly working to get the Village’s new reverse-911 system in place to allow for it to be functional when the website goes live. This will allow residents and businesses to take full advantage of signing up for the communication tools provided by this system when they visit the new website.

GARAGE STRUCTURE FIRE

On Friday afternoon, December 10, Police and Fire units responded to a reported house fire in the 1300 block of Edgewood Lane. An alarm was called in by the resident’s alarm company. The inside of the garage was destroyed and portions of the second floor above the garage. No injuries were reported. Fire operations were challenged due to an old 6” water main that broke, making it necessary to get water from a distant hydrant. Public Works responded to isolate the break and increase water pressure for Firefighting operations. Early estimates for damages are several hundred thousand dollars. Although the fire is still under investigation, Fire investigators point to a paper bag with fireplace ashes that was placed on newspapers inside the garage as the likely cause of the fire.



FIRE AT UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES

Early Tuesday morning, December 7, firefighters were called to building 5D on the Underwriters Lab property for an outside fire. UL Security was attempting to extinguish a fire in a pile of mattresses that were lying up against the building. Firefighters from Station 10 extinguished the fire. As additional fire apparatus arrived, the mattresses were pulled away from the building while other firefighters gained access to the inside to ascertain whether the fire had entered the building.

Post fire investigation showed that the mattresses had been used in a “burn test” early on Monday and had been soaked down with water before being moved outside. It is believed that one of the mattresses had not been completely extinguished and had smoldered until bursting into flames. No one was injured but the exterior of the building suffered an estimated \$5,000 in damage.

WATER TOWER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Work continues on the construction of the new water tower at 201 Huehl Road. The Contractor (CB&I), the Engineer (Strand Associates), various subcontractors and staff have met several times to develop and implement procedures that will expedite the project and protect the interests of property owners adjacent to the project site. About 500 feet of 8-inch PVC and 500 feet of 16-inch ductile iron water main have been installed on the east and north sides of the property. Connection of the 16-inch main with the distribution system is being delayed because of an unmarked buried structure owned by Qwest that is directly in the way of the main. Qwest is being very cooperative and expects to have the structure relocated within two weeks. Excavation for the foundation was completed and the ring wall footing was poured this week. Work on the ring wall will begin next week after the concrete is sufficiently cured. Although most of the cell service issues have been satisfactorily dealt with, there will need to be a change order to meet the post-design modifications they have requested. Staff is deliberating the best way to accommodate the changes to keep the project on schedule and ensure that the cost of these changes is ultimately borne by the cell companies. Staff is also reviewing options for connecting the proposed SCADA system at the new tower to the Water Plant control system.

RAVINE STABILIZATION PROJECT

Public Works crews continued stabilization of the 450+ feet of stream bed at the ravine that parallels our lake front pump station access road. Thus far, they have removed almost all of the undesirable brush and debris from the stream banks. Additional trees will also be removed in order to open up the banks to sunlight to allow natural grass with extensive root systems to become established. Crews have removed about 440 feet of major debris and rehabilitated about 425 feet of the stream bed by removing large amounts of debris and mucky soil and installing approximately 600 tons of recycled concrete (most of which was procured at no cost from a local contractor). The next phase of the work will be to stabilize more of the slope above the stream bed. This part of the project will involve a combination of stone placement and vegetative enhancements. Work will continue throughout the winter, weather permitting. The project is necessary to secure the slopes of the ravine and prevent possible damage to our 24" raw water main, as well as the station's power and gas lines, and to stabilize the access roadbed prior to its repaving next year. This project continues to attract the attention of other public and private agencies and we have had a number of visitors who are contemplating similar projects.

TREE TRIMMING

To date, the Village's tree trimming contractor, Nels J. Johnson Tree Experts, has trimmed 879 trees. Residents living in areas where tree-trimming work will be performed have been notified by mail. The Village conducts routine trimming of each parkway tree every eight (8) to nine (9) years. Trees are trimmed to prevent unnecessary damage during storms and protect pedestrians and motorists from low hanging branches, promote the health of the tree, and ensure that the tree is aesthetically pleasing.

WINTER WEATHER

The Village of Northbrook received 5 inches of snow Friday, December 3 and Saturday, December 4. Salting crews were called in at midnight and a transition to full plowing operations was made at 8:00am on Saturday. Crews continued to plow through the day as lake effect snow fell. Operations were completed at approximately 8:30pm and a total of 200 tons of salt were used.

The Village received additional snow, although accumulation was an inch or less, beginning the afternoon of December 9 into the early morning of December 10. Salt crews began work at 3:30pm and operations were completed by 6:30am. The amount of salt used was not available at the time this briefing was prepared.

Snow and ice crews are also preparing for snow and possible freezing rain on Saturday, December 11 and Sunday, December 12. Weather reports are calling for 3 inches of snow and the Village may also receive as much as 1/3 of an inch of rain. As in the past, the Police Department will notify Public Works when road conditions necessitate salting. Public Works will continue to monitor weather and respond as necessary.

EAB TREE REMOVALS

Removal of parkway Ash trees is underway. In total, 80 parkway trees have been removed by the Village's contractor, Autumn Tree Care, and Public Works crews. Residents with parkway Ash Trees were notified by mail prior to trees adjacent to their property being removed. Residents have been notified that the trees will be replaced at no cost to them, and are being given the opportunity to select the type of replacement tree that will be installed.

EAB PRESENTATIONS

Public Works staff was asked by representatives of the Morton Arboretum and the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus to speak on the process for developing and the scope of, the Village's EAB Management Plan at grant workshops on Friday, December 3 and on Wednesday, December 15. An EAB Management Plan is a required component of the Urban Forest Restoration Grant from the EPA and U.S. Forest Service that will be administered by the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus. Public Works will be submitting an application for this grant to assist with the planting of parkway trees where Ash trees were removed. The maximum award amount that the Village may receive is \$20,000, which would plant 67 parkway trees.

WATER SYSTEM BUFFER ZONE PROTECTION (BZPP) GRANT:

The Board approved Resolution 2010-124 authorizing \$45,150 for new surveillance cameras and \$32,884 for electronic locks for the water plant, tower and west side reservoir. The work is to be done by the low bidder - Keyth Technologies of Highland Park. Staff has prepared the contract documents for this work and expects to begin work within the month. The cost of this work will be reimbursed via a \$199,668 Buffer Zone Protection Plan (BZPP) grant (CFDA #97.078) received from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. Staff is reviewing proposals for manual securitization devices and window blast protection. Staff is also preparing RFPs for physical access barrier installations, cover locks & vent protection devices. The term of the grant agreement, which was approved by Resolution 10-R-75, is from May 20, 2010 through December 31, 2011.

BROKEN SPRINKLER PIPE AT RED CENTER

On Friday, December 10, a broken sprinkler pipe at RED Center caused some water damage in the men's bathroom and generator room. At this time, the cause of the broken pipe is undetermined. The sprinkler company, Fire Prevention Bureau, and Public Works are working to correct the problem.



RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

A delayed burglary was reported to Police on Thursday afternoon, December 9. The homeowner in the 100 block of Wellington returned home to find doors open, rooms ransacked and a safe containing currency and various jewelry items missing. The residence has an alarm system, but it was not in use.

A second burglary occurred in the 3800 block of Rutgers during the morning hours. The homeowner returned home and found an interior door open and lights on. Dresser drawers and the closet were ransacked. Items missing are being determined.

Canvases were conducted and the scenes processed by Evidence Technicians.

PLACES IN NEED: THE CHANGING GEOGRAPHY OF POVERTY AND THE AMERICAN SAFETY NET

Staff recently attended a poverty issues briefing seminar entitled *Places in Need: The Changing Geography of Poverty and the American Safety Net* hosted by the Jane Addams Hull House Association. Professor Scott Allard of the University of Chicago presented his findings, taken from his academic paper entitled *Strained Suburbs: The Social Service Challenges of Rising Suburban Poverty*. Professor Allard's work is based on the premise that poverty is spreading to the suburbs and the infrastructure or safety net that is in place to mitigate financial hardship is based on the experiences of those living in urban areas.

Prof. Allard stated that there is less social capital and less civic connectedness in suburban areas. Therefore, if we are to alleviate financial pressure in the suburbs, we must improve links to existing help, make sure we are reaching immigrant populations, strengthen community based non-profit organizations, and maintain public commitments to invest in effective programs that ensure access to suburban residents. If you would like to read the academic paper or view the Powerpoint presentation, contact Jason Batalden, Batalden@northbrook.il.us for an electronic copy.

GRADUATION CONGRATULATIONS

Officer Mike Tadley graduated Friday, December 10, 2010, from the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy receiving the Distinguished Recruit Award. This top honor recognition is awarded by the recruits and staff. Officer Tadley will begin Field Training on the Night Shift A Team. Welcome back Mike and great job!

Sergeant Dan Strickland also graduated on Friday, December 10, from the Northwestern University Center for Public Safety School of Police Staff and Command. Dan has been attending this ten-week course covering matters relating to the supervision and management of police operations. While attending classes full time at Northwestern, Dan continued to maintain contact with his shift and duties at the Police Department. Congratulations Dan on your accomplishment!

WEEK OF DECEMBER 13, 2010

MON.	12/13	7:00 p.m.	Civic Association Awards Presentation – Board Room
TUES.	12/14	7:30 p.m.	Regular Board of Trustees Meeting – Board Room
WED.	12/15	1:00 p.m.	Code Compliance Committee – Terrace Room
		7:00 p.m.	Youth Commission Holiday Party – Lake Cook Terrace
THURS.	12/16	8am-Noon	Nestle Grand Opening - 885 Sunset Ridge
		5:00 p.m.	Electrical Commission – DPS Conference Room
		7:00 p.m.	Environmental Quality Commission – Terrace Room
FRI.	12/17		No Meetings