

State of the Village

Delivered March 16, 2015

Good evening, I would like to begin tonight's State of the Village address by reviewing "the numbers" – our summary of some metrics in each department or service area for the prior year. Some folks say "if you can't measure it – you can't manage it" and thus we have found it helpful over the last several years to report on our Village "by the numbers" as we do this annual report.

#s review – overhead/ highlights (see attached "By the Numbers")

The numbers help us assess how we are doing in providing the following for our Village – safety, savings, so services can be sustained, a place for social interaction and opportunity, and structures to meet the needs and desires of the community. Now before you wonder if tonight's State of the Village is brought to you by the letter "s" – suffice it to say the alliteration just helps me present in a more organized way.

Safety

The number one job of local government – is to provide for the safety of its residents and quite frankly for the safety of anyone who happens to be

in the community at any given moment. As we look at our various Village departments several have a very direct role in providing it. The projects and work of our Public Works department is key to the “flow,” quite literally, of everything in the Village. From plowing the snow, running the water production and wastewater treatment plants, maintaining all the Village infrastructure, addressing stormwater management – which we have been doing aggressively, to planting trees and removing the dead ones, in 2014, as always, the actions of our Public Works department were critical to making the Village safe.

Our Development Services Department also has a role to play in making the Village safe. From issuance of building and zoning permits to code enforcement, building inspections and engineering and design responsibility for roadways and other public infrastructure the Development Services Department plays a very critical role. It was a banner year for issuing building permits (92% increase over 2013) and inspecting buildings (2,500 inspections) to assure that safety codes are being followed. Some major construction projects, such as the one across the street – at

Hough and Main, have required countless hours of plan review and construction inspections. But when not inspecting or overseeing street improvement projects, providing GIS for all Village departments or converting all of our building files to a cost saving laser fiche system, this department has worked on the following projects in 2014: the Route 14 grade separation project achieving approval from IDOT for Phase I design engineering and initial work for Phase II, administering the ICC CN/EJ&E noise mitigation grants for those living near the tracks; the North Commuter Parking Lot new entrance drive Phase I engineering study; updating our ADA transition plan; and Phase II of the Hart Road Intersection/ Route 14 Project, which will be built in 2017. I would like to pause for a moment on this last project, Hart Road, because it is instructive as to the time, patience and commitment each of these “obvious” need projects requires. For years anyone observing the end of the high school day or just using Hart Road has not been able to miss the backup because of this intersection, or that “life in your hands” feeling because the roads don’t square up. So if safety is so important why is Hart Road at Route 14 still such a crazy intersection? My

oldest, now 29, was a high school student when as a student council member he spoke to our then state representative about how important it would be to improve the intersection (as many others had thought and said). Later, in 2005 this improvement was a local campaign discussion point. Not through lack of effort, but the realities of herding the parties – Lake County (the lead on this project), IDOT, Barrington Hills, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Illinois Commerce Commission (crossing safety), and - not to mention – acquiring the most necessary – funding for the project, we are here in 2015 with the project finally having an actual build date. The other exciting part of finally seeing this come to fruition is the other “no brainer” project which will be done at the same time. Thanks to a partnership between the School District and Village and receipt of funding for it, sidewalk will be in place from the Barrington High School entrance on Main Street to Hart Road and then along the east side of Hart Road beyond the Field of Dreams entrance. This safety improvement will be a fantastic addition – and has been a long time coming – ironically just after my last child will graduate from Barrington High School.

The two departments we most identify with safety – Fire and Police were on the job 24/7 in 2014. In addition to continuing their excellent patrol and investigation activities, the Police Department assisted with the Administrative Adjudication process (285 cases last year) and supported and coordinated an increasing number of local events - fostering community and economic development. Our Fire Department had a very successful year. Its rapid response times (averaging under 3 minutes) to emergency medical calls, the overwhelming majority of its calls, as well as the fact that there were no “structure” fires in the Village last year are a credit to years of good work. Better building codes, sprinkler and alarm systems, fire prevention training – from Homecoming open houses to Fireman Jim at Safety Town for decades is paying off. But, more than ever, we appreciate the need to be prepared - whether it is for responding to the smaller fire incidents or being ready for new rail risks, like freight trains with flammable cargo rolling through our Village over 20 times a day.

I would like to recognize our Fire Chief Jim Arie, for his continued work to increase safety around the hazmat tank car issue. Not only has he

engaged to insure that our department has training but he is working with other chiefs and departments through MABAS (the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System) the wonderful Illinois invention where departments share resources and assist each other with emergencies, by chairing the MABAS hazmat task force committee. Before we leave the topic of safety it is worth mentioning that our first full year of having our Fire Department not also contracted to cover the Fire District calls has turned out to be a safe and financially sound decision as we had hoped and expected it would. Not only has our response time to our now 5 square mile response area (instead of almost 50) meant better, safer service for our residents, our ISO rating has improved meaning savings for our commercial enterprises and perhaps homeowners in insurance rates. The long term financial significance of cutting in half the number of fire employees for whom Village taxpayers will have ultimate responsibility from a pension and benefits perspective - while also creating a safer department, cannot be understated.

And no safety report would be complete without an update for you about rail matters. As you all know, Barrington is crossed by 2 Class 1

railroad lines UP and CN intersecting just behind the Ice House. The commuter trains 60+/ day of course are on the UP line, as are a small number of freight trains. The CN, which prior to 2009 was the little used EJ&E, is now a major freight line carrying over 20 trains per day. Barrington is a railroad town and because of that our rail efforts over the last years have been two pronged.

When CN applied to purchase the EJ&E in 2007, Barrington began its efforts in front of the STB – or Surface Transportation Board in D. C. – the federal agency which has jurisdiction over rail acquisitions and mergers. While our efforts along with those of other suburban communities in our TRAC Coalition to change federal law to prevent the acquisition did not meet with success, our efforts to mitigate the impacts of the merger did. In unprecedented fashion the STB awarded grade separation relief to federal routes in Aurora and Lynwood, Illinois, quiet zone relief to various areas (including Barrington) as well as other relief. Additionally, the STB created a five year oversight period to watch how the transaction unfolded and whether the impacts were as predicted. That period was extended by one

year, to January 2015 when CN failed to report how often it was blocking road crossings for more than 10 minutes (CN's report of 14 blockages was actually 1400 blockages – a fact brought to the STB's attention by Barrington and our TRAC Coalition). In 2014, on Barrington's petition to the STB, that oversight period was extended for two additional years, until 2017 allowing additional time for the STB to award further mitigation. As you know the reason Barrington has pressed its case before the STB is because the CN line crosses four roadways all at grade level within Barrington's corporate limits – Lake Zurich Road, Northwest Highway (US 14), Hough Street (Route 59), and Main Street (Lake-Cook Road) – which carry over 70,000 cars/day. Our main concern is that these crossings are within a span of 5,918 feet and a CN train can and usually does block all of them at once several times a day. Without any grade separation, our residents are at risk if they need to be transported to our nearest hospital – Advocate Good Shepherd – with its state of the art cardiac and emergency facilities.

Our most recent petition to the STB has brought to its attention the increases in train traffic which were not expected when the acquisition was

approved leading to more train carloads and longer trains now and in the future. The intermodal traffic (we see those double stacked shipping containers quite often) coming into the Port of Prince Rupert (with CN the exclusive rail line there) has almost doubled from the traffic prediction in 2007 and of course the crude oil rail traffic from the Alberta tar sands is expanding and will increase further in the next few years. That tar sands traffic was not even on the horizon in 2008 when the acquisition was approved. Thus Barrington asserts to the STB that in the face of this new evidence, it must be awarded a grade separation at Route 14 to be funded by CN.

A second and separate area of rail involvement for Barrington has been pressing for rail tank car safety. Different federal agencies – the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), both part of the Department of Transportation have jurisdiction over these rail safety matters. Our focus has been on tank car safety ever since the horrible CN ethanol train derailment near Rockford, Illinois in 2009 killing a woman waiting in her car at the tracks, and injuring

others. Barrington petitioned PHMSA in 2012 following the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) report on the incident pointed out the flaws in the rail tank cars transporting flammable hazmat. Our petition requested not only new safety car standards, but requiring the retrofit of the thousands of existing tank cars that have a life expectancy of 40-50 years, in order to insure the safety of those of us living along train lines. Our petition is part of the current rulemaking proceeding at PHMSA and FRA, with final rules expected in mid-May. Barrington, TRAC, and many of our suburban colleagues and others around the country commented in this rulemaking at our urging. Every action that Barrington has taken and will take leads to greater safety for our residents along the rail lines and in the entire community.

Social

When we consider the desire for Barrington to be vibrant and social, over the last year the community experienced some exciting events and activity in the Village which fed this desire. The net 28 new businesses coming into the Village last year joined with a broader business community

which supported and benefitted from events like Cruise Nights and Scarecrow Fest, and the Memorial Day weekend art festival with its large crowds. Many of the over 500 viewers in 2014 and the over 1,000 viewers of the Oscar Short Films over two weekends in 2015 made it a point to visit or dine in other Barrington establishments before or after the show.

Another very bright part of the social side of the Village are the many volunteers who have created, promoted and supported so many of the wonderful events and activities in our Village. Our Bike and Pedestrian Committee has endless enthusiasm for its plans and undertakings, continuing this work along with others to connect more of our community by bike paths and trails. Our Cultural Commission appointed in 2009 has brought us a most wonderful menu of events – from the Art Festival, to the holidays, to the ever popular Oscar Shorts. Supported by the economic and community development staff – this Commission looks toward even more as our new community and cultural center comes on line at the Barrington White House. Although we will see their show unfolding as we celebrate this 150th year of Barrington, I would be remiss if I did not recognize how

much and hard the Sesquicentennial Committee has worked over the past four years to plan the celebration of Barrington's birthday. This year's events will be spectacular, creating great memories, and will be worthy of such a momentous time in Barrington's history.

Savings and Financial Sustainability

To keep the Village safe and social and attractive for residents, businesses and visitors requires planning and resources and our Community and Financial Services Department was "on the job" to make that happen again in 2014. Our Aa1 bond rating and attention to economics by our Treasurer and his department allowed taxpayers to save over a million two hundred fifty thousand (\$1,250,000) in 2014 by refinancing. Our sales tax revenue, showing an almost 9% increase over 2013 contributed to operating revenue allowing a strong finish for our 2014 budget. Keeping our budget balanced as we do, year over year, becomes more challenging as the state tries to get its financial house in order. As the funding passed by the state to local government – our per capita share of income taxes or motor fuel taxes paid by residents is eyed to be held to balance the state budget, we

must react and respond accordingly. Our financial services department has done that well and will continue to do so. The Risk Management/ HR area of the Village had another great year in holding down costs for work-related incidents as well as issuing and renewing many food, liquor and business related licenses and permits – another sign of vitality in the Village.

Structures

Speaking of signs of vitality in the Village – the long awaited project in the Village Center, broke ground and has been going up at breakneck speed since the Fall. The Barrington Village Center project, being built by private developers on a footprint leased to them by our Village with municipally owned parking – completes a big part of the downtown plan vision for a pedestrian friendly commercial village center which respects the sense of place existing in Barrington. The project is built to a scale that enhances the attractiveness of the surrounding parcels and the entire Village and will bring new restaurants (always a desire expressed by residents in community surveys) and retail to town. Our goal of assuring a “critical mass” of

walkable desired destinations to bring folks into town is very much furthered by this capstone TIF project.

The other structure undergoing a massive restoration/renovation on Main Street cannot be missed and is a most visible sign of our community's allegiance to its Village Center which respects its past, embraces its present with excitement, and plans and anticipates a wonderful future. Thank you, thank you to the generous people who have said yes to Barrington, and a community and cultural center in a beautiful White House on Main Street by donating to date over 5 million dollars in cash and in kind to fund this project. Thank you to Beth Raseman and the many volunteers supporting her tremendous efforts in every aspect of this project. This gift to our community, especially in its 150th year will provide an amazing venue for all of the best of community life now and for years to come.

And this leads me to some final thoughts. The structures like the Barrington Village Center and Barrington's White House, the events which make our community a vibrant social place, the savings and planning for a financially sustainable future while providing for the safety of our Village

does not happen without a lot of planning, effort, patience, deliberation and decision. Tonight I salute our staff and other professionals who day in and day out work to make this happen. The volunteers who staff our commissions and boards, who work on our committees are a big part of this as well. But tonight I want to especially salute you – Village Trustees, for the determination you have shown over the years to bring these projects to fruition and to make our Village safe and great. This includes Trustees serving on Boards, I dare say, for the past 150 years. But from my recent observations I appreciate the time, thoughtfulness, faith and patience that you must possess to carry on the Village's work. When it has taken a long time to get a project like the one at Hough/Main finally underway, you have not lost patience. You have made thoughtful, informed choices – weighing the various implications – when it came to this project and others. Some of you were on Board when the property was assembled, when the first prospective developer had to walk away in tough economic times, when you had to spend significant time vetting the next group of proposals and then approving a development agreement and working and waiting through the

many pre-build steps as the developer secured his tenants, investors and finances. But you did – and soon a new piece of our downtown will be complete alongside a White House which you had the foresight to preserve and help to transform into something special for our entire community.

It is sometimes difficult for people who have not been on that side of the dais to appreciate the incredible amount of time and effort it takes to do the so-called obvious. Now when I look at things like the Barrington High campus, rather than just taking for granted that, of course, we would have a large campus and high school building in our town, I remember the pictures of the Hough Street School which contained the high school for a very long time. I appreciate what a big step creating that was for a School Board years ago. When I see turn lanes at Main and Hough, or Route 12 running uninterrupted under the CN tracks in Lake Zurich, I think about how easy it is to take those things for granted. Of course these things should be this way one would think, not realizing the back story of what it took to achieve those.

This year as we celebrate 150 years of Barrington, we also celebrate 150 years of Village Trustees who volunteer their service to not only capture the vision that Barringtonians have for their Village but to work together to achieve it and preserve it. Over the years, people have come to live in our community because the vision of a dynamic, engaged, attractive, safe, quaint village has been achieved, and maintained and enhanced. We are proud of that wonderful reputation in this region, in this state, in the nation, and in fact, the world.

One hundred fifty years from now, or even fifty years from now, let's hope some future residents are standing in front of the White House thinking – "of course this lovely place is here in our great Village." They will never know what was behind that – but tonight we do, and for that and so much more, and for them, I say thank you.