

NORTHFIELD VILLAGE CAUCUS MEETING

January 25, 2018

Those members attending were: Marco Aiello, Marsha Balsamo, Tom Bolling, Jonathan Don, Kathy Estabrooke, Ericka Foster, Mark Gantner, Jerry Mulick, Keith Reed, Kim Stricker, Cricket Trutter Hauff and David Woodyatt. Guests were Tom Anderson and Dennis Smith and Caucus prospects Dave Fullerton, John Cherveney and John Green. Also in attendance for part of the meeting were Stacy Sigman, Village Manager and Joan Frazier, Village President.

Chair Jonathan Don called the meeting to order at the Village Library meeting room at 7:00 PM.

Upon motion made by Cricket Trutter Hauff and second by Jerry Mulick, the agenda for this meeting was approved. Upon motion made by Kathy Estabrooke and second by Jerry Mulick, the minutes of the October 5, 2017 were approved.

Joan Frazier, President of the Northfield Village Board, gave an update on the "state of the Village". Her good news was that our retail facilities are 100% occupied; Village officials have visited Medline which is becoming an active member of our community; we have a new Jaguar dealer and a new optometrist opening facilities in the Village. Joan said that the Village is very business friendly with streamlined zoning procedures and a very competent and highly regarded staff. The Village has a special link on its website where local businesses can advertise their wares. Joan referred to the surge of car and home burglaries in the Village during last summer. She reported that our police department and Village were active in keeping this to a minimum by using social media, Village meetings and signs on Willow Road urging residents to lock their houses and cars.

Stacey Sigman reported on another positive development for the Village-- the Happ Road project between Willow Road and Winnetka Avenue which will include road improvements, additional landscaping, safer configuration of the streets and intersections with the addition of a round-about at the present five street intersection at Orchard and Happ. There may even be a fountain and a little park in the middle of the round-about. The project will take place over the next two years. We have had a lot of support from the local businesses and local residents to improve this part of the Village. So far, the Village has received significant cooperation from the County on this project.

Joan and Stacey explained the reason for the March 20th referendum on the question of eliminating the provision for a primary election for the Village offices of President and Trustees and to require 50 signatures of residents for ballot eligibility. This referendum was approved by the Caucus last year after hearing from Village candidates how cumbersome and irrelevant many of the prior requirements were. Caucus members were encouraged to vote in this referendum and to encourage their neighbors to do the same. The Village prepared an information sheet on this matter which can be assessed on the Villages website and is attached to these minutes.

On the negative side of things, the Village is having a tough time with the State in the State's attempt to raise revenues to pay its bills and other liabilities. For example, the State is imposing a 2% administrative fee on sales tax revenues received by the Village; and the State may negatively impact the Village's receipts from its property and motor fuel taxes. The Association representing municipalities is fighting

these actions by the State, but it is a continuing and serious threat to all municipalities. Northfield continues to operate on a balanced budget and tries to keep 6 months of operation expenses in reserve. Its staff has not increased much in the last several years even though the State continues to pass on to the Village more duties and obligations without providing additional funding for same (e.g., the Village having now to patrol Edens Expressway because the State doesn't have the resources to do so).

Another negative development is the increase of the Village water rates by about 15% this coming summer. We have been buying water from Winnetka since at least 1929. A contract was agreed to about 30 years ago which contained a complicated formula for an increase in rates to take effect in 2018. We are fortunate that the cost of living component of that formula has had a modest effect on the increase, but a comparison of other neighboring villages' water rates (also to be considered under the contract) results in about a 15% increase to the average Village resident. The Village has an excellent memo on its website describing the entire water purchase background, contract and formula for the coming increase.

Jon explained that Frank Charhut, our past Treasurer for many years, is spending more time out of town this winter and has recommended that another Caucus member take over his duties for the rest of his term. Mark Gantner was recommended by both Jon and Frank, and he was approved by the Caucus. Jon mentioned that the current bank account has \$1270.86 and that Caucus member David Aul has agreed to review and reduce the future cost of our website, which has been our biggest expense.

In the absence of Bill Gould, who is leading our solicitation of community opinion initiative, Cricket reported that she, Bill and Kim Stricker are developing a plan of having several neighborhood events during the summer where our residents are asked their opinions on several Village issues and subjects. This information will be used to update the Caucus Platform which was last revised in 2015.

Marsha Balsamo gave background information on the three Caucus prospects present at the meeting: John Cherveney, Dave Fullerton and John Green. Several Caucus members have known these prospects and their capabilities for several years. It was pointed out that they happen to live in precincts which are under-represented on the Caucus. After the meeting, these three prospects were excused from the meeting and, upon motion by Cricket and second by Mark Gantner, they were approved for Caucus membership effective immediately.

Jon gave the Nominating Committee report on behalf of Al Chircop, Chair of the Committee. Jon reported that three of the present trustees are finishing their terms—Allan Kaplan is not eligible to serve another term, but John Gregorio and Tom Roszak could serve another term if nominated and elected. Jon said that the present Nominating Committee of he, Al and Frank Charhut needs 2 or 3 more Caucus members to help with its duties during the remainder of this year. The tentative schedule for this Committee is: July 21, the search begins for candidates; Aug. 1 to 20, applications are filed with the Caucus; Sept. 17-19, Caucus interviews the candidates; Sept. 20, notice issued of the townhall meeting which will be held sometime in October at which the candidates will be selected. Jon mentioned that this is the primary, and one of the most important, task of the Caucus.

Jon reported that he would like to see more Caucus members at the Village's regular trustee meetings. He said the meetings are very informative about Village developments. For example, he recently learned all about the police "drone cars" that set along Willow Road to monitor traffic and how many actually have a Spiderman "blow up doll" behind the steering wheel! He reported that the Village

recently considered very carefully its option to accept or reject Cook County and Chicago ordinances on a couple of employment law initiatives. The trustees' final vote on this option was for the Village to opt out of the paid sick leave ordinance, but it agreed to be covered by the minimum wage ordinance.

New Business: One of our Caucus members requested that we show in these minutes that at a recent Village Commission hearing, two of our Caucus members voted in favor of continuing on with the ATT building project on Winnetka Avenue. It was clarified that these two persons were acting as individual residents and were in no way representing the Caucus or Caucus positions at such hearing.

Jon gave two of our guests, Tom Anderson and Dennis Smith, an opportunity to introduce themselves and explain their interests and experiences with the Village. Both gave an interesting fact about themselves—Tom has been a resident of the Village since 1962 and remembers most of the truck farms and businesses from that time; and Dennis is a “reverse snow bird” who spent most of his life in Florida and other Southern warm spots, but recently moved to the more temperate weather of Northfield to be close to family!

The motion made by Cricket and seconded by Marco Aiello to adjourn the meeting was unanimously approved. The next Caucus meeting is April 19, 2018 with location to be announced later.

Prepared by Caucus Secretary Keith A. Reed