



Village of Clarendon Hills 2008 Annual State of the Village Report

It is difficult to believe that 2008 has come and gone. During the past year, your Village Board and dedicated Village staff have accomplished many important projects that have improved your Village and the quality of life that we all enjoy in this community. While future fiscal challenges remain, I am pleased to report that the overall economic state of the Village remains strong and Village operations are stable. Below are some of the highlights of the past year and the challenges that the Village is facing.



Since 2006, the police departments of Clarendon Hills, Hinsdale, and Oak Brook have collaborated to bring the “Alive at 25” program to Illinois. The Alive at 25 Program includes a defensive driving course developed by the National Safety Council to address the growing problem of fatalities for people under the age of 25. This team of police departments has successfully brought the defensive driving course into local schools to protect our young drivers.

Once again, the Village focused on communication in 2008. For the fourth straight year, the Village conducted an annual Community Needs Survey to evaluate services, seek feedback on timely issues, and guide budgeting and planning processes. Consistent with past years, the results reveal that our residents believe there is a high quality of life (94.3%), a feeling of safety and security (95.3%), and optimism for change within the Village. Not surprisingly, respondents continue to identify Clarendon Hills’ convenient location, friendly and peaceful neighborhoods, and top-rated schools as its most important assets. The complete results of the Survey are available online at www.clarendonhills.us/Administration.cfm and include responses about Fire Department staffing needs, the redevelopment of the Metra parking lot, and Village-wide gravel shoulder and stormwater improvements.

In addition to the annual survey, the Village launched a new website at www.clarendonhills.us to provide residents, businesses, and visitors with more accurate and easy-to-find information about the Village and its government. The Village's website now offers such features as an interactive community calendar, online document search, economic development information, and a useful links page.

Finally, in an effort to strengthen communication between the Village government and its residents, the Village hosted two Neighborhood Dialogues held at Prospect and Walker schools to inform residents of Village trends, accomplishments, and challenges. At each Neighborhood Dialogue, Residents had the opportunity to ask questions of the Village officials and staff about a wide range of topics.

This summer, the Village completed the 2008 Dancin’ in the Street concert series. Once again, the concert series was very successful and well attended. Next year will mark the 10th anniversary of the concert series and the Village is currently looking for volunteers to help plan or work at the concerts. Should you be interested in volunteering, please contact Jennifer Johnsen at (630) 286-5402.



In 2008, maintenance and replacement of infrastructure continued to be a priority for the Village. In September, the replacement of the water main on 55th Street from Holmes to S. Richmond Avenue was completed. This water main was originally installed in the 1930’s and was replaced due to a poor service record, the high cost of repairs, and increased water volume demands in this area. The total cost for this project was \$1.2 million. In order to install the new main, the DuPage County stormsewers that run this stretch of 55th Street were lined improving stormwater drainage. In addition, existing sidewalks on the north side of 55th Street were back pitched to improve drainage in this area.

In 2008, the Village also completed the third year of the road maintenance program. This program began in 2005 following the Village's original road improvement project. The goals of the road maintenance program are to bring roads back to new pavement standards, improve structure where possible, and avoid impact to existing infrastructure. This year's program included Mohawk from Burlington to Norfolk, Indian from Burlington to Norfolk, 56th Street from Western to the Village limits, and Richmond from Chicago to Ogden.

This fall, the Village completed the implementation of a grant awarded from the West Suburban Mass Transit District to improve safety at the train station. This work included the installation of a surveillance system surrounding the train station and the crossing, the enclosure of the drainage ditch along the north platform, and repair to the electrical conduit that lights the parking lot and the platforms. In April 2008, the Village also received a \$30,000 grant to offset the cost of the new ambulance purchased in FY 07-08.

Economic Development continued as a priority during 2008 although the economic downturn drastically slowed development efforts. However, the Pointe at Clarendon Hills (5-23 Walker Avenue) was granted final planned unit development approval and construction is to begin next spring.



This fall, the Village once again received its annual audit with another favorable opinion. Less than three tenths of 1% of all municipalities under 25,000 in population receives a favorable opinion each year. However, while Village fiscal resources are well managed, service challenges lie ahead.

As with other local and state governments nationwide, the Village has felt the effects of the slowing economy on revenue sources. Declining property, sales, income, and motor fuel taxes are expected as the overall economy and housing market continue to struggle. This fiscal year, the Village reduced operating budgets due to an overall budget shortfall of 5.7%. The shortfall was caused by declining revenues coupled with increased expenditures for operations and services. The Village has also chosen to defer or eliminate \$415,400 in current and future projects in order to offset a shortfall in the Capital Projects Fund.



This November, the Village addressed challenges in the Water Fund by passing the first water rate increase since 1992. The water rate increase was a direct result of increases for Lake Michigan water that were made by the City of Chicago. In order to determine the increase, the Village conducted a water rate study that included a comprehensive review of the Water Fund's overall financial position to support future operating and capital expenses. While no one is happy about passing on rate increases, Chicago's water rate increase left little choice. If the Village did not increase water rates, the Water Fund would have been put into a deficit position.

Due to a decrease of paid on-call "volunteer" firefighter/paramedics, during 2008, the Village Board accepted the results of a fire service study that recommended hiring 2-3 additional part-time firefighter/paramedics per shift. This May, the Village helped to redirect revenue to the Fire Department by consolidating code enforcement and fire inspection services. This consolidation freed up enough revenue to add a part-time firefighter/paramedic shift during the day. However, the Village will continue to review revenue options to fund the additional part-time firefighter/paramedics that were recommended by the fire service study in order to maintain adequate personnel levels.



Although much was accomplished in 2008, there are many challenges and opportunities ahead for the Village of Clarendon Hills. Together with your Village staff, the Village Board will continue to prudently manage the future progress and growth of our community. Finally, to all of you that have contributed so much of your time and expertise to the Village this year – thank you!

Thomas F. Karaba, Village President