

February 16, 2007

**To:** Village President and Board of Trustees  
**From:** Michael J. Earl, Village Manager  
**Subject:** Village Energy and Environmental Initiatives

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On February 21 the Administration Committee will be discussing whether to recommend creation of an Environmental Commission to the Village Board as suggested by several residents. To assist the Committee and the Village Board in determining whether such a Commission is necessary, this report seeks to catalogue the numerous energy/environmental initiatives the Village has pursued in recent years.

Given discussions the Committee has had of late regarding the possibility of consolidating and/or eliminating certain advisory Boards/Commissions, it is recognized that the Committee and the Village Board may not wish to recommend creation of another such advisory body. Therefore, towards the end of this report (page 6), I discuss an alternative structure as a way to formally advise interested residents of the Village's energy and environmental efforts and at the same time solicit ideas from interested residents.

In recent years, the Village Board has listed in its annual goals several environmentally related objectives. This direction, coupled with the fact that the culture in the U.S. is more cognizant about seeking ways to live and work that are less harmful to the environment, there is a heightened awareness amongst Village staff to be environmentally aware as we are sensitive to being customer focused and cost conscious in delivering local government services. I am pleased to present the following initiatives.

#### **1. Village Staff Training**

Many staff members from throughout the organization have received training and/or have been exposed to "green thinking." In addition to attending various seminars at professional conferences, last year members of the Village staff participated in a group tour of the Chicago Green Center and this year several staff members attended a private viewing of the movie, *An Inconvenient Truth* at the Wilmette Theatre.

Last August, the Village became a member of the United States Green Buildings Council (USGBC), and a member of the Chicago Chapter of the USGBC. Membership in the

USGBC provides the Village opportunities for training, educational resources for green building initiatives, information on “green” products among other benefits.

Building and Grounds Supervisor, Paul Hahn, has participated in four seminars: 9/14/06 - Best Practices for Sustainable Facilities; 9/28/06 -High Performance Operations; 10/12/06 - Green Cleaning and Site Management; 10/26/06 -Materials Exchange and LEED Program Administration.

## **2. Village Facilities**

As the Village remodels and upgrades its facilities, energy efficient replacements are purchased. The following energy/environmental initiatives have occurred in Village facilities:

### Village Hall, Village Yard, and Fire Stations

- Energy efficient lighting in the first floor office areas
- Motion sensors for lights in private offices and meeting rooms
- Low E glass on all windows
- Energy efficient copy machines, water heater, air conditioning compressor
- Environmentally friendly air filters
- Green chemicals for cleaning (janitorial service)
- Florescent bulb recycling
- Use of low VOC paints

### Water Plant

- Fluorescent bulbs and several lights on motion sensors/timers
- Electric heaters replaced with portable heaters that are used when needed
- Replacement of larger 1,200,000 BTU boiler with more efficient 900,000 BTU hot water boiler
- The heating system for two thirds of the plant with point of use thermostats for each area. This improvement eliminated the need for one of the steam boilers to heat large portion of building.
- All new pumps selected with high efficiency motors.
- Replacement of roof with energy efficient and sustainable roof designed for a 30 year life span.

## **3. Purchasing Procedures**

When the Village’s purchasing procedures were revised a few years ago, a policy was added to ensure that environmental considerations were factored into all purchasing decisions. Products containing recycled materials and those that are energy efficient such as *Energy Star*, low VOC, clean fuel and efficient lighting are procured and utilized as often as possible. As equipment becomes eligible for replacement, *Energy Star* compatible equipment such as compressors, motors, copy machines, etc. are purchased.

#### 4. Municipal Fleet

Idling Policy. The Village has adopted an Idle Reduction Policy for its employees; the only exception is for public safety vehicles that are responding to an emergency situation.

Bio-Diesel Fuel. All diesel-equipped vehicles began using a 2% bio-diesel fuel blend on January 1, 2006.

Diesel Oxidation Catalysts. The Public Works Department applied for and received notification of funding for a grant offered through the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Clean Air Counts Campaign that will provide \$22,140 to purchase and install diesel oxidation catalysts on nine (9) trucks.

Hybrid Vehicles. Capital purchase plans for 2007 include the purchase of two Hybrid Sport Utility Vehicles to replace two older gasoline powered units.

Testing of Emergency Diesel Generator. The Public Works Department reduced the testing of its emergency diesel generator from once a week to once every two weeks to reduce emissions. The Fire Department also changed the emergency diesel generator test cycles from once a week to once every three weeks.

#### 5. Public Education

To help generate enthusiasm for village voluntary clean air efforts, the 2004 Wilmette village vehicle sticker, required on all resident-owned vehicles, featured the Clean Air Counts logo along with a sketch of a lakefront outdoor scene. The Village newsletter, *The Communicator*, regularly includes articles that focus on energy and environmental causes. See the list below:

<u>Date of Communicator Issue</u>	<u>Article</u>
June – August, 2001	Letter of Support from Village President
Aug – Sept – Oct, 2001	Clean Air – Lawn Care Tips
Nov – Dec, 2001	Clean Air – VOC Products Contribute to Air Pollution
June – Aug, 2002	Clean Air – Consider Home Energy Audits
May – June, 2003	Lawn Care Tips – Utilize Native Landscaping
June – July, 2003	Clean Air – Alternative Transportation Options
April - June, 2003	Electronic Recycling Event
July – Aug, 2004	Clean Air Ordinance
Sept – Oct, 2004	Gas Equip Buy Back/Gas Can Replacement Programs
Nov – Jan, 2005	Consider Composting
Feb – March, 2005	Mercury Thermometer Recycling
April – June, 2005	Recycle Athletic Shoes

July – Aug, 2005	Residents Support Recycling Efforts
Sept – Oct, 2005	Protect Environment & Waterways
Feb - March, 2006	Clean Air Counts Recognition
April – June, 2006	Clean and Green News
July – Aug, 2006	Improve Waterways in Wilmette
Sept – Oct, 2006	Environmental Awareness – Clean Air
Feb – March, 2007	Letter of Support from Village President & Clean and Green News

## **6. Recycling**

On average, Wilmette residents recycle about 30% of its waste which equates to 4,600 tons of recyclables a year. For the past few years, the Village has offered residents the opportunity to drop off sharps, mercury thermometers and thermostats for recycling. The Village also recycles batteries and light bulbs.

In addition to the in-house paper recycling program that has been in place for over 10 years, the Information Services Department staff will be working on the development of an internal effort to encourage the use of less paper by re-using the blank side of papers and encouraging the forwarding of documents of more than 2 pages to a copy machine for double-sided printing.

## **7. Trees and Native Plantings**

In order to maintain a healthy urban forest, the Village has sought to promote tree planting to increase shading and to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, and to plant native plantings that require less water and maintenance.

### Tree Planting Programs

The Village typically plants more trees in a year than it removes. As of November, 2006, the Village planted 238 from Village parkways and removed 218. The Village's parkway tree capacity is between 90% and 95 %.

The Village offers residents participation in a cooperative tree-planting program. Fifty-nine residents shared in the cost of planting trees, thus allowing the Foresters to plant additional public trees throughout the Village.

### Pesticides

The Village Board has prohibited the use of pesticides on its properties by Village crews and landscape contractors.

## **8. Community Programs**

The Village takes advantage of programs offered through its membership in SWANCC and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Recycle Your Worn Out Shoes – 2007 will mark the third consecutive year the Village has participated in SWANCC's Reuse-A-Shoe program. We estimate that over 300 pounds of shoes are collected each year diverting 11,000 pounds of shoes from the landfills.

Paper Document Destruction Event - In April, 2006 the Village volunteered to hold paper document destruction event for SWANCC communities. The event was very well attended.

Lawn Equipment Exchange Program – In 2004, the Village hosted a Lawn Care Buy Back / Gas Can Replacement Event at the Village Yard. The event was a cooperative effort with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Clean Air Counts Campaign. In total, 14 residents participated in the program, exchanging gasoline powered lawn equipment for vouchers applied toward the purchase environmentally friendly lawn equipment.

Gas Can Exchange Program – This event was held in conjunction with the 2004 Lawn Care Buy Back Event, and has continued yearly through 2005 and 2006 during the Public Works Open House. Initially, 50 residents took advantage of the program exchanging old gas cans for environmentally friendly units equipped with a positive seal to help prevent spills. In 2005 and 2006, 6 residents participated each year.

## **9. Village Board Goals/Initiatives**

Clean Air Counts Program – In the past few years, the Village has been an active participant in the public/private initiative to voluntarily improve air quality in the Chicago metropolitan region. It currently holds a bronze level designation. As I reported at the last Village Board meeting, the Village has recently been notified that it will receive a Platinum award at the June meeting of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Environmental Discounts for Vehicle Stickers - Beginning in 2007, residents will receive a substantial vehicle sticker discount for vehicles that meet certain environmental standards. This program was highlighted in the recent issue of the *Communicator*, and received national attention through *Newsweek* magazine in an article entitled "Cars" published in the November issue.

Redevelopment of Ford Property - Through the planned unit development process, the Village required the developer of the mixed use development for the former Ford site on Green Bay Road to incorporate LEED design elements. It is expected be the first residential development on the North Shore to be LEED certified.

## **10. Board and Commission Advisory Board Decision Making**

Several of the Village Board's advisory Boards/Commissions incorporate "green" initiatives and concepts as a part of their discussions and activities. As an example, in a recent proposal to convert a portion of the parkway on Manor Drive into a parking area, the Transportation Commission discussed the possibility of using permeable pavers or porous pavement as an alternative to asphalt.

Other examples include transportation initiatives to reduce vehicle idle time by interconnecting traffic signals (Lake Avenue and Green Bay Road) and reviewing student pick up and drop off activities (Central School, Romona School and Ronald Knox Montessori School) so as to maximize vehicle efficiency and pedestrian safety. In all traffic issues discussed by the Commission, there is an emphasis on promoting alternative modes of transportation such as public mass transit, bicycling and walking and making Village transportation facilities safe for pedestrians. The primary charge of the Bicycle Task Force is to educate the public on the benefits of biking and promote activities such as "Bike to Soccer Day" and "Bike to Higherrest." These and other activities are aimed at encouraging emission and congestion free transportation.

On numerous occasions, staff has recommended that the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals encourage alternative stormwater management techniques in conjunction with commercial development. Rather than hard pipe and convey parking lot and building stormwater runoff directly into the Village's storm system, the multi-step approach is to reduce the volume of runoff as much as possible, re-use the water runoff where possible and filter out as many contaminants by using bio-swales and filter strips.

## **11. Village Staff - Ad-Hoc Energy and Environment Committee**

Chaired by Assistant to the Village Manager, Joe McRae, a staff committee consisting of representatives from all Village departments will soon be convening to discuss energy and environmental initiatives. The purpose of the committee is as follows:

*It is the purpose of the committee to review and ensure that the operations of the Village are as energy and environmentally-friendly as possible within the realm of fiscal responsibility, to champion a heightened awareness amongst Village staff of the importance of being sensitive to the environment, to solicit and offer suggestions for energy and environmental initiatives as it pertains to Village operations and the community.*

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## **Alternative to Environmental Commission**

As discussed earlier, below is an option for the Committee/Village Board's consideration regarding the suggested creation of an Environmental Commission.

No more than three times a year, invite interested residents to attend a meeting of the Administration Committee. The specific purpose of the meeting would be for the staff to present and discuss Village energy and environmental initiatives, and for the

Administration Committee to solicit feedback and ideas from interested residents. The Committee would be asked to provide direction to staff as to what suggestions/ideas it may wish to pursue. This option may accomplish the goals envisioned by those petitioning for the creation of an Environmental Commission without significantly impacting staff resources.

cc: Department Heads  
Paul Hahn, Building and Grounds Supervisor