

Subject: [DPNeBlast] All the candidates, the issues, the news and more
Date: Wednesday, January 28, 2009 8:49 PM
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Conversation: All the candidates, the issues, the news and more

host_name

Greetings, Neighbors!

The list of candidates for the April 2007 election include:

Running for President, 4-year term:

Scott Gifford
Bob Kellermann

Running for Trustee, 3 seats for 4-years terms each:

Joyce Trost Beattie
Bill Koutsis
John Lahr
Bill Michael
Keith Olson
Dale Sands

We have already invited both presidential candidates to participate in a one-on-one dialogue moderated by a neutral third party. We have a great format developed, and we have the moderator. Bob Kellermann has agreed to participate. When Scott Gifford responds, we can set a date in early March. Scott, you've had an email and a hand-delivered invitation. Ours will be a more inclusive, less formal event than has ever been held. We have the format, and we have a moderator. Please let us hear from you.

This weekend, invitations go out to the six would-be trustees. Like the presidential debate, we'll cover Finance, Zoning, Public Safety, Parks, Sanitation and Roads/Drainage. You are welcome to begin to submitting your questions now—as well as your suggestions for a moderator for the trustee events. We're already at work to develop additional candidate profiles, as an introduction of them to you. We know you'll be cordial when the door-knocking begins—remember, it's cold out there, and campaigning is hard work. Give everyone a few minutes of your time. Thanks.

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IN THE NEWS

Local candidates, and amazingly, a number of uncontested races:

http://www.pioneerlocal.com/barrington/news/1399481_ba-filings-012709-s1.article

While you wouldn't imagine such a furor, it took Deer Park's banning of above-ground swimming pools to awake the populace. Read the online story, and be sure to scroll down to read the (not necessarily Deer Park). reader comments (If you don't know how to post comments on public sites, please see our hints on the right of our "Press Room" page at our web site—and more on public dialogues next month.)

<http://www.dailyherald.com/story/?id=266722>

And another "Mayors face challenges" story, this time in the Herald, but no quote from President Gifford. Obviously, we don't know if he was asked, but we do look forward to Scott and all the candidates in Deer Park being very available to news organizations:

<http://www.dailyherald.com/story/?id=267305>

CUSD 95

Aiming to cut \$4 million: http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lakezurich/news/1394427_lz-district-012309-s1.article

The global financial rating agency Fitch Ratings has downgraded Community Unit School District 95's bond ratings to AA-" from "AA+": http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lakezurich/news/1390376_lz-d95rating-012209-s1.article

Vehe is picking up coverage for nature programs:

http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lakezurich/news/1367101_lz-initiative-010809-s1.article

PARENT UNIVERSITY Please mark your calendars for 15th Annual Parents Encouraging Parents, Sat., Feb. 28, 2009, 8:30am-12:30pm, LZ Middle School North, Hawthorn Woods. Registration ends 2/20/09. Details and registration form on our Education page.

<http://deerparkneighbors.com/pages/education.html>

LONG GROVE ROAD

We are delighted to continue our fostering of Long Grove Road via the Adopt-A-Road program at Lake County Department of Transportation. We heartily recommend this pro-active community project to raise the visibility of your organization.

<http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Transportation/Adopt.htm>

We'll be setting a date for our road patrol as soon as the weather clears and the verges are walkable. That will depend, of course, on how rainy the spring is and how well village drainage can carry away the water. It's always a fun morning, followed by a brunch hosted by the Barrys (not DPN—we use subscriptions for community education). We would love to see elected officials at our twice-annual Road Crew. If you're interested in joining us next spring, just reply to this email.

CAMPAIGN ISSUES

While we await the full panoply of candidates to get their planks nailed to their platforms together, we derive from our emails and conversations the issues that interest our membership most:

- Transparency in governance. In other words, “What are those guys doing?”
- Roads and drainage. In other words, “My house/yard is flooded, again.”
- Recovery of Vehe Barn cost overruns, which round up without exaggeration to a million bucks.
- The sales tax—residents don't want it, business owners/managers are afraid that raising DP's sales tax will put us at a disadvantage compared to the surrounding villages.

Our commentary on the issues (much more to follow in the upcoming months):

- Transparency requires that the governed actually witness. While the numbers of residents at public meetings has been way up this past year—and many have stayed on when the issue of personal interest was concluded—it is shocking how few people have ever attended. Read the minutes, see the DVDs, talk among yourselves and express your views to elected officials. The doors are open, you need only step in.
- Many people do not realize that the roads are inextricably linked to the drainage, as much of the storm sewer pipes are next to and under our roads. There is a current 10-year plan (north of \$12 million) and as well as a 15-year plan to bring both roads and drainage up to specs; **at the end of that process (just like painting your house), you have to do it all over again.**
- Vehe cost overruns. If the bonding company can be found, does it have any assets that

can be recovered? What will it cost to do so, legal proceedings being what they are. Somehow, no one here in Deer Park is “responsible” for continuing to pay an inept contractor long after it was obvious he wasn’t up to the job. No one is responsible for failing to conduct due diligence regarding the bonding company (not licensed in Illinois). Basic stuff, folks. Best practices. Common sense. Is resolution even possible, much less likely?

- As to the sales tax, we believe that another effort to increase the tax would fail; the previous effort failed by a margin of almost 2:1. Consensus among our membership was that they were unwilling for the then-sitting administration to have more money to spend. It seems to us that talking about the sales tax at all is putting the cart before the horse. You will want to elect the next administration, see them in action (anyone can promise anything during a campaign) and only then consider raising the sales tax. In any case, we’ll soon have inflows from the hotel tax (see below).

Call it “Roads,” call it “Vehe,” this is where the name-calling and finger-pointing will be the most vigorous during this campaign. Whether you feel the Barn/Vehe Property is a project that benefited only a few, nearby residents (NIMBY=Not In My Back Yard) or that the acreage represents a wonderful preservation of open space for community and regional programs, the fact is, little income is being generated at the property, either by Barn rentals or Vehe Foundation fundraising. Clearly, the expenses greatly exceed the cash flow.

Time and time again, we are asked about the argument over spending on Vehe instead of on roads. The current administration says no dollars were ever “diverted”; others on the board and many residents feel that’s a matter of semantics. Diverted, under-funded, misappropriated—these are distinctions without a difference. Funds that should/could have been spent per the previous five-year plan to maintain our village infrastructure were never spent. In other words, the dollars were never put into that particular bucket.

HOTEL TAX

With the Hampton Inn likely to open mid-year, we should start to see significant inflows from the Hotel Tax (raised to 5% by a recent board action). However, by state law, the income from this tax has to be applied to projects that increase tourism. It’s rather vague. For example, would that floating island on the Vehe property be an attraction that could be funded by the hotel tax? Or perhaps, fixing the roads, would that improve tourism? Could the monies be spent to develop WiMax infrastructure, to encourage more business travel to Deer Park?

How about that splash park we heard about last year, especially since Ozzie’s is gone. Maybe an aquatic center (naming rights, anyone)? Indoor/outdoor would be cool! A driving range or mini-golf course? A skateboard park? (That’s an Olympic sport now.) An

equestrian center would be very authentic to the area. Ice skating rink (indoor/outdoor would be literally cool). A visual arts gallery. An interactive science museum. We're thinking family and business attractions, and we're thinking projects on the east side of town, where the people brought here will overflow into the two shopping malls (meaning more sales tax income) and the hotel (more tax there, too). But, like so many of you, we worry that somehow, the monies will end up at Vehe, where improvements do not have a return on investment, but only ongoing maintenance costs.

We have asked in public meetings to put the spending of the hotel tax before the board, to clearly define how the monies will be spent, thereby avoiding the verbal vagaries of the recent sales tax referendum. Create a policy now, before the dollars are in hand. Perhaps hold a Hotel Tax Open Forum, to hear what business people and residents have to say about potential projects. Now, this is an issue that could generate lively discussions during the campaign. New dollars. New ideas. What an opportunity!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Thank you, thank you to our subscribers and advertisers. There's a great deal to do in an election year, and we'd like to extend our activities beyond the Internet. Printing and postage, folks, that's the challenge. As always, basic email blasts are free. ***Click here to expand the local dialogue***—and no, we never share our list of subscribers, it's just between you and DPN.

<http://deerparkneighbors.com/pages/subscribe.html>

Remember, together, we are stronger.

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Deborah Barry, Secretary | Al Barry, President

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