

Subject: [DPNeBlast] Why every vote counts; tranformation or status quo?; Endorsements by Chay and Hankin; Letters to Eds; CN Complaints

Date: Thursday, April 2, 2009 5:16 PM

From: Deborah Barry, Secretary <deborah.barry@deerparkneighbors.com>

Reply-To: deborah.barry@deerparkneighbors.com

To: "dpneblast@deerparkneighbors.com" <DPNeBlast@deerparkneighbors.com>

Conversation: Why every vote counts; tranformation or status quo?; Endorsements by Chay and Hankin; Letters to Eds; CN Complaints

host_name

Greetings, Neighbors

DATELINE DEER PARK, THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2009

As more and more people come to the Deer Park Neighbors website (our biggest number of unique visitors ever recorded on March 31), we are asked, **“What is DPN?”** Well, we are a group of residents who work as volunteers in a business enterprise, the product of which is information. We attend village open meetings, we videotape almost every meeting and we contribute to an archive of local history at the Barrington Area Library. We also research, write and distribute these eBlasts as well as maintaining a web site called DeerParkNeighbors.com. It’s blogging with legs; we know whereof we speak.

In the interests of community education and community action, we read and re-read the official, approved village meeting minutes, listen to the digital recordings and watch and re-watch the meeting tapes. We continually urge our neighbors to get to know each other and to give a little of their time to showing up at open meetings. We call or are contacted by local reporters and editors, who recognize this organization as knowledgeable about Deer Park. It is rare that we do not have a name and phone number—often a cell phone number—for the person YOU need to reach to resolve issues of public policy.

DPN also reaches out to elected officials and staff at the township, county, state and national level. We cannot be everywhere; our focus is Deer Park. So we also provide a forum for others’ expertise; one notable example is the extensive we have given regarding the consequences of the Canadian National’s purchase of the local EJ&E rail line. Even our detractors admire (or decry) our dogged devotion to information, and we try very hard to distinguish between fact, opinion and blatant rumors.

We have even been called upon by residents in nearby communities to help them educate, organize and influence the outcomes in their communities. One recent notable example was the resistance by citizens to the additional expansion of Concorde Banquets in a residential

area. So, whether you agree with us or not, we try to make it engaging; humor is an invaluable tool in community activism.

The second-most common question is: “Do the elected officials and village staff read your eBlasts?” Many recipients of our eBlasts are anonymous to us, just an email address that offers no clue to personal identity. But we have been quoted to ourselves by official and employees alike, from the village all the way up to the State of Illinois. We cannot imagine WHY anyone would refuse to sign up for these eBlasts (must longer and more frequent in these last days running up to the election); but they have NO PROBLEM “reading someone else’s mail.” We don’t care. In the process of disseminating information, whatever works!

So, that’s the context in which to view the following.

LET’S PLAY A GAME CALEED, “WHAT MIGHT DEER PARK LOOK LIKE ON APRIL 8?”

These are the times that try mens’ souls. We face some of the most difficult choices this village has faced in the last couple of decades, far more important than the Town Centers, the prison that wasn’t or even the Vehe Barn that was, is and ever shall be.

Still, **nothing can dilute the power of your right to vote**, but each of you must consider very carefully the meaning of your votes in context.

Remember, **even a completely reformed board does not start with a clean slate.** The 2009-10 Budget will have been approved by the current board--two of whom are retiring and one who is moving out of town.

So as you are meeting candidates and reading everything you can find, we suggest this approach: First, make your choice for President; then, given the implications of that result, choose your 3 trustees. **(Yes, vote for 3!)** You do not HAVE TO use all three of your trustee votes, but “undervoting,” as it is called, has consequences.

Let us play out some scenarios. Whatever else we say or recommend, we believe voting is an obligation. Or as Deborah likes to say, **“Democracy is the price we pay for civil liberty!”**

ALTERNATIVES FOR PRESIDENT

*****If Bob Kellermann is Prez, three new trustees will serve under him, AND Bob will name a registered voter to serve out Bob’s remaining term as trustee, 2 years.**

*****If Scott Gifford is re-elected, three new trustees will serve, BUT Bob will remain on the board and complete his own 2 remaining years. (Trustees Maureen Pratscher and Dave Kizior also have two years left to serve.)**

That being said and assuming that slate mates ARE are political colleagues—that they would most likely cast the same votes...

FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

Consider what is at stake in this election. In most elections, an administration is nudged in one direction or another; change is slow. But this year, the outcome will clearly be either transformation or status quo.

1*If Scott is Prez, and all three Gifford slate mates are elected, then Bob faces 2 years more as trustee but with zero political colleagues. The votes are most likely to align 5-1, with Bob the lone opposition vote.**

2*If Bob is Prez, and all three Gifford slate mates are elected, then Bob names the sixth trustee to fulfill his own term and votes are still likely to be 5-1, now with Bob's appointee the lone opposition vote.**

3*If Scott is Prez, and the Kellermann slate mates are elected as trustees, then Bob continues to serve out his term, and the votes are likely to split 2-4, with Bob and his slate mates making up the MAJORITY.**

4*If Bob is Prez, and the Kellermann slate mates are also elected, then Bob names the sixth trustee, and the votes are likely to be 2-4, with Trustees Pratscher and Kizior unable to continue Gifford's agenda.**

With scenarios 1 and 2, the board's direction continues on its current path. With scenarios 3 and 4, the board's direction is completely changed.

This is why we endorse CASTING ALL THREE OF YOUR VOTES IN THE TRUSTEE RACE.

It is NOT our intention to suggest that the two slates for Trustee are completely oppositional on every issue, or that any trustee will always march in lock step

with his or her slate. Of course, we certainly hope that each individual would vote his/her conscience on each motion.

But if you analyze the voting record (*see following*) over the last four years, the pattern is obvious. The pattern has been to follow one's political colleagues to the logical conclusion and to vote in support of your side's/slate's agenda.

That's why we've posted a spreadsheet chronicling the past two years' votes by our spreadsheet master, Teri Masino, 847-917-8771 or TechTasksByTeri@aol.com. Teri does NOT vote in this village; she votes in unincorporated Ela township. (She's also available to help you and your business with her amazing organizational skills!)

THE UNOFFICIAL RECORD OF BOARD VOTES

HOW TO USE THE SPREADSHEET. We have posted both the Excel and a PDF versions online. PDFs are static, but the Excel can be sorted; all can be zoomed. You will NOT be able to save changes, but you can download to your desktop. If you are not familiar with Excel, you can click on the little double arrow at the top of each column and sort by, for example, date. (You can also do this through the menu.) However—and this is very important—after each sort, you must go under Data>>Filter>>Show All after each sort, in order to go back to square one. If “Show All” is grayed out, then all the records are in view. The documents are set up as ledger (tabloid), 17inch wide by 11inch high, and goes to 16 or 27 pages. For those of you who aren't regular Excel users, we recommend the Acrobat version.

So, to see the UNOFFICIAL record of votes, please visit:

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

That's the CONTEXT; tomorrow, Friday, we publish the official DPN ENDORSEMENTS. That gives all of you the whole weekend to call, complain, express your thanks, argue, reflect, rebut and generally agree/disagree with our point of view. We WILL say this; if you don't know how to vote, ask the people who make the governance of Deer Park their passion. And you can visit us at Caribou Coffee in Deer Park Town Center from 7:30-10pm. Open table, pick up a cup of coffee or tea, and dialogue! See you there!

IN THE NEWS

Letters to Editor in Lake Zurich Courier, 4/2/09: “Kellermann for Deer Park village president”

In a long collection of L2EDs, two Deer Park letters lead the way, one from Richard Chay, reproduced below from his submission to DPN, and one from Al and Deborah Barry. Read them in their entirety:

<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lakezurich/news/forum/1503535,lz-lettersforweb-040209-s1.article>

Also in the news:

Newser.com, 3/31/09, "Lobbyists and two public interest groups asked the White House Tuesday to rescind its ban on lobbyists discussing stimulus package projects with Obama administration officials, saying it violated free speech and would still allow access for others seeking money from the measure." Full story

<http://www.newser.com/article/d97985q00/lobbyists-public-interest-groups-ask-white-house-to-end-ban-on-lobbyists-discussing-stimulus.html>

Barrington Courier, 4/2/09: "Kellermann said despite several requests he has still not received all the documents and invoices from the Vehe Barn project. ... Gifford has been village president for five years and owns Gifford Builders. He said the village staff does the best it can with accounting and record-keeping based on its four-member staff. He said in order to implement a more detailed system the village would need volunteers." Full story

<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/barrington/news/1506181,ba-deerpark-040209-s1.article>

REBUTTAL TO YET ANOTHER REFERENCE TO "VOLUNTEERS"

President Gifford, you have mentioned volunteers several times, including today's paper. Why didn't you accept Deborah Barry's offer to post village documents on the village web site? Or Deer Park Neighbors' numerous offers to catalogue all those papers and development plans facing destruction in the basement and attic of Village Hall? Think of all the volunteers from the Vehe Farm Foundation!

In our opinion, scanning documents to make PDFs is so easy, any school child can do it, and you have the equipment in Village Hall to do it.

Why not make it a Village procedure that everything submitted to the village be submitted in digital format? We cannot think of a single business document that is not created by computer.

Here's a thought, the \$60,000 tossed to the lobbyist would have funded **SIX**

THOUSAND MAN HOURS at 10 bucks an hour.

Or you could bring back former administrator Kari Diesen-Dahl, whom you frog-marched out of the village office, changing the locks behind her. You did that without proper notice to her and worse, without the advice and consent of the board. Who would object to her coming back, especially now that there is the increase in staff she herself requested so many times.

But by the way, how did you come up with the number “4” in staff? Jim Connors, Terry Stade, Susan Meyle, Josie Doniec and Lisa Pagano—that’s 5. Oh, and Yvonne Keith, who works on Special Events at the Barn, makes 6. So you see, Scott, you have plenty of resources at hand. **DO YOU HAVE THE POLITICAL WILL TO PROCEED?**

ENDORSEMENTS BY CITIZENS
From Richard Chay

Kellermann for President, Olson and Sands for Trustee

Deer Park needs new leadership and much better roads and drainage. Under Scott Gifford’s regime, the majority of the board presided over the construction of a \$2 million barn at Vehe Farm to serve the special interests of Gifford’s neighbors and friends. Gifford diverted nearly all of the money for the Vehe Farm project from the roads program. That is why roads in your subdivision are in such deplorable condition. When the village of Deer Park starts collecting hotel taxes from the Hampton Inn, Gifford would attempt to divert those funds to his friends and special interests at Vehe Farm.

Gifford and the majority of the board lost \$1 million in revenue when they sold village park property in the Deer Park Town Center to Red Seal Condo Development Corporation. The village property was sold for far less per acre than the Dahm Fruit Stand people received for the adjacent property. Why did Gifford and the majority of the board do that? Finances are so bad that money in the Deer Park checking account has dwindled to just more than \$1 million today, from about \$4 million when Gifford took the office of president from Rick Karl, the prior president.

What is one of Gifford’s solutions to the funding crisis in Deer Park? Red light traffic cameras on Lake Cook Road! What is his latest

idea? Spend \$60,000 on a lobbyist to beg the federal government for relief!

Gifford wants to be reelected to another four years as President. Isn't it interesting that not a single person on Gifford's slate from 2004 decided to run with him now? He found three new people with little exposure to Gifford's leadership style...three people who have attended almost no village board meetings over the past four years.

When Gifford tried to raise money for his special interest projects like bike paths, tennis courts, and more stuff at Vehe Farm through a sales tax on village residents, Deer Park voters soundly defeated the referendum. It is time to completely defeat Gifford and his cronies by voting for Kellermann, Olson and Sands on April 7th.

Richard Chay

From Roger Hankin

I wish to commend all of the Trustee candidates for stepping up to offer their service to the community. Community service can be quite rewarding; elections are a thankless and unpredictable task.

I ran for Trustee in 2005 in an attempt to arrest the freefalling reserves and ethical compromises orchestrated by President Gifford and the then Village Attorney, who was also Mr. Gifford's personal business attorney. I spoke out against their ethical compromises and appearances of impropriety. I subsequently learned that Mr. Gifford cursed at my daughter, eleven at the time, and that his supporters had embarked on a whispering campaign regarding the candidate for Village President's race and my religion. Later, other residents filed numerous ARDC complaints and that attorney resigned from the village only after having siphoned millions of dollars from Deer Park, billing at 5 to 10 times current annual legal expense levels during most of Mr. Gifford's reign.

This year, both slates have done a poor job of clearly differentiating their passions sufficiently for newer residents or outside journalists to succinctly understand the fundamental

choice. Even more critical than the eroding reserves over the past six years, there is one very clear and discernable difference: ETHICS. Mr. Kellermann is not as glib or polished as Mr. Gifford, but I believe he has a fundamentally stronger moral compass than Mr. Gifford, and Kellermann is **STRONGLY ENDORSED**.

Neither Mr. Gifford nor his attorney nor the architectural firm of a former Village President adequately vetted the Vehe Barn contractor or its bonding agent, which was not licensed in Illinois. As a result, \$1+ million construction overruns can not be recovered. Mr. Kellermann's analytical skills and attempts at forensic accounting have been thwarted by concealment of the detailed billing records.

Farm construction and legal fees are the two largest components of the evaporating Village reserves on Mr. Gifford's watch. Others include large no-bid contracts for oversight of the Rand/Plum Grove intersection and for oversight of a bike path on the Farm. The Village parks system was built on developer donations, but opportunities for tough negotiations with Praedium and Red Seal were squandered. He brags about 24/7 police protection, but we receive one officer and share one for the mall at a cost of \$1.4 million, which works out to over \$220,000 per officer as it takes roughly four 40-hour shifts for 24/7 coverage. Essentially, 100% of the sales tax receipts from the mall go to police protection, and with high-end stores such as Bailey, Banks, and Biddle closing, a greater shortfall is likely.

Financially, there can be no end to the deficit spending without a new President. The Village newsletter references a "lean" budget with expenditures nearly 20% above an extremely optimistic revenue projection. It has already slipped out that any hotel tax revenues will be used for the marketing of Vehe Farm. The Village exacts the legal maximum in utility and telecommunication taxes (check your bills) and is budgeting for controversial red light camera fines, recently suspended in other communities.

Mr. Gifford also touts his support for high quality development, but personally authorized the 50,000 square foot Dick's big box since the developer couldn't secure tenants of the approved size, despite the Plan Commission having approved two smaller buildings. He later allowed the gazebo to be eliminated to placate Dick's site line requests. His version of the proposed development on Quentin and Lake Cook is inconsistent with that of the property owner, who indicated a far greater willingness to build a higher-end, possibly multi-use, project. Repeating a lie does not make it become the truth.

A Gifford supporter trumped up a spurious protest to the nominating petitions of the Kellermann slate and Mr. Gifford was fully planning to rule on that matter until presented with strong legal precedent by the petitioners' attorney and directed to step aside by Village counsel.

Mr. Gifford's latest stunt, spending \$60,000 on a lobbyist, was shared with his running mates before it was communicated to current trustees. What was the political motivation of this "October surprise," reminiscent of classic Blagojevich moves?

Mr. Gifford disenfranchised the voters, changing the Village Clerk position from elected to appointed, ostensibly to circumvent State law regarding the timing of pay increases for incumbents. This is a man who changed the locks on a Village Administrator with two decades of loyal service, six weeks prior to her forced "retirement." Mr. Gifford rose into the presidency only after his predecessor resigned after having concealed his non-residency long enough to miss the deadline for a special election.

With respect to the Trustee race, Dale Sands is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**. He has an outstanding grasp on the issues. Bill Koutsis is also **RECOMMENDED**. Much like Trustee Rotter, he appears to one who can put the needs of the Village above slate loyalties and also has a clear vision. Keith Olson has a strong environmental interest and could continue in Trustee

Plautz's role, as she moves on after long and dedicated service. Mr. Michael and Ms. Trost- Beattie appear to be uninitiated rubber-stamps for a Gifford agenda and are not recommended. As an aside, the most recent Village newsletter is factually incorrect. If you would prefer to vote for Mr. Lahr and he receives one of the three highest vote totals, the (new) president, with the approval of the new board, will appoint a resident to fulfill his term.

The state had the focus of the U.S. Attorney as a catalyst for change, but we must rely on the voters to end the Gifford nightmare and restore our small village to one where we can be proud of our elected officials. Too many residents appear to live in fear of retribution. Deer Park deserves better than a president who curses and schemes like Blagojevich. We live in a democracy, not a third-world dictatorship where the President decides who can run for office or tells voters what to do.
Character counts. Gifford's Gotta Go.

TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT

<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/evanston/news/forum/1491690,pp-duffy-032609-s1.article>

The tide is turning. From the citizen responses we've had, the residents are sick of the subtle manipulation of the facts, the newsletter's misleading information about the ballots for April 7 being just the most recent example. We are all sophisticated enough to recognize that there is such a thing as a gray area. But when the same individual taps, taps, taps his toe against the lines of common sense and propriety, the weight of the aggregate is overwhelming.

FROM FIGHT RAIL CONGESTION

----- Forwarded Message

From: <administrator@fightrailcongestion.com>

Date: 2 Apr 2009 08:22:50 -0700

To: <wyngate150@sbcglobal.net>

Subject: How to Determine Whether to Register a Complaint about CN Operations

A concerned resident of the region recently contacted TRAC wanting to know what type of event should be registered as a complaint regarding CN's operations along the EJ. She asked that we provide some education for the public. While it is not possible to envision all possible events that would justify a complaint, perhaps an example of a few justifiable complaints that were registered would be instructive:

>From Hoffmann Estates: "Why does CN work in my bedroom?? We were awakened by screeching metal and kept awake by idling engines, movement of train cars and finally revving engines and typical train noise as the train left. CN has hundreds of miles of track. Why is it allowed to conduct these operations in the middle of the night in a residential neighborhood, feet from our homes?"

>From Barrington Hills: "A train was idling (engines on) on the EJ tracks behind my house today from 10:50am until 11:40am."

>From Frankfort: "Every time a train passes the high-pitched wheel screeching noise is ear-piercing. This sound can be heard through closed windows and doors."

>From Aurora: "Going to work turning onto Liberty from Eola with increased and slowed traffic. Train was dead stopped so all cars were turning around. Arrived to work at 7:20 a.m. I have a 7:00 a.m. start time."

>From Hoffmann Estates: "Train horns blown several times in quiet zone. This is the third time since the CN trains started travelling that this has occurred. Did not happen before purchase by CN."

>From Lake Zurich: "The EJ railroad bridge that goes over Rand Road in Lake Zurich is in serious need of repair. Prior to CN, only a few trains a day crossed it. However, today alone I have already seen AND heard 4 (it is noon)! This bridge has large chunks of concrete missing and a friend recently had a large piece fall on her car and damage it. With the increased train traffic, I fear the worst. This bridge crosses over a MAJOR roadway and could cause significant damage. It needs to be repaired immediately if CN thinks they will be driving more, longer and heavier trains over these tracks!"

>From Barrington: "This morning at 2:47 a.m. and then again sometime after 5:00 a.m., the blaring sound of the horn was used between the Lake Zurich Rd. and Rte 14 quiet zones. It appears that either the conductor is inexperienced with quiet zones or blatantly using it without regard to the sleeping community, since I am not aware that a safety issue mandated using the horn at such an

early hour this morning. The frequency of the horn use is becoming apparent contrasted to the EJ rail. I have submitted this complaint to the CN public affairs office as well."

>From Deer Park: "It is rush hour and a train 150 cars long passed through town. I thought the plan was for CN to be careful of rush hour and travel during non peak hours??? It took 15 minutes for it to pass!"

>From Elgin: "Due to very rainy conditions on March 7, 2009 and March 8, 2009, there is flooding and moving water along the base of rail bed. The rail bed is built up with gravel and earth, but the fast moving stream of water is causing erosion, and eventually this section of rail will become unstable. Water is an ongoing significant problem because the rail line is at the base of a sloping hill, and there are natural springs in the area. No one from CN has done an inspection or maintenance. This is an accident waiting to happen. And if it does, I will have a train falling over into my backyard, and because we have a private well, the water supply of my entire neighborhood is at risk."

>From Barrington: "An extremely slow freight train passed. It was the loudest train I have ever heard in 1 1/2 years of living near the EJ tracks. It was so loud the telephone conversations I was on could not be continued. Worse, the train noise and vibration rattled my entire house and windows for over 5 minutes. Many trains that passed in the past were very smooth-running and quiet, and I didn't even notice a train was passing until I looked out the window."

>From Bartlett: "At the train tracks on West Bartlett Road, the train was so slow moving that not only did a School District U-46 school bus make a u-turn right in front of me to change direction, but on the other side of the tracks from a police car, an ambulance and two fire trucks waited with sirens going and lights going because they were stuck for approximately 10 minutes...wasting precious time to get to an emergency. Please don't have trains stalled/ running during the rush hour."

>From Wayne: "The railroad crossing at Army Trail Road in Wayne was blocked by a stopped train for almost 30 minutes. There is no posted phone number by the tracks to call the railroad. Several cars were honking their horns."

These examples all demonstrate that the STB's assurance that the transaction will have minimal impacts of the quality of life in the region is not reflected by reality (even before reaching maximum CN freight volume.) These complaints also cause us to question CN's commitment to doing everything possible to minimize the negative impact of its operations on the EJ. **So, use the complaint**

form at www.fightrailcongestion.com judiciously, but use it. It's a vital tool to helping us track where the problems are occurring, so forward this information to family and friends. Help us get the word out!

----- End of Forwarded Message

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Deborah Barry, Secretary | Al Barry, President
847-867-1867 <http://deerparkneighbors.com>
Deer Park Neighbors, 412 Bramble Lane, Deer Park, IL 60010

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