

Subject: [DPNeBlast] Tax Freeze

Date: Wednesday, July 29, 2009 1:09 PM

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Conversation: Tax Freeze

host_name

Greetings, Neighbors

DATELINE, DEER PARK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009

CORRECTION: In mentioning the Over-65 Assessment Freeze, we should have clarified that to be eligible, the TOTAL HOUSEHOLD income must be below \$55k/year. Again, for more information:

Now through August 31, Applications must be submitted to the Lake County Chief County Assessment Office, (847) 377-2050, 18 North County Street - 7th Floor, Waukegan, IL, OR any one of the 18 township assessor offices to pick up an application and ask questions.

<http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Assessor/TownshipAssessors.htm>

Download the Forms

<http://www.lakecountyil.gov/Assessor/TaxRelief/SeniorCitizen%27sAssessmentFreeze.htm>

AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE YOUR SAY

You have received the Summer Village newsletter which includes a survey. You can participate in hard copy, or complete the survey online. So many of you have wished for a time when the village would listen to residents. This is a first, sincere attempt to be inclusive. The ball is in your court.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pu_2fgaY3x3F3YDuUoDRa3zg_3d_3d

FOR PARENTS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN PRIVACY ISSUES

Thursday, July 30, 12:30p.m. ***What is in your child's cell phone and who has the right to know?*** Students' cell phones are being confiscated at schools and

searched by administrators and teachers. What are the rights of students related to technology in the schools? Bring your lunch for a lively discussion!

Citizen Advocacy Center, 630-833-4080, <http://citizenadvocacycenter.org>

182 N. York, Elmhurst

[http://www.mapquest.com/maps?](http://www.mapquest.com/maps?city=Elmhurst&state=IL&address=182+N.+York)

[city=Elmhurst&state=IL&address=182+N.+York](http://www.mapquest.com/maps?city=Elmhurst&state=IL&address=182+N.+York)

Programs are free and open to the public.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE JULY MEETING

We were not able to attend the entire meeting, so we offer up the Village's summary of events:

<http://www.village.deer-park.il.us/default.htm>

However, we can say that the overall atmosphere in the Barn before and during the meetings is much more relaxed and friendly. Just more at ease, more smiles, more laughter. Not that this isn't serious business, but it is, after all, OUR business, too.

Service plaques were presented to immediate past Trustees Patricia Plautz and Joel Rotter. Pat made what sounded like an impromptu speech that while a lot of people were unhappy with the Barn project, at least we were "lucky" that the village had enough savings to cover the costs and cost overruns. Those in attendance appeared to be pretty well struck dumb; we certainly were flabbergasted.

And it's a very fine point to parse, that the Barn costs were paid out of "savings" or "reserves," while ongoing maintenance should be paid out of current income. Well, we get the point. But aren't the savings there for a rainy day—no irony intended--such as when current income is less than basic needs. Very, very few people in the village use the property, no is there an active program to encourage those who do come to Vehe to extend their visit by shopping or dining at our stores and restaurants. That's a huge disconnect.

We're hoping that Trustee Barb Evans, who oversees the Barn and the Vehe Property as part of her Parks and Recreation authority, will have many innovative ideas and will help this village partner with local business to cover costs, if not make a bit of a profit.

ONGOING DISCUSSIONS ON ETHICS

You can read a bit of coverage about the Board of Trustees discussion last week revolving around our Ethics ordinance and if/when/how we might appoint an

Ethics Advisor.

<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/lakezurich/news/1677936,lake-zurich-dpethics-072309-s1.article>

...AND A BRIEF EDITORIAL ON THE SUBJECT

In our opinion, the matter of ethics should be on the Agenda at the upcoming Community Forum. It's time to hear from the residents on this matter. We are pleased to see from the news coverage that Attorney Keller agrees with DPN's stance that a great deal more specificity is needed to move forward: What qualifications are required, what would the ethics inquiry process look like, etc.

However, there is NO EXCUSE for not moving forward. As one of the candidates at the February candidate's forum put it, how can anyone say that an Ethics Advisor isn't necessary in the State of Illinois!

Attorney Keller is reported to have mentioned that individuals can approach the Lake County State's Attorney or Illinois Attorney General to investigate violations. We can tell you from direct experience that rarely does such an inquiry go anywhere at all. What's more, in our experience, those offices do not even follow up with the complainant. The inquiries we have made over the years have resulted in nothing more than a phone call to the Village Attorney saying, "If the Village did this, don't do it again." And we have only the county staff's word that the call would be made.

Once, we asked to be copied on a letter to be written to the attorney. You would have thought we were asking for the moon. The letter that we finally received was vague, and made no mention of the half dozen or so similar ethics complaints that had been made—to our direct knowledge—in the previous couple of years.

For whatever reason, there's very little weight given to a mere resident speaking out. That's why we need a local process. First, to give the board of trustees and commissioners and staff guidance in advance of making a mistake. Second, to present ethics complaints in a way that gets a complete hearing and full resolution. Finally, to ensure that unresolved issues would be taken up with higher authorities and carry greater credibility.

To get to that point, the village staff and/or an ad hoc committee can investigate what other municipalities have done—there are lots of examples online—then present those possibilities for discussion. The administrator and clerk could draft a more detailed ordinance; only then, and with the input of the board, are the services of an attorney required. But in no way can a hired

consultant—attorney, engineer, inspector, whoever--be our ethics sounding board. The relationships between the village and its vendors are one of the areas that ethics legislation is to address.

Others may disagree with our point of view. We welcome a full-throttle discussion. But in the end, the solution should reflect the will of the people, not the attorney. His role, in our opinion, is to ensure that any village ordinance complies with state statues, is constitutional and can be enforced.

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL SHOPS

NEWS:

Eddie Z's Blinds and Drapery Deer Park location has been awarded the prestigious 2008 Angie's List Super Service Award! The Super Service Award, now celebrating its 10th year, is given to companies who have achieved and maintained a superior service rating on Angie's List throughout the past year. Fewer than 5 percent of the companies on Angie's List meet the eligibility requirements to be considered for the award.

<http://www.angieslist.com>, <http://www.eddiezs.com>
Town Center Promenade, 20710 North Rand Road, Suite
B, 847-438-2020

Now, take a look at this updated list of stops at Deer Park Town Center:
deerparkneighbors.com/sources/2009_July_DPTCStoreList.pdf

Or, visit the DPTC site and sort alphabetically or by category:

<http://shopdeerparktowncenter.com/go/dirListing.cfm?FL=All>

Did you know that you can purchase a Center-wide gift card, good at all the locations? What a great way to encourage friends and family to shop here in town:

AT THE MANAGEMENT OFFICE:

Suite 133 (next to Smith & Hawken)

Monday - Friday: 8 am - 5 pm

OR BY PHONING IN YOUR ORDER:

(847) 726-7755

We can arrange for mailing, postage fee required. (NOTE: Signature is required for all mailed deliveries). Visa & MasterCard accepted

Smith and Hawkins is closing all its stores (20-30% off, no returns), but rumor is that Bailey Banks & Biddle may stick around after all. Of course, there is always a certain amount of attrition as store leases come to an end and, obviously, as the economy forces national companies to cut back on their locations.

But it is also, in our opinion, the Village's responsibility to pro-actively support local business. There are simple things to be done that can have immediate impact. For example, this Village needs to amend its sign ordinances to permit more monument signage and directional signage, bringing the names of business out to the roadways, as they do just across the street at Shops of Kildeer and Quentin Corners. We have exposure on Quentin, Long Grove, Lake Cook and Rand Roads to tens of thousands of cars passing by; let's give them a reason to pull over.

The Deer Park Town Center also needs much more signage and maps to direct shoppers to the south end of the mall (by the cinemas) and to the new building that is so out of the way as to be almost invisible. This will be very helpful to the new visitors to the hotel and the upcoming office building.

There are lots of other opportunities as well, including co-op direct mail programs, broadcast and online advertising and village-wide events to attract out-of-town visitors. Yes, this will require an investment by the village board. But a sound media plan, executed with quality and style, will pay back in the bottom line and put this village in the best possible position when the economy recovers.

It's time—it's past time—for the Village to develop a Business and Economic Development Committee, taking advantage of all the professionals (active and retired) here in the village who specialize in advertising, marketing, special events and business attraction. We look to this board for immediate leadership on this matter.

Remember, together, we are stronger.

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Deborah Barry, Secretary | Al Barry, President
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Deer Park Neighbors, 412 Bramble Lane, Deer Park, IL 60010

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DPNeBlast mailing list

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