

**Subject: Re: Monday's meeting**

**Date:** Wednesday, December 26, 2007 11:43 AM

**From:** mpratscher@aol.com

**To:** <deborah@wordspecs.com>

**Conversation:** Monday's meeting

**Category:** DEER PARK

Hi Deborah,

I did hear what Al said, but the implication (to me, at least) was that because the difference between the two bids was inconsequential (in some people's opinion), we didn't need to discuss the issue at length or worry about the outcome of the vote. THAT was what I couldn't disagree with more strongly.

We (the Board) have spent hours and hours discussing and listening to residents' comments about Vehe Barn expenses, yet that entire interior reconstruction project did not cost a whole lot more than what we spend in one year on police services. Police protection consumes the largest portion of the Village's budget, and I expect that, as a percentage of the entire budget, it will continue to grow in the next 5-10 years. That fact alone, in my opinion, means the Board should give its closest scrutiny to the police contract. It is a long-term contract, and as you heard, we must live with the decision we made for the next five years.

I think there were some real differences between the two offers, and those differences needed to be explored and considered, both in economic terms and in terms of the safety and well-being of our residents. I appreciate the fact that you and Al have a friendly relationship with one of the Kildeer officers, but there are some residents who would have preferred Barrington service (I took an informal poll among my friends and acquaintances).

I didn't mean to bash Al, but I really wanted to make my point about how important I thought the police contract vote was, and he gave me an opening to do so.

As for the Vehe Foundation, I really don't know why there is such animosity toward a group of people who really are trying to do good things for the Village. I am not saying that I am in favor of giving the Foundation a big chunk of money, unrestricted, in the next budgeting session. To the contrary, I would prefer the Village to earmark funds for projects that the Foundation suggests and the Board supports but keep the funds under Village control. I think the final stumbling block now comes down to the Directors and Officers insurance policy. I can't say definitively at this point that I will vote to pay for the Foundation's D&O insurance, but it seems to make good sense to me to fund that expense in hopes that the grants they will be able to secure for the Village's benefit will far exceed that expense.

Finally, on another topic, I would like to ask you and Al to do what you can to help pass the sales tax referendum. Whether or not past Boards mismanaged Village funds is not the question here -- that is water under the bridge. The question going forward is how will the Village be able to fund road and drainage improvements in the future if the police budget line item continues to grow? Would residents prefer that roads be allowed to deteriorate or that the Village ask for a property tax instead? I think a small increase in the sales tax is a much less odious solution. I am asking that you publicly state that you support the referendum and urge others to do so as well. I know you have said that Deer Park Neighbors is not a political group, but I don't view this as a political issue -- it is a financial and civic issue that will have real (and negative) consequences if the referendum is defeated. You have stated your opinion (quite strongly) on issues that don't impact each and every resident of this Village, and I think this issue calls for an equally strong (or stronger) statement.

Maureen

-----Original Message-----

From: Deborah Barry <deborah@wordspecs.com>

To: Maureen Pratscher <mpratscher@aol.com>

Sent: Fri, 21 Dec 2007 7:44 am

Subject: Monday's meeting

Maureen,

I can't help but point out that I think you misunderstood something Al said in his public comments. He did not say that the cost of police was inconsequential, he said that the difference between the two department's bids was inconsequential.

That being said, We both noted with pleasure how very well prepared you were on the police topic. You were, of course right, that it was a tremendously important decision, and we're pleased that the village will continue with Kildeer.

I'm not sure the board appreciated (perhaps at least not yet) that every single Kildeer employee gave up 1.5% of their 3% salary raise for next year. I really have never seen that kind of commitment to do the deal in the municipal arena. I think that communications will improve with Chief Lilly.

As to his coming to meetings with his prepared speech and refusing to take questions, even from trustees, I think that attitude will end.

I remain very concerned about the Vehe Foundation, and believe that you are now on that board as well. I can't say if the trustees don't understand or simply are in favor of the village treasury covering things like the foundation's D&O insurance and the like. But when that subject comes up for budget review, I hope that the point will be made that the foundation in fact should pay its own operating expenses out of its own income (donations).

I am very active in a chamber of commerce or two, also 501c3 organizations. In Highland Park, the Chamber does a great amount of the work of marketing the City, and does administer some funds of the city (controlled entirely by the City budget), but the City doesn't pay the Chambers D&O insurance, or rent or telephone or anything else. They must provide their own operating funds.

My college alumnae association does not receive funds from the college; they raise every cent--including operation expenses, salaries, printing, mailing, etc., etc.--out of the fundraising.

I don't know why the Vehe FF should be any different.

This is what the residents want; for the foundation to stand on its own feet. Yes, the volunteers are energetic, but there are only six of them. If they continue to come to the village for money, what would prevent each of the homeowner's associations coming to the village for funding for their volunteer efforts and vision? Could you say yes to Vehe, but no to a Deer Park HOA?

Every single person I have spoken with or who has emailed me is consistent. The foundation must pay for its own operations. They have at least \$30,000 which should take care of 2008, and their fundraising can take care of 2009 and beyond.

Somehow, we are failing to articulate this very important point, and I hope it will come out during budget discussions. But the message must be sent by the trustees that spending priorities will be different and Vehe will support itself. I think that's what the referendum will hinge on.

Thank you for your hard work, as always.

--

Deborah Barry  
847-867-1867  
Deer Park

---

More new features than ever. Check out the new AOL Mail <<http://o.aolcdn.com/cdn.webmail.aol.com/mailtour/aol/en-us/text.htm?ncid=aolcmp00050000000003>> !