

Bridge Newsletter February 2013

The Next 50 Years

Eight years ago, the Village Board began working proactively on the restoration of our Village. Along with improving our local economy, road maintenance and drainage issues throughout the entire village as well as the Historic Business District needed to be addressed. The Board realized this was an ambitious and time consuming project and that it was imperative to get it right. To that end, we worked with three outside consultants to develop a Master Plan, which was adopted in 2008. Guided by this Master Plan, necessary upgrades to the current Village infrastructure are being made and a more realistic maintenance plan for the future is being identified.

Last summer, the Village Board invited residents to attend three Town Hall Meetings to inform residents about our Village history, why certain decisions were made 50 years ago as well as the consequences of those decisions. (All three presentations may be viewed on the Village website).

So what's in store for the Village in the next 50 years? The Board continues discussing plans for the future and considering the options. Residents are encouraged to express their opinions and participate in this process. These discussions, while sometimes difficult, are very necessary; you are urged to become involved. Your input can help to shape the future of the Village for the next 50 years.

Lake County will host public meetings to gain your input as they finalize plans to reconstruct the section of Old McHenry Road between the Long Grove Fire Station and Kildeer Countryside School. Lake County owns the road and is therefore responsible for improvements to the pavement including possible "on street parking," traffic lights as opposed to stop signs, as well as sidewalks, and improved drainage. The Village will be responsible for additional streetscape improvements. Burying of power lines, additional street lighting, and/or adding a Lake Michigan water distribution system are projects to consider while the road is under construction. These improvements, however, are very expensive. Which projects the Village should commit to and how are we going to fund them are issues requiring citizen input and participation in the process.

The Village Board will also be reviewing options for improving our village roads. We are inviting all of the Home Owners Association presidents to a meeting to explain the options thus far identified and request their help in disseminating this information to all Village residents. As with the downtown infrastructure improvements, we need to make necessary improvements now and identify a realistic maintenance plan going forward. Again, residents are encouraged to get involved.

Many policy decisions regarding how to fund capital improvements, made when our village was established, are no longer relevant. With an eye toward the next 50 years, we need to address infrastructure issues—namely roads and drainage—but more importantly, we need to identify ways to fund a more realistic and sustainable maintenance plan for these improvements.

By working in concert towards a common goal within the next few years, we can realistically see more than just a facelift to our Historic Business District. We will achieve sustainable improvements throughout our village that will help to maintain property values while protecting the quality of life within the Village long into the future.

Three Issues Facing Long Grove Today

The *Pioneer Press Countryside* newspaper recently asked several area villages about issues facing their municipalities. Issues facing Long Grove were identified as follows:

The top three issues facing Long Grove:

... the current economic downturn has had a significant impact on our residents and has magnified the following top three financial issues facing the Village of Long Grove:

* **Budgetary Constraints.** The total budget for the Village of Long Grove is roughly \$2.6 million. Unlike the vast majority of municipalities, the Village of Long Grove does not have a Village property tax to fund operations. The upside is that the Village does not impact the property tax bills for our residents; the downside is that property taxes provide a significant source of funding for most municipalities that is relatively stable. The Village Board has worked extremely hard on reducing Village expenses for what was already a very lean budget in order to continue providing basic services to our residents while maintaining a balanced budget without having any debt.

* **Unfunded Mandates.** With the increasing debt of the Federal and State governments, the number and complexity of requirements being imposed upon municipalities continues to increase without any new funding to offset expenses. For example, since 2003 all municipalities have been required to submit a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPEDS) Report to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Although Long Grove submitted plans since 2003 without response from the IEPA, the Environmental Protection Agency audited Long Grove this year and notified the Village of non-compliance. In response, the Village Board approved the 2012 budget with \$37,000 of the total cost of \$102,000 for a compliance program with plans to spread these costs over three fiscal years in order to minimize the impact on Village operations. The EPA ruled that this plan was not acceptable and agreed to allow the Village to spread these costs over a period of two fiscal years, which will cost the Village \$78,000 this year (2012-2013) and \$24,000 next year (2013-2014). In order to maintain a balanced budget, this unfunded mandate significantly reduced the funding available for much needed road paving/maintenance and other critical Village operations within our limited \$2.6 million budget.

* **State of Illinois Financial Condition - Reduction in Shared Revenues.** Illinois municipalities receive a significant portion of their operating revenues from State shared revenues. The two most significant sources for State shared revenues are Illinois Income Tax and Motor Fuel Tax (MFT). In both cases, the State of Illinois distributes a portion of the total taxes received back to municipalities based upon population. In the case of Long Grove, these taxes account for roughly \$1.0 million of the \$2.6 million total revenues for Long Grove. When the State Income Tax was originally approved, it was done so with the commitment that 90% of the taxes would go to the State and 10% would go back to the municipalities. Since northeast Illinois has income levels higher than the majority of the rest of the State, the residents that live in this area of the State already pay a disproportionate amount of income taxes into the system. When the State of Illinois significantly increased the income tax rate by 67% in 2010, 100% of this increase remained with the State with none of this increased revenue being distributed back to the municipalities. During the past several years, in an effort to balance their budget, the State has considered reducing or eliminating these shared revenues to

municipalities. During the past several years, in an effort to balance their budget, the State has considered reducing or eliminating these shared revenues to municipalities. If the State reduces, let alone eliminates, either or both of these sources of revenue, municipalities will be faced with severe reductions in revenue and will have to either reduce/eliminate services or find other sources of revenue to offset these losses.

Given the economy, how would you describe Long Grove's fiscal situation?

Fortunately for the Village of Long Grove, Village Boards had the foresight to develop plans to encourage moderate commercial development in several strategic areas of the Village which promoted the construction of several developments (Menards, Sunset Grove, Long Grove Commons) that contribute significant retail sales tax. These developments have helped to offset the loss in building permit revenues while providing basic services. Although the Village has been able to maintain funding levels, the economic downturn has reduced what otherwise would have been much needed increased revenues to the Village budget.

In the late 1970s, the Village Board identified the fact that without a significant increase in revenues the Village could no longer afford to be developed as other municipalities were being developed and essentially stopped the practice of accepting new public roads and the costs required to maintain the public roads. While this resulted in all new roads in Long Grove being privately owned/maintained, the 31 miles of public roads that were accepted since the Village was incorporated in 1958 means that the Village must maintain an average of 3.1 miles of public road each year in order to properly maintain the pavement on a 10 year cycle. While the Village has historically adopted balanced budgets, they have done so at the expense of underfunding the proper maintenance of the roads simply because there is insufficient revenues to cover these costs. While the Village's fiscal situation is strong in that it has a balanced budget and does not have debt, revenue levels are not sufficient to maintain the public roads as they should. The Village Board recently concluded its third Town Hall Meeting to discuss this situation with the invaluable input of the residents in hopes of arriving at a solution to address this funding gap in the coming year.

What is Long Grove doing to promote economic development?

In the 1990's the Village of Long Grove created several sub-area plans for commercial development in the Village's Comprehensive Plan. Several years ago the Village Board developed a downtown master plan and updated the Comprehensive Plan to reflect these refined plans. As a result of these efforts and others, the Village successfully attracted commercial developments in three of these sub-areas (Menards, Sunset Grove, and Long Grove Commons), which not only provide a significant source of sales tax revenue but also provide the valuable services for the residents of Long Grove and the surrounding area.

As an offshoot to these plans, the Village Board adopted a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District along IL Route 83 and the historic downtown to partially fund the public improvements (primarily roadway) required to support Sunset Grove and eventually fund additional public improvements in the historic downtown, including: streetscape, water system, etc. In addition, the Village Board established a Special Service Area (SSA) for the IL Route 83 properties to fund a common deep well water system to serve

the immediate needs of Sunset Grove and the other IL Route 83 properties slated for commercial development, with the design for extending into the downtown. The Village Board continues to seek out potential commercial developers/tenants that would continue to reflect the Village's goals for high quality developments with tenants that not only provide sales tax revenue but also provide services desired by our residents.

Resident Artist Eduardo Acuna

Long Grove resident Ed Acuna is someone we'd like you to "meet".

Ed was born in Cuba, as a young child lived in northern Spain, and then in the 1970's settled in Chicago. He earned Masters' degrees in Engineering and Business and currently is a small business owner. In 2001, Ed, with his wife and three children, moved to Long Grove where he soon became involved in community activities. Ed strongly believes in giving back to the community where he resides. In past years, Ed served on the Village Board of Trustees as well as the Plan Commission. Currently Ed sits on the Vernon Area Public Library board and the Long Grove Business and Community Partners board.



"I love Long Grove. I've met so many talented and generous people who truly care about their community here. Folks ask me about my involvement with the downtown and its future. I'm very optimistic. Everyday it's getting better in small ways and there is a lot of energy and activity behind the scenes. The renewal process is well

underway and the result is going to be awesome," says Ed.

In Ed's spare time, he enjoys painting. His medium of choice is oil paints, creating bright, colorful, figurative oil paintings that tell a story. There is a geometrical aspect to Ed's paintings that incorporate his engineering background. As Ed says, when he works on a painting his characters take on personalities of their own as the work unfolds.

In addition to figurative oil paintings, Ed uses a splatter technique to create abstract paintings rich in color. As Ed states, "There is a fundamental human connection that arises from these abstracts that I think of as a common human subconscious."

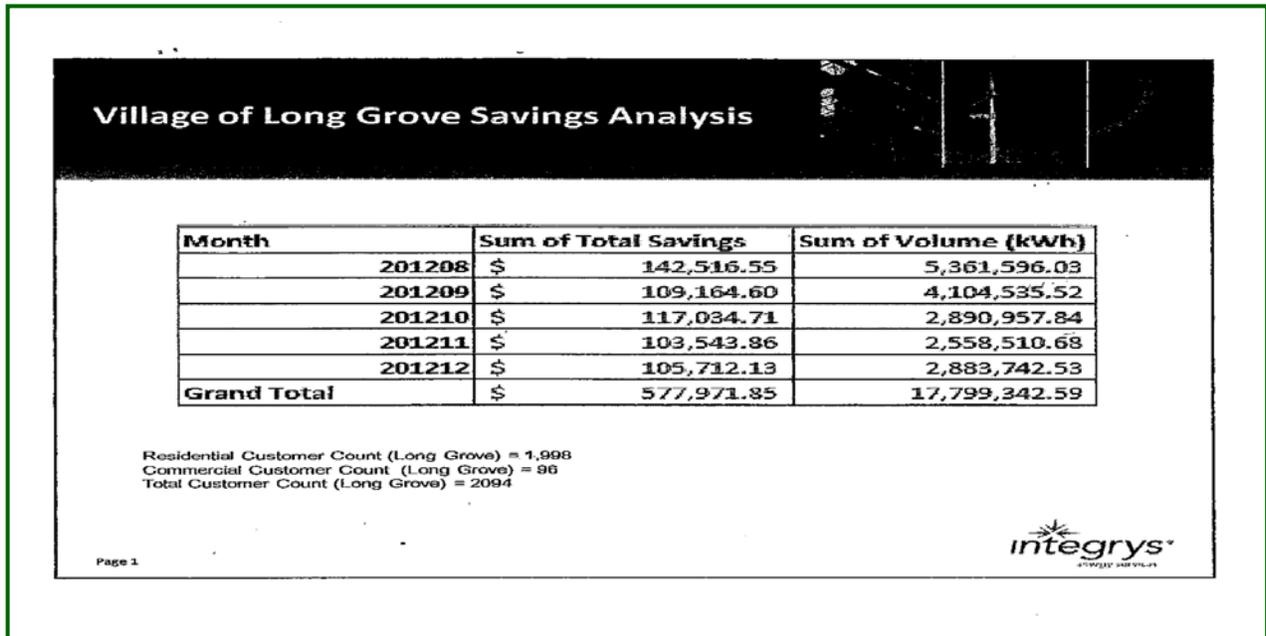
Ed is a member of the Long Grove Artists' Guild, an open, supportive organization giving local artists an opportunity to take their work to a broader audience via the Guild's downtown gallery (located in Fountain Square). The Guild is a way for artists to grow as individuals while at the same time giving support and encouragement to fellow artists.



To view Ed's art pieces as well as works by other local artists, stop by the Long Grove Artist's Guild Gallery (224 Robert Parker Coffin Road), open on Saturdays and Sundays. To learn more about the Guild and the artists, visit www.lgag.org.

Savings Analysis from Integrys Energy Services

From August 2012 through December 2012, residents and businesses in Long Grove saved a total of \$577,971 in electrical costs. (See chart below) If Integrys is not currently your provider and you would like additional information, contact Integrys Energy at 888-340-1983.



Save the Date for the Long Grove Electronics Recycling Event

The annual Long Grove electronics recycling event is scheduled for Saturday morning, April 13. More information will be forthcoming.

2013 Vehicle Stickers

The 2013 Village of Long Grove vehicle stickers are available at the Village Hall. The cost is \$10 a decal. While vehicle stickers are not mandatory, residents are encouraged to purchase one if they park on streets in other suburbs or in Chicago where a local sticker is required and where tickets are issued if one is not displayed.

To purchase a sticker, send a check made payable to the Village of Long Grove; include your name, address and number of decals needed. Or stop by the Village Hall located at 3110 Old McHenry Road (behind Kildeer Countryside School). The Village Hall is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Payment must be made by cash or check - credit cards not accepted.



AROUND TOWN

Ice Meltin' Blues

Helping to melt the wintry blues away is Long Grove's Ice Meltin' Blues Festival, to be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 2-3, in downtown Long Grove. The Village Tavern, Long Grove Cafe, Wine Splash, and Beans & Leaves will be hosts to this musical event. For a schedule and list of entertainers, go to www.visitlonggrove.com.

ODDS AND ENDS

Long Grove-Kildeer Garden Club

Plant Sale and Garden Walk

Mark your calendars for the Long Grove-Kildeer Garden Club's annual Plant Sale, which will be held on Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19 at the Reed-Turner Woodland; the annual Garden Walk will take place on Friday, June 21.

Long Grove Park District

Who's paw prints are those? Come to Reed-Turner Woodland on Saturday, March 2 at 1:00 p.m. when Melissa Alderson of the Lake County Forest Preserve presents Animal Tracking in the Woodlands. This program promises to be both educational and fun for the entire family as you learn who is making those tracks in the snow. Dress appropriately as a portion for the program will be spent outside.¹ The cost for this program is \$22.00 for a family of 4 and \$3.00 for additional members. Pre-registration is required. Register early as there is limited space.

5 Star Sports will be teaching a new session of classes starting in early March. Don't miss out on improving your hoops skills or learning new soccer skills with these great coaches.

The Safe Sitter class will be held at Reed-Turner Woodland on March 16 and 17. This class will teach 11-15 year olds how to be responsible babysitters. Sign up early, as this class usually fills up fast.

Tai Chi is held every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. at Reed-Turner. Join in this wonderful pay as you attend class. Pre-registration is required for this class. We are also trying to get a Zumba Gold class started which will be held at Reed-Turner Woodland on Tuesday evenings or Wednesday mornings. Please check website for details.

Please take time and check out all the other wonderful programs we are offering. Cooking classes, art classes, tennis at the Lincolnshire Club and much more. For more information visit www.longgroveparkdistrict.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - MARCH

Ice Meltin' Blues

March 2, 3 Historic Business District

Long Grove Park District

March 4 7 pm Reed-Turner Woodland

Plan Commission & Zoning Board of Appeals

March 5 7 pm Village Hall

1st Aid Class

March 5 6 pm—10 pm Long Grove Fire Dept.

Call Katie at 847-634-3143

\$15 In-District Residents

\$30 Out-of-District Residents

Conservancy/Scenic Corridor Committee

March 6 7 pm Village Hall

CPR/AED Class

March 7 6 pm—10 pm Long Grove Fire Dept.

Call Katie at 847-634-3143

\$15 In-District Residents

\$30 Out-of-District Residents

Long Grove-Kildeer Garden Club

Topic: Plant Propagation

March 11 9:30 am Reed-Turner Woodland

Board of Trustees

March 12 7 pm Village Hall

Architectural Commission

March 18 7 pm Village Hall

Long Grove Historical Society

March 20 10 am Historical Society Farmhouse

Board of Trustees

March 26 7 pm Village Hall