

Village Spokesman

Village of La Grange
53 South La Grange Road
La Grange, IL 60525



January/February 2011

On behalf of the Village Board and Administration, Happy New Year! Your Village Board of Trustees will begin 2011 with a busy schedule of workshop meetings, in pursuit of our strategic goals of managing our fiscal health, enhancing traffic and pedestrian safety and improving our aging infrastructure. We invite you to join us at these meetings to share your thoughts and suggestions.

Traffic Safety/47th Street Corridor Workshop — Tuesday, January 25, 2011 — A special meeting of the Village Board is scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, in the Village Hall auditorium beginning at 7:30 p.m. to discuss potential improvements within the 47th Street corridor.

In 2010, the Village Board engaged its traffic consultant, KLOA, to produce several technical studies, including the following:

1. Feasibility study to re-configure 47th Street from a four-lane cross-section to a three-lane cross-section, as part of an evaluation of traffic and pedestrian safety along this roadway, and also a planning concept to improve north-south “community connectivity;”
2. Traffic origination and destination study of the 47th Street corridor, to ascertain if 47th Street is a regional transportation arterial, a local east-west arterial, or some combination of both; and
3. Feasibility study to signalize the intersection of 47th Street and East Avenue, as a means to create gaps in westbound traffic, thereby facilitating left-turns and cross-traffic movements from/between the residential neighborhoods east of La Grange Road.

In addition to reviewing these studies, the Village Board is expected to discuss the experience and effectiveness of the enhanced pedestrian crossing signal at 47th Street and 9th Avenue. This discussion will likely include recommendations regarding a similar crossing at Waiola Avenue. The Village Board is also expected to discuss a proposed policy on the use of the in-pavement pedestrian crossing signs, predominately used in the Central Business District on weekends and during special events.

The technical reports and staff recommendations are expected to be posted on-line, no later than Thursday, January 20, 2011.

Sewer Improvement Workshop — Monday, January 31, 2011 — A special meeting of the Village Board is scheduled for Monday, January 31, in the Village Hall auditorium beginning at 7:30 p.m. to discuss potential improvements to the Village’s sewer system.

In connection with long-term planning for the Village’s sewer infrastructure, the Village Board engaged Heuer & Associates, consulting engineer, to produce technical studies regarding an extension of the Maple Avenue Relief Sewer, west from Bluff Avenue, and the feasibility for another relief sewer to serve residents north of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad tracks.

At about the same time as these studies were commissioned, the Village and surrounding western suburbs experienced a severe rain event. Shortly thereafter, the Village Board authorized a study of the drainage basin south of 47th Street. Several neighborhood studies were also authorized to investigate more localized flooding occurrences.

The purpose of the sewer improvement workshop is to discuss these studies, and attempt to establish priorities among our various sewer improvement projects. The technical reports and staff recommendations for sewer improvement projects are expected to be posted on-line shortly, but no later than Thursday, January 27, 2011.

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Village Budget — A special meeting of the Village Board is scheduled for Monday, February 7 in the Village Hall auditorium beginning at 7:30 p.m., to discuss capital projects and infrastructure improvements. This meeting traditionally marks the beginning of the budget development process for the Village. Staff recommendations will be posted on-line, no later than Thursday, February 3.

A budget workshop will be held on Saturday, March 12 in the lower level conference room of the Village Hall beginning at 8:00 a.m. to review revenue projections and operational expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning May 1, 2011. The proposed Village budget will be posted on-line, no later than Friday, March 4.

Village Finances — In light of current and projected financial conditions on both a local and state level, and in an effort to maintain the Village's financial health over the long term, the Village has taken steps to reduce operating expenses below budget-authorized levels for the current fiscal year, which began on May 1, 2010. Personnel expenses account for nearly 85% of the Village's operating expenditures, and therefore it is within this category that a majority of expense reductions are taking place. Cost containment strategies include not filling vacant employee positions, encouraging greater staff efficiencies, continued close scrutiny of overtime expenses, and increased employee contributions towards health insurance. Other reductions in budgeted operating expenses that have been implemented or considered include deferred equipment purchases, reduced capital expenditures and reductions in contractual services.

These are difficult times for everyone, and the Village is sensitive to the financial challenges our residents are experiencing. The Village is attempting to contain its operating costs while at the same time preserving the value of our significant investments in human, economic and capital assets — preserving the quality of life and community vitality that we presently enjoy.

Comments or questions may be directed to our editor, Cathy Benjamin, at 708-579-2313.
cbenjamin@villageoflagrange.com
