

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OF THE GURNEE VILLAGE BOARD**

**GURNEE VILLAGE HALL
AUGUST 28, 2023**

Call to Order

Mayor Hood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Other Officials in Attendance

Patrick Muetz, Village Administrator; Austin Pollack, Assistant to the Village Administrator; David Ziegler, Community Development Director; Heather Galan, Public Works Director; Brian Gosnell, Finance Director; Christine Palmieri, Director of Human Resources; Erica Wells, Assistant Finance / HR Director; Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director; Nick Leach, Village Engineer; Jodi Luka, Management Analyst; Ryan Nelson, Assistant IT Director; John Kavanagh, Fire Chief; David Douglass, Deputy Fire Chief; Brian Smith, Police Chief; Jeremy Gaughan, Deputy Police Chief.

Roll Call

PRESENT: 5- Woodside, Ross, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson
ABSENT: 1- Garner

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Hood led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. DISCUSSION
ITEMS

1. Presentation: 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan: Progress Report #1.

Administrator Muetz stated that tonight staff would review the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Progress Report #1. He stated the Report was provided to the Board this afternoon. It will also be posted online and shared on social media. Using a PowerPoint presentation staff then reviewed each of the 24 Strategic Plan Initiatives, giving the Board information on progress to date and next steps.

The 24 Strategic Initiatives reviewed included:

Fiscal Sustainability

- 1.1 Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy
- 1.2 Develop and implement a new Business Attraction Plan
- 1.3 Formalize a business retention program
- 1.4 Create a new strategy for operational effectiveness and efficiencies

Well-Maintained Infrastructure

- 2.1 Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements
- 2.2 Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan
- 2.3 Update Pedestrian Improvement Plan
- 2.4 Perform a comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment

Effective Communication

- 3.1 Conduct resident satisfaction survey.
- 3.2 Create interdepartmental communications team structure
- 3.3 Develop data-driven communications program
- 3.4 Develop Constituent Service Program

A Stable, well-trained workforce

- 4.1 Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan
- 4.2 Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness
- 4.3 Implement professional development pathways for management positions
- 4.4 Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the needs of next generation workforce

A Safe Community

- 5.1 Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan
- 5.2 Develop a public safety community engagement program
- 5.3 Create stakeholder relationship strategy
- 5.4 Update Comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan

Lifestyle Vitality

- 6.1 Develop Village/small business partnership program
- 6.2 Establish and support events in partnership with community

and neighborhood organizations

6.3 Develop relationship with regional multi-cultural agencies

6.4 Create opportunities for community engagement around strategic priorities

Questions:

Initiative 4.3: Trustee Balmes asked if Public Works employees received career advancement training. Human Resources Director Palmieri and Public Works Director Galan stated yes and provided some examples.

Initiative 5.2: Trustee Balmes asked the status of the Police Explorer program. Chief Smith stated current staffing challenges prevent the program from being reestablished.

Initiative 6.1: Trustee Ross asked if the Holiday Train would be back this year. Economic Development Director Dean stated she is unsure.

2. Presentation: Blue Ribbon Commission Pedestrian Mobility Plan Update.

Village Engineer Nick Leach reviewed the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) Pedestrian Mobility Plan including progress to date and upcoming projects

Engineer Leach stated the BRC was a committee appointed by Mayor Kovarik and was made up of a cross-section of the community that met monthly to devise a plan to improve Gurnee's walkability and bike-ability for residents. Sidewalk infrastructure and walkability was noted as a top priority during the development of the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. The BRC analyzed the 1996 Pedestrian Master Plan, the 2016 Pedestrian Survey and existing regional plans. Using GIS mapping, the group looked at existing infrastructure of trails and sidewalks. To identify criteria for recommending new or improved infrastructure, the group developed five Guiding Principles:

1. Connections to Regional Trails
2. Connections to Parks and Schools
3. Improve Connectivity Along Major Roadways
4. Connections to Local Businesses
5. Fill in Infrastructure Gaps

The Blue Ribbon Commission identified 30 projects that would improve accessibility and connectivity for pedestrian and bicyclists. It was recommended that wider, multi-use paths were preferred over standard sidewalks when feasible. The recommendations were divided in to "priority tiers":

- Priority 1: Critical to meeting the goals set forth in the Guiding Principles. Recommended completion within 3-5 years.
- Priority 2: Important to meeting the Guiding Principles. Recommended completion within 5-7 years.
- Priority 3: Would help meet the goals of the Guiding Principles, but may not be a higher priority due to minimal impact or existing infrastructure. Recommended completion within 15 years.

Engineer Leach then reviewed completed projects which include:

Knowles Road Pedestrian Path - Projects 1, 2, 3, 5

The Knowles Road Pedestrian path was fully completed this past year. This path was a key project because it linked one of the Village's major bike paths (ComEd Trail) and thousands of Village residents with the Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve and the Millennium Trail. The Village's path was fully completed this year stretching from Rollins Road to Route 45. The Lake County Forest Preserve was responsible for Projects 2 & 3, which included improving the intersection at Route 45 and Dada Drive to provide a pedestrian crossing and tying the Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve to the Millennium Trail.

Hunt Club Road Path - Project 15

In 2017, the Village installed a six-foot-wide carriage walk along the back of curb from Wildflower (the South Ridge Subdivision entrance) to Wentworth Drive. It was completed as part of a water main project.

US-41 & Route 132 crossing - Project 7

The intersection of US-41 and Route 132 was updated and completed in 2020, improving the crossing under the Route 41 bridge and Union Pacific Railroad bridge. The project installed signalized pedestrian lights for this is a multi-leg intersection, greatly increasing the safety of this intersection and walkability from east side of the Village to the west.

Route 21 @ Windsor Court - Project 22

This project has been partially satisfied for the time being. The Village closed the sidewalk gap just north of Windsor Court. Long term the BRC would like to see this path turn into an eight-foot-wide multi use path.

University Avenue Path – Project 27

BRC wanted to connect residents south of Grand Avenue to Christine Thompson Park. The surrounding neighborhood did not want the path and the project was canceled. While the University Avenue path did not get installed as part of the Lawrence Ave reconstruction this year the Village will be installing a five-foot-wide sidewalk along the west side of Lawrence Avenue. This completes the loop for this subdivision/area. Residents along Lawrence will have a safe passage to the Park and/or Grand Avenue.

Engineer Leach then reviewed future projects which include:

Dilley's Road Pedestrian Path – Project 26

The Village is working with Gewalt Hamilton and LCDOT currently. This path will connect the Stearns School Road path to the ComEd ROW Trail. The goal is for it to be completely finished in FY 25.

Hunt Club & Washington Improvement – Projects 11, 12, 13, 15

The projects will be completed as part of the LCDOT's intersection improvement at Washington and Hunt Club Road. The County will be installing an eight-foot-wide multi use path from Dada Drive to Washington Street and connecting the path just east of the intersection along Washington Street. South of Washington it will be installing a six-foot-wide carriage walk along the back of curb to Wildflower Court where the Village installed a carriage walk in 2017. Staff is hopeful this project begins this next construction season (FY 25). The County has been delayed due to ROW acquisitions and utility conflicts.

Lake Carina Forest Preserve – Project 20

The Lake County Forest Preserve is looking to connect the Lake Carina Trail to the Des Plaines River Trail by building a pedestrian bridge. This project has been approved and the Forest Preserve District has placed this on its Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2028.

Engineer Leach concluded by noting other pedestrian improvements including:

The County will be potentially installing an eight-foot-wide path on the north side of Washington from Route 45 to Almond and a sidewalk on the south side from Old Walnut to Almond Road. He stated this is not on the BRC list but will help achieve the Village's objective of being walkable and bike-able. Once this path is approved and installed the Village will have a multi-use path from Route 45 all the way to O'Plaine Road along Washington Street (giving the Village 4.5 miles of path).

Questions:

None

Adjournment

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Ross to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

Mayor Hood adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

**Andy Harris,
Village Clerk**