

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

**GURNEE VILLAGE HALL
OCTOBER 28, 2019**

Call to Order

Vice Chair Hood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in Mayor Kovarik's absence.

Other Officials in Attendance

Patrick Muetz, Village Administrator; David Ziegler, Assistant Village Administrator / Community Development Director; Heather Galan, Village Engineer; Bryan Winter, Village Attorney; Brian Gosnell, Finance Director; Christine Palmieri, Director of Human Resources; Chris Velkover, Information Systems Director; Tom Rigwood, Director of Public Works; John Kavanagh, Fire Chief; Brian Smith, Police Chief; Jeremy Gaughan, Police Commander; Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director, Jack Linehan, Assistant to the Administrator

Roll Call

PRESENT: 6-Thorstenson, Ross, Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Hood
ABSENT: 0-None

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice Chair Hood led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Report from Maureen Riedy, President of Visit Lake County - Convention and Visitors Bureau update.

Maureen Riedy, President of Visit Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau presented the following Power Point presentation to the Board:

OVERVIEW

Mission: Market Lake County as a premier destination.
Increase visitor spending and overnight stays.
Contribute to economic vitality of Lake County and Gurnee.

Staff of 8 — Sales and marketing expertise. Office in Gurnee.
Funding: State grant – certified DMO for Lake County
Local match – 14 municipalities plus Lake County,
200 industry partners and co-op advertising programs.

Awarded Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) recertification by Destinations International.

Community Partners: Antioch, Deerfield, Fox Lake, Grayslake, Gurnee, Highland Park, Lake County, Lake Zurich, Libertyville, Lincolnshire, Long Grove Business & Community Partners, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Waukegan and Zion

VLC Board of Directors - Representatives from Gurnee

- Cheryl Ross, Chairman
- Randy Ebertowski, Secretary
- John Krajnak, Treasurer
- Nadine Miracle, Director

MARKETING STRATEGIES

Build a strong, authentic, identifiable brand via Visitor Resource, Integrated Campaigns and Special Promotions:

Website

- 579,467 sessions
- 1.2 million page views
- Over 48,000 visits/month

Top Viewed Pages

- Calendar of Events
- Guides to Top Weekend Events

115 Gurnee events listed in past 12 months

MULTI-TOUCHPOINTS

- Social Media

- Billboards (Digital and Static)
- Metra Rail Display Cards
- Newspaper Inserts
- Pandora, Spotify, Connected TV
- YouTube, Facebook, Instagram
- Google Ads
- Dedicated Landing Page

SUMMER ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Co-op partner:

SIX FLAGS GREAT AMERICA

- Centerpiece of summer campaign
- Target audience – Chicago and suburbs
- Viewed over 40 million times.

SUMMER DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

- Facebook, Instagram & YouTube Ads
- 107,353 total clicks
- Produced “storytelling” videos 1,019,038 impressions (Six Flags) plus 56K views on YouTube channel
- 6,859,565 total overall campaign digital impressions

LAKE COUNTY SPOOKS & SPIRITS

Anchored by FRIGHT FEST with a Cross Channel Mix of promotions.

HOLIDAY DIGITAL CAMPAIGN

- Digital campaign with Facebook and Instagram ads, plus a sweepstake
- Niche-based interests and lifestyle targeting
- Dedicated landing page featuring Village businesses and events
- Co-op Partners: Gurnee & Antioch

DIGITAL MARKETING

336 mentions of Gurnee businesses and events in social media posts.
Gurnee Businesses mentioned 141 times in our blogs.

LAKE COUNTY RESTAURANT WEEK

- 7 Gurnee restaurant participants
- Facebook Live with WXLC and Mike Caplan
- Saluto's: **17,000+** Facebook Live views

LAKE COUNTY LIBATION TRAIL

Showcasing locally produced craft beer, wineries and distilleries in Lake County.

GROUP BUSINESS: ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Sales team actively recruits meetings, reunions, tour groups, sports tournaments
- Won 46 groups with 11,760 attendees for Gurnee
- Local economic Impact: \$959,000 from these groups
- 2,500 room nights - soccer, basketball, baseball, hockey, lacrosse tourneys, corporate meetings, tour groups and weddings.
- Issued 104 referrals for Gurnee for future groups – value of \$5 million
- DNC Convention impact in Gurnee, July 2020

TOURISM MARKETING: AN ESSENTIAL INVESTMENT

- Effective tourism marketing enhances the public image of the village & helps build a sense of community pride.
- Tourism puts people to work every day and helps sustain local businesses.
 - \$1.43 Billion Visitor Spending in Lake County +6.7%
 - 11,350 Jobs
 - \$32.4 Million Local Tax
 - \$90.8 Million State Tax
 - Average Travel Party Spending in Illinois: \$570 in Paid Accommodations

VISIT LAKE COUNTY

Partner Presentations

- Six Flags Great America Hank Salemi and John Krajnak
- Gurnee Mills – Randy Ebertowski
- Great Wolf Lodge Illinois – Nadine Miracle

SIX FLAGS

John Krajnak from Six Flags presented the following PowerPoint presentation to the Board:

Look At 2019

Six Flags Fright Fest

- September 14 to November 3
- Highlights include 6 Haunted Houses, 11 Scare Zones, and 7 themed shows
- Hosted events such as the 30 Hour Coffin Challenge and the Zombie Apocalypse Supply Drive

Legions of Craft Beer Fest

- Saturday, November 9
- Includes more than 35 craft beer vendors
- Specialty beverage sampling, live music, world class coasters
- Takes place over Veteran's Day Weekend

Holiday in the Park

- November 23 to December 31
- Highlights include S'mores Stations, Cookie Decorating, and Letters to Santa
- Several holiday themed shows
- Santa Meet & Greet

New in 2020!

- Tsunami Surge, 25th attraction in Hurricane Harbor
- Incredible 950 feet long and 8 stories high – the World's Tallest Water Coaster
- Top speed of over 28 miles per hour
- Three gravity-defying uphill blasts
- First in Six Flags family to feature Aqualucent visual effects

GURNEE MILLS

Randy Ebertowski presented the following PowerPoint presentation to the Board:

The best shopping centers are built around the needs of a community. Shopping centers power economies, build communities and inspire innovation.

Retail apocalypse myth vs. reality

- Store counts are on track to grow by 2,965 in 2019
- Overall, for each company closing stores, 5.2 are opening stores
- U.S. retail has increased \$565 billion in sales since Jan 2017
- The number of chains closing stores has dropped by 68% in 2019
- The number of chains increasing stores rose from 41% in 2018 to 64% in 2019

Continued growth at Gurnee Mills - retailers that opened in 2019

- BOM Bargain Outlet & More
- Nautica
- Joe's Boots Famous Westernwear
- Potato Masters
- Famous Footwear Outlet
- Soul Seekers
- Tanimar's Beauty
- Shee Goo Rolled Ice Cream
- Akira
- ACUtouch Massage Therapy
- Five Star Cuts

Gurnee Mills' Role in the Community

- Fire Safety Expo
- Winter Craft Fair
- Boo Bash
- Santa's Arrival Parade
- Lake County Police Expo

Gurnee Mills & the Local Economy

- Gurnee Mills generates approximately 3,000 jobs for Lake County
- Showcase jobs to the community and help retailers with hiring

Dining / Entertainment / Experiences

- Action Time Bungee Trampoline
- 60 to Escape / Escape Games
- Tilt Studio
- Fun Flatables (Indoor Inflatable, Part-n-Play Center)
- Mini Express Trackless Train
- Rink Side Sports and Family Center
- All On Target
- 4DX

Gurnee Mills & Alpha Media Partnership - Non-Traditional Tenants / Experiences

- AlphaMedia (On-Air, On-Site, On-Demand)
 - 102.3 XLC
 - 95 Will Rock
 - ESPN Deportes 1220AM
 - AM 1050 WLIP

GREAT WOLF LODGE

Great Wolf Lodge General Manager Nadine Miracle introduced herself to the Board and provided a few highlights.

Great Wolf Lodge objective is to Bring Joy to Families

This facility in Gurnee opened in June of 2018 and is part of a new generation of the Great Wolf Lodge brand.

Current issue is the lack of awareness that Great Wolf Lodge is in Gurnee. She said they are looking forward to building a partnership with the community and being more involved with Visit Lake County group.

Upcoming seasonal campaigns include:

- Fall Festival (ongoing currently)
- Snowland Festival
- Spring-a-Palooza

Questions:

Vice Chair Hood said the Village is fortunate to have such a wonderful group to work with. He then opened the floor for questions from the Board.

Trustee Thorstenson asked Mr. Ebertowski what we are missing that would help bring in more customers.

Mr. Ebertowski said that numbers have been noticeably higher when:

- Gurnee is the host of a large sporting event
- Six Flags opens a new roller coaster
- The opening of Great Wolf Lodge
- Completion of the Gurnee Mills renovations

Six Flags General Manager Hank Salemi said better public transportation solutions would have a positive impact on business at Six Flags. He suggested bus shuttle service to and from local train stations would bring in more business.

Trustee O'Brien said he likes what Six Flags is doing offering free admission to Servicemen. He suggested possibly tying that offer in with Navy graduation. He then asked if we are pre selling rooms for the upcoming DNC convention.

Ms. Riedy from Visit Lake County said that many of the housing blocks have been sold and spoken for. She then briefly explained the convention will last between 5 and 6 days and what impact it will have on Gurnee.

Trustee Garner said he wanted to once again thank Visit Lake County for making it so easy to plan family reunions. He then asked the difference

in a “click” and a “digital impression”.

Ms. Riedy explained a digital impression would be seen in a scroll and a click is when someone actually clicks on the impression to obtain more information.

Trustee Balmes asked about filling the former Sears building at Gurnee Mills.

Mr. Ebertowski said Gurnee Mills is in conversations with several entities that are interested in the location. He said until a lease is signed he can't disclose any more information.

Trustee Balmes asked if the issue with Max Force has been resolved.

Mr. Salemi said Six Flags is currently working with a sound engineer to alleviate the issue.

Trustee Ross said Visit Lake County recently won a very prestigious award and that Maureen is a leader in the profession and the Village is lucky to have her.

Vice Chair Hood thanked everyone for their participation stating he has a lot of admiration for each. He ended by thanking them for their contributions to the Village.

2. Report by Village Engineer Heather Galan – Update on Floodplain Property Buyouts.

Village Engineer Heather Galan presented the following Power Point presentation to the Board:

Update on Floodplain Property Buyouts

Flooding, Floodplain & Floodway

- Causes of Flooding:
 - Excessive rain, thunderstorms, high intensity rain events, saturated ground, snow melt, etc.
- Floodplain and Floodway limits
 - Surround the Des Plaines river and parts of its tributaries
- Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)
 - Created by FEMA
 - Maps out the limits of hazard areas
 - 1% chance of flooding (aka 100-yr flood)
 - 0.2% chance of flooding (aka 500-yr flood)
 - Determines where flood insurance is required

Flood Mitigation Plan

- Completed December 2001
- Reviewed sources
- Evaluated Economic Impacts
- Reviewed Preventative Measures
- Identified Critical Facilities/Flood Prone Buildings
- Generated a Village Priority List of Properties (44)

Buyout Locations & Process

- Priority List Locations
 - Kilbourne Rd
 - Emerald Ave
 - McClure Ave
 - Old Grand Ave
- Process (multi-year)
 - Lake County Stormwater Management Commission (LCSMC)
 - Multiple Grants/Funding programs
 - Application
 - Reapply if denied
 - Coordinate funding appropriations
 - Contractor to demolish the structures
 - Deed restrict parcel

Floodplain Property Buyouts

SMC Update:

This year the Village received approval and funding for 3 properties. Two other properties were submitted and approval is expected. One additional property application is in progress applications accepted through December.

- 2015 - Two buildings approved; demo in 2016.
- 2016 - Three property owners submitted but not approved; received no funding in 2016 year.
- 2017 – none approved
- 2018 – none approved
- 2019 – Three approved and funding, two approved not yet funded, one still to be submitted.

Funding for 881 Emerald 1046 Kilbourne and 991 Kilbourne 1054 & 1062 Kilbourne approval expected soon 4426 McClure applying for FEMA grant.

SMC applied for Gurnee properties in 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019

Questions:

Trustee Balmes said this is a long slow process.

Trustee Thorstenson asked if it was time to discuss updating the Flood Mitigation Plan. She said a resident stated to her he thought the Village does not do enough to clean the Des Plaines River and that is why it continues to flood.

Trustee Balmes said over the years the Forest Preserve has taken the position of leaving the forest in its natural condition and don't clean up debris and fallen trees. She said it is the Forest Preserves position that cleaning up won't help.

Mr. Ziegler explained the Des Plaines River is very flat and that it drops about a foot every mile. He continued to state the river is so wide and flat the debris we see isn't enough to cause problems.

Trustee Thorstenson asked about the wetland project north of Gurnee in Wadsworth.

Mr. Ziegler explained the project resulted in additional storage. This will help slow down the rise in Gurnee, but all of the water will need to drain through the Village eventually. Slowing the process results in the river staying higher for a longer period of time. So there are trade-offs related to work on this nature.

Trustee Garner asked if more retention ponds would help.

Mr. Ziegler said yes and explained that the Village has been pursuing additional ponds since the early 1990's.

Trustee O'Brien said removing houses doesn't stop flooding and asked about the possibility of digging a large hole somewhere around the Viking School area to alleviate flooding.

Mr. Ziegler explained what the Village has done in the past.

Trustee Garner asked if the Swanson Trigg area could be used for additional storage.

Mr. Ziegler said that is area is mostly protected wetlands and it would be cost prohibitive based on FEMA costs related to impacting wetlands.

3. Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2017 – 2021: Progress Report #7.

Administrator Muetz along with Strategic Plan Initiative Leads reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided an update on progress. The Initiatives have been divided into 3 categories: Completed/Ongoing, Substantially Completed and Ongoing.

Progress to Date:

- 24 total Initiatives

- 13 Initiatives Completed/On-going
- 6 Initiatives Substantially Completed (>70%)
- 5 Initiatives On-going efforts (<70%)

Completed/Ongoing Initiatives:

- 1.1: Improve communication opportunities with stakeholders. FEB '18
- 1.5: Update the Fire Department's Reporting & Record Keeping Systems. FEB '19
- 2.2: Update the Village financial policies. AUG '18
- 2.3: Develop a multi-year financial plan with contingency scenarios. NOV '16
- 2.4: Continue to conservatively fund pensions JULY '16
- 3.2: Provide solutions for improved pedestrian and bicyclist movement OCT '19
- 3.3: Improve efforts to mitigate flooding and provide storm water management OCT '19
- 3.5: Develop a Parkway Program as the standard for Public Works parkway operations. FEB '19
- 3.6: Explore enhanced communications via public Wi-Fi/open data/fiber OCT '19
- 4.1: Identify ways to increase public safety presence in retail districts to improve the sense of security. FEB '18
- 4.3: Research Opportunities for Shared Communications Dispatch Services OCT '19
- 4.5: Research and implement a body worn camera program within the Police Department. MAR '17
- 5.3: Build Welton Plaza. JUNE '18

Substantially Completed (>70%):

- 1.3: Refine performance measures to improve village service delivery
- 2.1: Develop a plan for economic development
- 3.4: Enhance Multi-Year Capital Improvement Plan
- 4.2: Update the Village Comprehensive Land Use and Subdivision plans
- 4.4: Research opportunities to implement electronic citation technology
- 5.2: Attract and Retain Boutique and Small Business Stores/Restaurants

On-going Efforts (<70%):

- 1.2: Develop a workforce/succession plan with a focus on diversity
- 1.4: Improve Business Processes Village-wide
- 3.1: Redevelopment of East Grand
- 5.1: Improve Public Transportation opportunities
- 5.4: Encourage deployment of Gigabit speed Internet Services

Next Steps:

- Continue work to complete Action Steps towards Initiative completion/substantial completion.
- Progress Report #8 included in FY 20/21 Budget
- Prepare for 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:
 - Late 2020/Early 2021
 - Revisit Mission, Vision, Values
 - Update Initiatives
 - Similar process as 2015?
 - Village Board One-on-One Interviews
 - Gurnee Leadership Team Survey
 - Community Focus Group #1
 - Community Focus Group #2
 - Village Board & Leadership Team Planning Retreat

Questions:

Trustee Garner thanked staff for the continued focus on improving diversity in the Village's workforce. He stated it needs to remain at the forefront and will help improve the overall level of service the Village provides to the community.

Adjournment

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

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

Vice Chair Hood adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

**Andrew Harris,
Village Clerk**