

MAYOR BRUMMEL'S 2007 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Thank you, Lambert, and to all of you a “Good afternoon” and “Welcome”. I’m delighted to be back at the Courtyard for this occasion, and am gratified that so many of you have made room in your day to participate in another Chamber event and take a retrospective, and a bit of a prospective, look at what IS happening in Warrenville.

As I came into the office late last week, I remarked to Ana Vainisi, our Deputy City Clerk and my Executive Secretary: “I see that 117 people have signed up for the State of the City Address. They must think I’ll have something to say that is worth hearing.” Never one to squander a perfectly good setup line, Ana quipped: “Or, it could be the food.”

Last fall, I was investigating whether I, as Mayor, had the power to perform civil marriage ceremonies, having been asked by a friend about that possibility. I encountered Jenn McMahan, Warrenville’s Assistant City Administrator, outside her office one afternoon, and shared my latest enthusiasm: “It looks like I’ll be marrying my neighbors’ daughter next summer.” With a perfectly straight face she immediately deadpanned: “I thought you were already married.”

Tough crowd at City Hall. I don’t think you have to worry about my ego getting too inflated or my speech patterns getting sloppy. I have people to keep me on the straight and narrow.

And, just to set the record straight for the members of the press in attendance, what I meant to say was:

“Looks like I’ll be performing the marriage ceremony for my neighbors’ daughter next summer.”

Last year in this room, I labored for a considerable time chronicling Warrenville’s successes, hopes, aspirations and plans for the future. It took me the better part of two days to fabricate that presentation, and I worried over each inclusion like a mother hen. Everything had to be just so to send the right message about our community.

Well, I got comments from a lot of folks about that speech over the last year, and almost to a person, they singled out one thing that I said to remark on. Many of you here today were present last year. What do you remember of what I said? Take a moment.

Perhaps, like these other folks, what you recall is one of my stock answers to the question: “So, Dave, what’s it like being Mayor?” You may recall I said: “There is never enough time; I’m always late for one thing or another – but I’m getting really good at changing my clothes fast. I can go from shop attire to office attire and vice versa faster than I ever imagined possible.”

You know, public speaking is a lot like raising children: you talk a lot, but you never know what is actually being heard, and you can never predict what will be remembered, except to say that it probably won't be what you want remembered.

Already, I'm having second thoughts about that "marrying my neighbors' daughter" line...

Of course, it matters little what someone might remember or not remember from what I have to say today. What matters is what is going on in Warrenville, our processes, our direction and our momentum as a community.

Here are some items from the last year or so that I believe have real significance and deserve a closer look:

- Let me begin with a late-breaking story, which really began many years back, continued to unfold last year, and may not be guaranteed a successful conclusion for another year or more:
- A press release, issued the day before yesterday by Community Unit School District 200 began: "Terms of a contract between the Board of Education and the owner of an 18-acre site on Herrick Road in Warrenville have been reached, allowing the district to move ahead with plans for a 2008 referendum seeking funds to build a replacement for the aging Hubble Middle School."
- We've been waiting for this announcement, and it couldn't be more welcome. It's difficult to envision a project with more upsides. District 200 has a beautiful school site that is appropriate, safe and well-located. The children in the southwest portion of the district (60% of whom are from Warrenville) will get a modern, well-designed facility to replace the present, worn out and ill designed Hubble, not to mention far less time spent on the school bus. Wheaton-Warrenville taxpayers gain significantly because the new school option is the least expensive alternative. Wheaton taxpayers, and really all District 200 taxpayers, gain with the addition of 22 acres to the tax rolls when the present Hubble property is sold and redeveloped. The City of Wheaton has the potential for a spectacular new entrance to their downtown area. And Warrenville gets a middle school on a par with the other three middle schools in the district, right here at home, without the bus ride. All of these things are one important step closer to reality. The elected officials and staff of the City of Warrenville remain committed to making this new school happen, and will continue to support the District 200 Board of Education in following up on their unanimous decision to locate the new middle school in the southwest part of the district, now specifically on the McNaughton site, on Herrick Road, in Warrenville.
- Staff and employee turnover at the City continue to be low, which I consider a very healthy sign. In the rare cases when someone decides to leave, talented folks are standing in line to wanting to join us. In last year's address, I mentioned that we were conducting a search for a new Finance Director to succeed Eric Bush, who moved to Flora, IL, to become their City Administrator. We were very successful in that search, and secured Kevin Dahlstrand before

someone else got him. Kevin, would you please stand for a moment of recognition? I tease Kevin frequently about always extending his probation, so he better be careful, but I want you to know he has become a valued member of our team because of his competence, reliability, hard work, enthusiasm, and easy sense of humor. Welcome, Kevin. Two more months probation, Kevin. That's it. I promise.

- Another major change in personnel was made necessary by the announced retirement of our Police Chief of 21 years, Bob LaDeur. Bob was responsible for building our fledgling police department into one of the best in DuPage County. Thank you, Bob. Would you stand for a moment and let us grace you with one more round of applause? Did you see that smile? I swear, it hasn't left his face since January 4th, his first day of retirement.
- Did I mention people standing in line to come to work for Warrenville? We had no less than 42 people who applied to become Warrenville's new Police Chief. There were quite a few very impressive resumes in this group, but one person stood out to all of us involved in the rigorous and exhaustive assessment and hiring process. This person just seemed right for us, and I am happy to say, we seemed right for him, and he accepted our offer. Allow me to introduce to you our new Police chief, Ray Turano.
- Ray comes to us from Elmhurst Police Department, where he spent the preceding 30 years preparing to come to Warrenville. Ray also has a Masters Degree in Law Enforcement and Justice Administration, and will soon complete his PhD in Education. His reputation is impeccable, he is well-liked and respected in the DuPage law enforcement community, and we are delighted he has joined the Warrenville team.
- The Warrenville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission was created in 2006. This new commission grew out of a group of volunteers assembled by Ald. Weidner and me, whose initial purpose was to attain a Bicycle Friendly designation for Warrenville. Interest in providing safe, attractive and plentiful pathways and connections in the community has always been an expressed priority. The WBPAC will give an official channel to promote walking and cycling opportunities, education, and special events to enhance community connection, safe and fun recreation, and reduce automobile traffic;
- 2006 saw the successful negotiation of the Cantera Closeout/Settlement Agreement. At the June 19th City Council meeting, the Council approved this agreement with WDLP covering and resolving all outstanding issues involving the Cantera development. The initial agreement to develop Cantera was inked in 1994, and over the intervening years, many things (and players) changed, leaving some serious disagreements over central issues. Without this settlement agreement, protracted and expensive litigation was almost certain. With it, there were no confrontations in court and the City received other substantial benefits, including WDLP providing a 4 million dollar payment to the City of Warrenville General Fund; a 2.44 million dollar payment to the city of Warrenville Capital fund; and the contribution of \$641,625 in DuPage County Traffic Impact Fee Credits to the City. This \$600,000,000+, world- class

development is nearly complete, but a few additional pleasant surprises should emerge this year to round things out;

- The City also managed to settle some differences with Naperville School District 203 last year concerning the Cantera TIF, although I suspect our smile is bigger than their smile. District 203 filed a lawsuit in March of 2005 challenging how we distributed some of the TIF money. Had District 203 prevailed in this suit, the result would have been disastrous for our Library District, Fire Protection District, Park District and School District 200, as they would all have had to return TIF assistance – money provided by the City that they had already spent and were in no position to repay. Fortunately, the courts ruled in the City’s favor. First, the Circuit Court dismissed the suit “with prejudice” in October, 2005. District 203 appealed. Finally, in September of 2006, the Appellate Court affirmed the trial court’s earlier decision in virtually all material aspects. Subsequent to this decision, District 203 elected not to pursue the issue to the Illinois Supreme Court. This was good news for the citizens of Warrenville, who continue to enjoy the benefits of TIF projects such as the new recreation center, the library addition, technology upgrades at three District 200 schools, and enhanced fire protection services.;
- Public Works continues to do an excellent job at maintaining and improving our public infrastructure. One year into the four-year plan to rebuild Warrenville Road, the one mile stretch at the core of the older community, consideration is being given to the use of permeable pavers instead of conventional asphalt pavement. Discussions revolving around the implementation of this “green” process, relatively new to the Midwest, has provided much positive press for Warrenville, as well as provoked dialogue on how this and other best practice concepts might be used to benefit other parts of the community.

So, there are some snapshots of things that stick out in my mind as significant for Warrenville over the past year. This is hardly a comprehensive list of the positive things Warrenville was blessed with in 2006. I’ve provided just a few highlights, assuming that the Chamber contracted for only one meal today, and that you wanted to get out of here before dark.

To my mind, there are three things at the heart of what is happening in Warrenville that make me proud to be Mayor, as well as give me much hope for our future as a vibrant, healthy community. I mentioned them in my opening comments. I’m talking about process, direction and momentum.

Last year saw us really kick our planning for the future into high gear. A Retail Market Analysis of the Rte. 59 corridor was contracted for, and is currently in progress. We have secured private property owner funding assistance commitments to aid the City in determining what our options are for this inevitably redeveloped part of Warrenville, and what would constitute realistic expectations for successful outcomes economically.

Also, consultants have been retained this year to help us engage in a Strategic Planning exercise, which, when completed, will provide the City with another useful look at who we are, what resources we have and will have, and a set of decisions about what to do, why to do it and how to do it, all with an eye on becoming the community that the citizens want to see in the future.

Two thousand six also saw the initiation of an intensive public dialogue on possible redevelopment opportunities in roughly 320 acres in the oldest part of Warrentville, including the “Civic Center” cluster of public buildings near the intersection of Butterfield and Batavia Roads, as well as the “Old Town” section surrounding the confluence of Warrentville, Batavia and River Roads.

We were able to engage the services of S.B. Freidman & Co., considered by many to be the premier community redevelopment consultant in the Midwest, to lead a consultant team that also included the Lakota Group and KLOA traffic experts. We were also able to secure a grant from the State of Illinois to aid in this endeavor in the amount of \$76,500, which may be further augmented to cover additional services not provided for in the original grant application.

This team, our professional Staff, our Community Development and Planning Committee Chair Jim McGuire, and a large group of willing citizens have made this an exciting and productive process. A steering committee was formed, and has met three times. There have been three well-attended and lively public input workshop sessions -- two in 2006 and the last on January 25, 2007. All of this effort has resulted in the preparation of a set of draft concept plans currently under final review by the consultant team. The results of that review, with heavy reliance on comments and suggestions from our citizens, will be presented to the Steering Committee on February 21st. The ultimate goal of all of this work is to have a plan for future redevelopment for these two important parts of Warrentville that enhances their ability to serve as gathering centers and identity markers for the older community, with emphasis on viability and charm. This plan will be based on what citizens want, combined with reasonable expectations, good planning principles and options identified as likely to succeed long term.

The City expects to complete the Old Town/Civic Center planning process as quickly as reasonably possible. It is anticipated that the final draft plan for this subarea will be presented to the Plan Commission and City Council at a joint public meeting toward the end of March this year.

As good as strategic, economic and subarea planning are, they are only part of the larger process of how our local government interacts with and serves its constituents. This is the process I mentioned earlier, one that I believe we do well and continue to strive to improve.

When citizens or developers come before our Plan Commission or in for a permit, they find a well-defined, clear path to their objective, as well as helpful, professional Staff to facilitate. They may not always hear what they want to hear, or get what they want, but

the ground rules are clear and fair, and outcomes are predictable and achievable when the process is followed.

Whether a citizen interacts with Community Development, Administration, Finance, Public Works or the Police Department, our goal continues to be a process that is open, fair, predictable and that produces reasonable results.

A large part of our public process has been, and will continue to be, listening. We have regular Council or Committee meetings nearly every Monday night, and Plan Commission/ZBA meetings two Thursdays each month. Opportunity for public comment is provided at all of these meetings. Elected officials and Staff remain only a phone call or e-mail away. On top of this, in 2006 the City hosted 24 additional public meetings seeking citizen input on a variety of issues.

Of course, you can always buttonhole the Mayor next time you see him filling his cart at Family Foods, Target or Walgreens, and pass along your thoughts.

You won't be the first to do this.

Or the last.

And I assure you, you won't be resented. One of the best things about being an elected official in a small town like Warrenville is the frequency of those little, unexpected chats with people. All of our elected officials feel this way. We'd much rather have you talk with us than about us.

But an open and effective process is not enough; it has to be coupled with a positive direction. Picture one of those arrow graphs. You know, the ones that businesses use to chart sales or revenues or growth. They are wonderfully simple and easy to read and understand, even at a glance:

Arrow working its way up across the page – good. Arrow heading toward the bottom edge of the chart – time to regroup.

Everything I see and hear indicates to me that Warrenville's arrow is headed up and we are headed in a positive direction. This is due to a variety of factors:

- The hard work and dedication of many people who came before us;
- a stable, professional staff and employee pool;
- better fiscal resources and a reasonably reliable revenue stream;
- responsible, well-behaved and issue-oriented elected officials; I'd like to repeat that one: responsible, well-behaved and issue-oriented elected officials -- the present council is simply the best I have had the pleasure to work with;
- reliable, generous volunteer commission members;
- great, supportive businesses and a strong Chamber of Commerce;
- improved management practices and planning;

- and good word-of-mouth: we are developing a growing reputation as good place to live and do business. I expect this trend to continue because we know and pretty much like who we are now, we are working diligently at finding out who we want to be in the future, and we continue to seek out and develop the means to achieving the goals we choose as a community.

The final element that I see as crucial for Warrenville's success is momentum. It's great if that arrow is pointing at a positive angle, but if it is not moving, those goals will remain on the horizon. Again, everything I see and hear indicates to me that Warrenville not only has momentum, we are gaining momentum. You know that feeling you sometimes get when everything seems to be coming together? A time, usually after a long struggle, when things begin to fall with you instead of against you. A sense that something fundamental has finally shifted, and things are taking off in a positive direction. I have that feeling about Warrenville at this point in our history. We are, right now, on the cusp of becoming what all of us in this room know we can be: the best small town in the Western Suburbs.

But momentum is a fickle friend. Anyone who has ever watched a girls volleyball match (or a Super Bowl) knows how quickly it can forsake one friend for another. What once filled your sails, can turn around and tear off your mast, leave you becalmed and drifting toward a whirlpool and certain unpleasantness.

The key, of course, is not to assume that you are entitled to positive momentum. The key is to recognize the gift you have and work even harder to augment it.

While talking with my college-age daughter, Sara, some time back, something she said lodged itself in my mind. She related a conversation she had with her boyfriend, Matt shortly after I was elected Mayor, in which he commented: "You know, Sara, your Dad's THE MAN now."

Well, having been a college student in the sixties, being referred to as THE MAN did not sit well with me. As I recall it, THE MAN was a code word for all that was wrong with society. I don't think he meant any disrespect, I think he meant something along the lines of: "We're labor, and he's management now." At least I hope that's what he meant if he has any aspirations for joining our family some day.

At any rate, the comment stuck with me, because, I guess, I had to admit that he was right – I am THE MAN now.

And so are you.

THE MAN; the establishment; the powers that be; the movers and shakers; the decision makers; the bearers of society's torch -- that's us, whether we're comfortable with it or not.

The question is: what do we do with that?

I have a suggestion that I'd like to leave you with, and please, let THIS be what you remember about what I said today:

Each of us, in some way can contribute to our community's forward momentum. Let's keep doing that. Since we are THE MAN, let's make the most of our time as THE MAN. Let Warrentville become the go-to place for people who want to see how a small town can do it right. Warrentville CAN be the best small town in the Western suburbs.

Thank you and have a great day!