

MAYOR BRUMMEL'S 2008 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Thank you, Jeannie, and a warm welcome to all of who are able to join us today here at the Courtyard to take a look at how Warrenville continues to evolve. Special thanks to the Chamber of Commerce for again hosting this event.

Well, we find ourselves in the middle of an election year, and nearly every candidate seems to be promoting him or herself as a change agent. I suspect there are far more successful campaigns that promise "change" than ones that promise to serve up "more of the same". And yet the prospect of change, especially at the local level, can provoke less-than-enthusiastic responses, like: "Over my dead body!" You might hear something like this from an older, long-term resident: "I like things just as they are. You can change things after I'm gone." And, right across the street, a newer resident who moved to the community with different expectations, might be saying: "Enough talk. When can we start? I'll buy lunch for the excavators."

A classic conflict. As much as most of us accept the inevitability of change, its prospect many times gives us the cold sweats. And the prospect of having to face change somewhere down the road in the nebulous future doesn't spike our blood pressure nearly as much as the necessity for an immediate adjustment to our routine or landscape.

Also, there is change and then there is *change*. Dealing with your trash day being changed from Monday to Tuesday is an annoyance. News of a proposed 4-story condo building for the property next to yours that will block your sunlight forever is likely to provoke a search for that batch of tar and feathers you've been saving just in case, as well as for the directory of local elected officials. Of course, if you live on the east side, and the condos will pop up on the west side, maybe it is time for more diversity in the town's housing stock. Goodness! What is the problem with those west-siders? Why can't they accept change?

I was prompted to have these reflections on the significance of change by a number of things. First is the fact that this year Warrenville celebrates the 175th year of our founding as a community. 175 years. That's several generations of accumulated change. I sometimes reflect on how my father's Warrenville world was changed from his birth here in 1913 to his death here in 1995. From riding in a horse-drawn grain wagon through open fields as a child with his father, in a truly rural setting, to thousands more people, roads, homes, businesses, to a toll way interchange, a noisy gravel pit that eventually transforms into Cantera, and the loss of most of those open fields, not to mention almost all of his contemporaries. When you hang around for nearly half of your community's history, you see a lot of things come and go.

Second, I am aware that, besides the prospect of a nice lunch, some pleasant conversation, with perhaps a little promotion of your business on the side, you showed up today to find out what's new, especially if it's good news. How is 2007 Warrenville different from 2006 Warrenville, and what are the prospects for 2008 Warrenville? I think most of us have accepted that the only constant is change, with the corollary that

not all change is for the better. So it wouldn't hurt to hear that we have made some improvements and our prospects are good.

Finally, in light of the aforementioned corollary, there is the awareness that some things need to be preserved, protected from change. From year to year, what do we want to be the patterns in the tapestry of Warrenville? Are there some things about Warrenville that we cherish, things we wouldn't change if we could? How in the world do we determine what goes into the trash, what gets recycled and what should go on the mantle above the fireplace? And who decides?

Tough questions. Let's circle back to see them in a bit, after we look at some of the more salient, positive changes that have come to Warrenville in 2007:

- Last year, in this address, I began with the hope that we would see progress in the process to secure a middle school for Warrenville. Well, I couldn't have better news: on February 5, nearly 58% of District 200 voters voted to pass a \$58 million referendum to build a new Hubble Middle School in Warrenville. After many years of hard work, and a superior effort by a diverse group of District 200 citizens, the Hubble Middle School move to Warrenville is another huge step closer to reality. Individual precinct results will not be available from the election commission until February 26, but unofficial results from Warrenville precincts 10, 31 and 33, whose ballots were cast at City Hall, show that 77.3% of the voters in these Warrenville precincts supported the referendum. Work on the school site is proposed to begin in April with an expected completion date of August, 2009. Congratulations Wheaton-Warrenville District 200.
- Last year, I also mentioned that the City was considering using permeable pavers on the Warrenville Road reconstruction project. The City Council approved the use of these pavers and Phase One of the project was completed last fall. Warrenville is the first community in Illinois to use permeable pavers on a public street of this size. In addition to this project being well received by residents for its charm and traffic calming, as well as significant environmental benefits and increased life expectancy, Warrenville has received some very good word-of-mouth for our leadership in this area. When this project is completed in two years, it will really be something to be proud of.

Other signposts of a healthy Warrenville:

- 2007 was the inaugural year for the Warrenville Environmental Advisory Commission which replaced the Natural Areas Commission. This new commission kept most of the duties and responsibilities of the NAC, along with expanding the scope to include: acting as a resource and advocate to the City Council and the community at large to help develop educational and informational programs based on environmental concerns; researching environmental and greening projects to recommend to the Council and coordinating the City's beautification efforts.

- The financial position of Warrenville remains strong. Kevin Dahlstrand, our Director of Finance, would be delighted for you to stop by his office some afternoon to talk numbers, if you like spreadsheets, columns and the like. I'll just relay to you that our budget is balanced, our revenues are above our projections, we continue to provide good services, pay our bills on time, we have growing reserves and have no debt against the general fund.
- Mike Smith, our Public Works superintendent, continues to look after our infrastructure, as well as heading the best crew of snow removal people in the western suburbs. Special thanks to all our drivers who have put in long hours to do such a superb job this trying winter.
- Besides the successful completion of phase I of the Warrenville Road reconstruction, the sanitary sewer system was expanded to Rogers, Townline and Forestview South; plans were finalized for an additional iron filtration system at the Winchester well; we started using micro surface in the road preservation program, and began a multiyear curb/gutter replacement in Edgebrook/Thornwilde.
- Do you recall how much more beautiful our public spaces, as well as many private properties and businesses looked this last summer? This was largely the work of our America in Bloom volunteers. The City Council has expanded their resources for 2008 to enhance the positive impact their efforts have had. Please watch for opportunities to participate in this wonderful exercise in volunteerism.
- Our new Police Chief, Ray Turano, completed his first full year in Warrenville. He continues to improve an already good department. Some highlights include: establishment of a part time police officer program and hiring , thus far, of four part time officers; establishing a second full time Community Service Officer position and filling it to primarily provide increased service in the area of animal control; implementing the Administrative Adjudication process, whereby certain ordinance violations are heard by an Administrative Law Judge in the Council chambers, rather than being conducted through the DuPage Circuit Court.
- The Warrenville Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission held its second annual Bike Rodeo in May, 2007. This was a lot of fun as well as a huge success, with a great group of volunteers, nearly 70 children participating, and wonderful generous support by our business community for the event. Mark your calendar for May 10 for this year's rodeo. This event deserves to continue growing.

More good news can be found in Warrenville's New Development/New Business/Business Expansion category. We have some significant accomplishments for 2007, and I'd like to thank our Community Development Director, Ron Mentzer, for having established the consistent and excellent process that continues to attract quality development to Warrenville:

- A new 135 room 5 story Hilton Garden Inn Hotel is under construction south of Diehl Road. This will be Warrenville's fourth hotel, welcome on many levels, not the least of which will be its contribution to our healthy hotel/motel tax revenue stream.
- Liberty Mutual Insurance is constructing a 4-story, 148,000 square foot building to house its corporate offices and 700 employees in Cantera.
- Fuel Tech, a 100+ employee company that specializes in providing technologically advanced guidance for environmentally sustainable energy production and material processing, has moved from Batavia to Cantera.
- Our second Walgreen's was completed in August at the corner of Batavia Road and Rte. 59 and is now open for business.
- Coskata, an energy company recently featured on National Public Radio, Talk of the Nation, Science Friday, has its home in Cantera. They specialize in utilizing new technology to convert waste products into ethanol, and recently announced a partnership with General Motors.
- Precision Midwest, a company that specializes in the sale and training of high-end surveying equipment, has expanded their presence in Warrenville by relocating to a much larger, remodeled 21,600 square foot facility on Calumet Avenue.
- Two Brothers Microbrewery expanded their presence in Warrenville, also on Calumet, by relocating to a new 36,000 square foot, state-of-the-art production and distribution facility that also includes a brewpub component.

I'd also like to highlight two significant proposed development projects currently being reviewed by the City and on deck for the near future:

- The MayCliff Development, a 15.22-acre mixed use, office, retail, restaurant and multi-hotel development is planned for the northeast corner of the Mill Street/Ferry Road/Warrenville Road intersection in Cantera. A 123-room, five-story, Hyatt Place Hotel, and a 123-room, five-story, Summerfield Suites Hotel would likely be the first two buildings constructed in this project, followed by approximately 35,000 square feet of additional retail/restaurant/office uses. The City is currently reviewing the final PUD application and plans for this development.

- Central DuPage Hospital and Procure have contracted to buy a 9.7 acre vacant parcel of property in Cantera, at the southwest corner of Mill Street and I-88, on which to construct a two-building, \$140,000,000, approximately 100,000 square foot state-of-the-art proton therapy cancer treatment facility, the first such facility in Illinois, and only the sixth in the nation. The Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board is scheduled to conduct a public hearing on the proposed construction of this facility on March 5, 2008, at 9:00 am at City Hall.

Pretty exciting stuff for our little town. But, I assure you, we are not done by any means. As we have been watching Cantera mature and approach build out, elected officials and staff have focused more and more on the future of the whole community and how we can prepare for -- and here's that word again -- change. Specifically, how do we promote redevelopment outcomes that the citizens want, and how do we protect what the citizens value that we already have?

One answer is to make plans for the future based on as much public input as can be gathered, and then take the steps necessary to implement those plans. Here is what we have accomplished along these lines in 2007:

- On November 19, 2007 the City Council adopted Warrenville's first strategic plan. This effort took a year and a half to develop and is an important tool for planning. Designed to be focused and implementation-oriented, the Plan identifies on-going/immediate, short-term and long-term actions, as well as recommendations for administrative actions, new programs and services, new staffing, capital expenditures and funding. It represents the clear intent of the elected officials to improve and expand both the type and the level of service the City provides to the community, as communicated by residents. The Plan establishes ten focus areas, ten goals, almost 60 objectives, and over 180 implementation steps. It will be used and reviewed each year through the budget process and updated every five years. Assistant City Administrator Jennifer McMahon deserves most of the credit for the success of this effort.
- After an approximately 1-year long public input process, the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan was unanimously approved by the City Council on April 16, 2007. This plan encompasses roughly 320 acres of land in the original center and most historical area of the community and includes the area near the Warrenville Road/DuPage River bridge and the area surrounding the Batavia Road/Butterfield Road intersection.

This plan is one of the most important "tools" the City will reference when making decisions related to land use, development proposals, and City investment in the subarea. It provides written and graphic policy direction on what specific public/infrastructure improvements are desired and what type of development/redevelopment is appropriate in these areas based on healthy community input, real estate market dynamics, and

economic feasibility considerations. And importantly, the Subarea Plan includes detailed discussion on what actions the City may take in order to implement the approved plan and achieve the goals and objectives it articulates.

Here are some important Subarea Plan implementation actions that the City took, with unanimous City Council support, in 2007:

- The City purchased the industrially zoned, 3.7 acre, former Musselman Lumber Company property with the intent to insure that it would be redeveloped consistent with the goals and objectives of the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan.
- The City Council authorized the hiring of S.B. Friedman and Company to prepare a formal request-for-qualifications (RFQ)/request-for-proposals (RFP) document and to coordinate the public process the city would follow to locate and select a qualified and quality private developer to redevelop the Musselman property in a manner consistent with the community's vision as articulated in the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan, which illustrates the construction of approximately 35 rowhomes/townhouses and three single family detached residences on the property.
- In July of 2007, the Council authorized a reconnaissance study to be performed to evaluate the scope and configuration of the City's existing TIF districts and to determine if it would be possible and beneficial to either amend the TIF districts or create a new TIF in order to be in a stronger position to implement the goals and objectives established in the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan.
- Late in 2007, based in large part on the results of the TIF reconnaissance study, the City Council authorized the Freidman Company to proceed with the process that would potentially lead to the creation of a new TIF #3, the limits of which would focus on those areas identified in the Old Town/Civic Center Subarea where change (development/redevelopment) is either expected or recommended to occur.
- The Retail Market analysis the City hired Economics Research Associates (ERA) from Chicago to prepare for the Route 59 corridor was completed late last winter, and it confirmed that this area of the City could support between 150,000 – 270,000 square feet of properly designed and targeted retail space in the next 3 – 5 year period. The analysis and opinions provided in the study will help inform important economic development, land planning and zoning decisions the City will be making relative to this area in the near-term future.

- The City continues to push IDOT to further adjust its plans for the Rte. 56 expansion to be more consistent with the goals and objectives of our Old Town/Civic Center Subarea Plan, which envisions that the design of Rte. 56 in the center of the City would be a lower speed, pedestrian friendly, landscaped boulevard.

That completes my executive summary of the best of Warrenville for 2007, as well as the highlights of our efforts to secure our promising future. Success does not come without significant effort, and I would be remiss if I did not recognize our City Administrator, John Coakley, for the work that he does. The elected officials provide policy and direction, and John makes sure that it all happens from day to day, as well as constantly prodding us to look and plan ahead. He is a fair and respected boss to our talented and hard working staff. Our employee turnover remains extremely low in Warrenville in large part to the excellent work environment he maintains and nourishes. Year after year, Warrenville benefits from the consistency and continuity he provides, without which, our road to success as a community would have a lot more potholes, literally.

I promised we would circle back to some questions I posed earlier. I'm glad I didn't also promise answers you could all embrace, as answers to tough questions are rarely one size fits all. And frankly, I don't pretend to have the answers. I'm much better at asking questions, and I prefer to have you think about the answers.

I certainly have a vision for Warrenville and a firmly held point of view about who we are and who we can be. I shared it with you last year on this occasion at the end of my address: "Let Warrenville become the go-to place for people who want to see how a small town can do it right. Warrenville can be the best small town in the western suburbs."

I continue to see our town in this light. Warrenville has a rich history and heritage, but most of our tangible reminders of the past have been lost to time. We don't have a lot of old bricks and mortar. But what we lack in this respect is more than made up for in the character of those who have chosen and still choose to settle here. And if I had to pick the one defining element of what is best about Warrenville, and what is worth preserving and nourishing, it would be the fierce loyalty of our citizens to our town. In my welcoming letter to folks who have just moved to Warrenville, I warn them that if they think they are just passing through, not to blame me when they are still here 30 years down the road.

That's the thing about our town: people come here and put down roots. Why do we have parking problems in some of our subdivisions? Partly, because they were designed to contain starter homes for young marrieds, but these couples had kids, added on to the house, the kids turned into teens with cars, but few of these families wanted to leave the home they created in Warrenville.

Others are choosing to move to Warrenville to build their dream homes. Why? Aside from the fact that we have so many beautiful properties and are surrounded by wonderful

forest preserves and open space, these people appreciate what I like to refer to as our refreshing lack of attitude. Just plain folks is the small town way, and we like it. I don't ever want to change that. Our neighborhoods need to be protected and preserved.

Some other things need to be changed. Our civic campus and Old Town area can be better. We can improve their ambiance, provide gathering opportunities and enhance our community identity. The Rte. 59 corridor is ripe for change and is the rightful focus of significant planning efforts. The rebuilding of Rte.56 provides opportunities as well as daunting challenges.

With all the potential for change, with all the pains we are taking to be prepared for what we are sure is coming so that it can be managed in a way consistent with the wishes of the citizens, we come down to that last question: Who gets to decide? Trash, recycle or fireplace mantle? My answer to that is: that's up to you. Someone will decide. If you are too busy to worry about all this change stuff, then I guess it won't be you -- someone *else* will decide.

I urge you not to pass on this rare opportunity. Warrenville is on the cusp of being the community it chooses to be. Sometime in the next few years, things will all come together, all the preparations we are making will merge with the development community and the market, and significant parts of our town will change forever and, if enough people care to help, for better.

Make a resolution this year to attend at least one community meeting. There are several already scheduled. Between the City website, our monthly newsletter, announcements on TV and notices in the local paper, dates, times and issues are easy to come by. We at the City are committed to being "the go-to place for people who want to see how a small town can do it right." As I said in our last newsletter, as I invited everyone to participate in community events planned for our 175th celebration, "It can only be better if you join us."

Have a great day and I hope to see you soon!