



The Glenview Watch

October 10, 2007

GLENVIEW LIBRARY OFFERS NAMING RIGHTS

With little fanfare, Glenview's library board has voted to begin a \$3 million fundraising campaign to supplement \$27.1 million the village says it will provide to build an 87,000-square-foot building with 224 parking spaces. Library trustees have argued for a bigger building and vowed to pay for an additional 5,000 square feet themselves.

Glenview resident Peter McGuire, library board member Claire McGuire's husband, has offered to lead the fundraising drive at no charge. Among other things, big contributors may get naming rights to various parts of the library.

TRUSTEES OKAY PURCHASE OF DOMINICK'S SITE

Glenview has agreed to buy the shuttered Dominick's site on Waukegan Road just north of Glenview Road from a private trust that owns it. The price: \$6.5 million – about \$48 per square foot.

Village President Kerry Cummings said the site was key to downtown redevelopment. “We are not interested in forming a TIF, but we do have money in the permanent fund – money set aside during the development of The Glen to be spent on capital projects outside of The Glen.” Because of its “high visibility,” Cummings said the property could serve as a “catalyst” for redevelopment. “This is an important piece of land. We have a unique opportunity,” she concluded.

Dominick's lease on the property runs through 2012. Village Manager Todd Hileman said the store's parent company, Safeway, would be paying \$165,000 a year – an amount that would offset lost investment revenue on the \$6.5 million.

Cummings stressed that the board kept quiet about the deal “to protect the taxpayers' interest.” Had Glenview announced its plan to buy the property, she said would-be buyers from the private sector might have pushed the price up.

“There are no tax dollars going into this purchase,” said Trustee Scott Britain. “The money from the permanent fund will be replenished when the property is sold.”

Swainwood resident John Brennan was not impressed.

He said the trustees had a poor record when it came to spending public dollars for development. “About 15 years ago we purchased the corner of Lake and Waukegan. We just recently sold it for what we paid for it. That's not a good use of capital.”

Referring to a no-interest loan the village gave to department store Von Maur, Brennan asked: “Where's our

money? We gave them what -- \$17 million? They haven't paid a dime. We're still waiting on that."

He also questioned prospects for development of about 40 additional acres of Navy land recently acquired by the village.

"An argument can be made that it's not the role of government to get involved in private transactions," Brennan said. Pulling a document from a folder, he noted that village consultant Steve Friedman had recently put the value of the Dominick's site at about \$4.5 million.

"This was not part of the downtown plan. We never said we were going to spend millions of dollars from the permanent fund. We said we were going to spend money to create a form-based code, and that would attract development, and the market would do it. It was such a robust market. We were such a great community. It would all just fall in place. Now you're saying that's not true."

Brennan pointed out that the village is expected to raise sales and property taxes next year to close a budget shortfall. "You're raising our taxes, but you're giving \$6.5 million to some trust? I'm sorry. I find this disappointing."

Finally, he predicted the village would not attract another grocery store – something downtown planners had hoped Glenview would do. "You think Safeway is going to let Kroger or Albertson's into this market?" Brennan asked the trustees. "They're not. It's not going to be Trader Joe's. It's not going to be Whole Foods. It's not going to be Sunset, so you're running out of grocery store chains. I just don't see this as a good business decision."

THE BOARD BARKS BACK

Cummings defended the board's decision. The trustees had never promised not to invest public funds downtown, she said. "What we did say is there would not be a TIF."

She acknowledged that it might be difficult to find a grocery store for the site but said other goals of the downtown plan might be achieved.

Trustee Jim Patterson defended the deal involving land at Lake and Waukegan, saying the purchase was made to protect the public. "[Development there would be] way too close to the intersection. It was a blind spot. It didn't make any sense, and the board paid a premium to make a deal. It was more of a safety issue. It wasn't an investment."

He boasted the village had made money on some land deals, such as the Chestnut Square site at The Glen – purchased for \$4 million and sold for \$19 million, and he defended the acquisition of more Navy land at The Glen, saying it was necessary to prevent overdevelopment.

Trustee Detlefs agreed, saying the board bought the Navy land to prevent a developer from putting in dense, single-family housing. We did not think that was in the best interests of the village, [the schools, park district or library.]

He said the village was starting to hear about possible development plans for the Dominick's site, and the trustees were "very uncomfortable" with some of them. "There were certain retail uses that we did not feel sounded like an enhancement of the downtown."

"We've spent so much time and effort to create this downtown plan. Why would we want to risk doing irreparable damage to it?" asked Trustee Pat Cuisinier. "This makes perfect sense, and I'm fully supportive of it."

Editor's note: It's funny to hear Trustee Cuisinier talking about all the time and effort that went into the downtown plan, as he didn't attend a single planning session. Cuisinier ran for trustee at the behest of his

church, Our Lady of Perpetual, which happens to sit right across the river from this property. OLPH has a long history of influence on local government, and the purchase of the Dominick's site will give the church a bigger say in the future of that property. Why wouldn't the congregation support use of public money to assure a development to its liking?

As for Trustee Patterson's remarks about the lot at Waukegan and Lake, we note that it is now being developed, and traffic getting in and out of that site could still be a nightmare.

Pressing on to The Glen, Patterson and Detlefs may well have worried about dense residential developments on former Navy land, but the plan recently approved by community leaders includes 192 town and row houses. It's hardly a low-density proposition.

Now to the supposed profit made on the Chestnut Square site. Patterson neglected to subtract the enormous investment the village made in infrastructure – building roads, sewers and sidewalks at The Glen. That's what upped the value of the property – not some brilliant investment strategy hatched by the trustees.

The thing to remember about all of these public acquisitions is that development is subject to zoning and market forces. If our zoning rules are not strong enough to prevent undesirable developments anywhere in the village, then perhaps those rules should be revised. Drive-through retail establishments can be prohibited. High-density housing can also be banned. But once the village becomes a landowner, another element creeps into the mix. We need to make our money back. That's why we are likely to see more town and row houses at The Glen. Glenview will get more money from developers of multi-family housing than from developers of a few single-family homes.

The trustees may think they've given themselves more power by spending your money on property downtown, but time will tell if we end up with something great at that site – or something very much like what might have gone up there anyway.

What were those plans that the trustees were hearing about? A CVS drug store with a drive through window? Was that such a bad idea that the village had to step in? Is it so important that Glenview have tall, mixed-use buildings on Waukegan Road that the trustees are again playing developers with public dollars?

VILLAGE TO PRIVATIZE SOME SNOW REMOVAL

The trustees have awarded a three-year contract for snow plowing services to Snow Systems, Inc -- a Wheeling company that will clear 15 public parking lots for half what the village had paid for equipment and municipal employees. The firm will also take over 16 percent of neighborhood streets and cul de sacs.

In support of the \$173,356 contract, Public Works Director Bill Porter said eight people had left his department, representing a 16 percent drop in manpower. He said it would be cheaper to pay an outside firm than to replace those workers.

Other bids came from companies in Elgin, Wilmette and Wauconda, Illinois – bids that were much higher than Snow Systems' estimate. To cover the neighborhoods for three years, for example, Wayne Endre of Wilmette wanted \$416,000 and Tovar Snow Professionals in Elgin would do the job for \$497,638. Snow Systems said it could do the work for just \$49,864.

Likewise, the Elgin company wanted \$492,092 for three years of clearing parking lots, and a Wauconda firm offered to do the work for over \$1.6 million. Snow Systems' bid: \$94,600.

Staff acknowledged the enormous gap but said it had gotten fine reviews on Snow Systems from the company's current customers: Motorola, Avon, High School District 214 and C.B. Richard Ellis.

The village will continue to plow most streets, 75 miles of sidewalks along major roads, and to remove snow piled up by private businesses in the downtown area. Porter pledged to "ride herd" on the new contractor and to

follow up on complaints, but he conceded there would be a “learning curve.”

Editor’s note: On the face of it, this seems a logical move, but the gap between what Snow Systems bid and what others asked for the work is worrisome, and we have to wonder if the rush to privatize is in any way related to the fact that public works employees are about to begin negotiating a new contract. In their work plan for the village manager, the trustees specified that Todd Hileman should “manage negotiations with public works and police unions.” Surely that job becomes easier when employees see their jobs going to private contractors, but we wonder what it does for employee morale and for residents who want their streets cleared early and well.

BUSINESSES MUST SHOVEL ON SUNDAYS

The village has decided to require that businesses shovel their sidewalks on Sundays, but not without objections from two trustees. Cuisinier thought it unnecessary to make businesses that aren’t open on Sundays clear their walks, but Trustee Debby Karton pointed out that many service businesses close on Mondays. “Should they be exempt from the requirement [to clear their sidewalks]?” she asked Cuisinier.

Village Attorney Jeff Randall, who has held that job since 1976, did not recall anyone ever being sued for failing to shovel or plow. “We’ve never had any complaints,” said Patterson in arguing for deleting the requirement. Britton disagreed. “I think what we are trying to do is to set the best practices. We should at least give the businesses of Glenview the idea that it’s better to have sidewalks plowed.” White said he was “indifferent,” but ultimately joined a majority in voting for the Sunday rule.

BIKE AND SIDEWALK PLAN APPROVED

The trustees have given unanimous approval to a bike and sidewalk master plan for the village. Consultant John LaPlante of T.Y. Lin International said the addition of bike lanes, paths and signs would cost about \$2.3 million over 20 years. The first phase, putting bike lanes on Shermer Road, will cost \$42,000.

The plan also calls for bike lanes on Glenview Road. “Riding a bicycle on the sidewalk, for someone who is going at a fairly high rate of speed, can be up to 10 times more dangerous than riding in the street,” LaPlante told the village board. “That is because when you come to an intersection, someone pulling out of the cross street or out of a driveway will look on the street to see if a car is coming, but they don’t look down the sidewalk.”

LaPlante said collisions could be avoided, and cyclists would be more comfortable if the village added bike lanes. What’s more, he said bike lanes cause motorists to slow down, because the car lane is narrower. The consultant noted that Chicago created bike lanes on four or five of its widest streets and found total crashes declining 10-15 percent.

LaPlante added that children should still ride on sidewalks.

Trustee Scott Britton expressed strong support for the plan, saying he had once fallen off his bike and was walking it back to his home when he was hit by a car in the crosswalk. “I think this plan is extremely necessary for our village,” he said.

Dean Schott, a spokesman for the League of Illinois Bicyclists (and co-editor of *The Watch*), said the bicycle plan “should be considered a quality of life issue. As communities make themselves more accommodating to bicyclists, more people are willing to bicycle to commute, to run errands, to ride for recreation, health and fitness. As more bicyclists take to the street, motorists get more accustomed to them being there. Hopefully, we reach a point where everyone is willing to share the road.”

Schott stressed that riding bikes on the street is legal, and he urged local police to do more to educate drivers and cyclists. Admitting people on bikes sometimes run stop signs, he said most crashes involving bikes are caused by drivers. “When a bicyclist commits a violation, he’s usually looking both ways to be sure he’s not putting himself in danger. When a motorist driving a 4,000-pound vehicle commits a violation, it can cause injury, and it can cause death.”

Resident Vic Sholis, one of the citizens who helped consultants craft the plan, said he was “an active bicycle rider, an active car driver and an active taxpayer. I don’t want to impede automobile traffic. It’s bad enough now, and I don’t want the taxpayers burdened with silly expenses. I was looking for the end result to balance the needs of all. I think the current plan does that.”

Trustee Pat Cuisinier thought the plan was a good one but warned, “There may be certain components that people in the village may not be receptive to. I don’t know whether people are going to be real excited about bike lanes on Glenview Road,” he said. “That’s the type of thing that maybe has to be debated.”

Editor’s note: The law is not about what people are “excited about.” It’s about doing what’s right for the public good. If it’s 10 times safer for fast-moving cyclists to ride on the street, and if adding bike lanes improves safety for drivers and cyclists, then how the public feels about the addition of those lanes is not the point. What’s needed is not debate but public education.

MILWAUKEE AVENUE PLAN FAILS FIRST TEST

The trustees have agreed to annex the site of a new shopping strip at 611 Milwaukee Avenue and to let construction go forward, even though the developer refused to go along with new guidelines for the area. After extensive community planning at a cost of more than \$120,000, Glenview said new commercial properties should sit relatively close to the road and have parking lots behind buildings. Planners also called for creation of a slip road – a route parallel to Milwaukee – so drivers could move easily from one business to another without adding to the traffic on Milwaukee. The developer said he would put some parking spots behind his building but claimed prospective tenants wanted more spaces in front. Village planners said the current design was better than previous plans, and because the property had not yet been annexed to the village, the developer could opt to proceed with construction under county rules – producing something even less appealing. The village board opted to approve the plan and collect the tax revenue from future businesses in the strip.

MILWAUKEE TRAFFIC WILL ROLL THROUGH GLENVIEW PARK

When work begins on the Milwaukee Avenue bridge that spans railroad tracks just north of Glenview Road, the village and park district have agreed to divert traffic through Community Park West on Zenith Drive to Central Road. The plan should make it easier for Aon employees to get to work and for customers to reach Abt Electronics. The store says it will cover any costs associated with the detour, and Aon will provide parking for park district patrons who will be unable to use about 100 spaces in Community Park West. The district may also move some activities to other parks from April through August, 2008.

POLICE REPORT \$1.8 MILLION GEM HEIST

It happened just before 8 p.m. last Wednesday in the parking lot of P.J. Moondoggies, a fast food joint near the corner of Milwaukee and Lake. A 56-year-old salesman had just left the restaurant carrying a case filled with gems and fine jewelry. As he put the case back in his car, a gold Dodge Caravan approached. The salesman says two men dressed in black wrestled him to the ground.

"One kept trying to cover my mouth, and I was trying to bite his hand. It was a desperate struggle," the salesman told a reporter for the Chicago Tribune. "He kept saying, 'It's not worth it. I can kill you.'"

One of the men grabbed the salesman’s keys and drove off in his car – a 2007 Subaru Forester. The other escaped in the van. Both drove south and turned into Abt’s parking lot where a security camera shows the Subaru being abandoned.

Police put the loss at \$1.8 million. The victim was not seriously injured and is hoping much of his loss will be covered by insurance.

According to the Tribune the crime bears the markings of similar thefts by gang members targeting jewelry dealers. "We're pretty sure he was followed by the people who robbed him," said Glenview Police Sgt. Stefan

Johnson. "These kinds of robberies have been happening in the Chicago area for years."

There have been two similar robberies in Glenview since April 2006.

MORE VILLAGE NEWS AND NOTES

-- Rudy Malnati, a cousin of Lou's, will go before the village board on Oct. 16, hoping for approval to continue work on his family-style Italian restaurant on the northwest corner of Chestnut and Waukegan. The project is hung up over village requirements for parking and outdoor dining.

-- The Wilmette Hockey Association plans to build a 47,000-square-foot indoor sports complex at the corner of Founders Drive and Techny Road in Northbrook. The group will sell \$10 million in bonds through the Illinois Finance Authority.

-- The village has approved construction of two mausoleum buildings at the Sunset Memorial Cemetery along Shermer Road, just north of Navy housing at The Glen.

AT&T SERVICE DELAYED

Village Hall has decided to put off a review of permit applications for construction of utility boxes needed to operate AT&T's new broadband service entailing voice, high speed data and video communications. The system will use existing phone lines but will require dozens of system support boxes that are about five feet tall, four feet wide and two feet deep.

Village officials notified AT&T that it would not provide permission to build until the utility gets a video license from the Illinois Commerce Commission – delaying any construction until 2008 at the earliest. In an internal memo, AT&T said the village was within its rights to do that, "but they don't HAVE to." Construction of boxes is already underway in Golf, Northfield, Northbrook and Wheeling.

The news sparked protests from some consumers who say Glenview will continue to pay far more for high-speed Internet connections, and the village will continue to collect more in franchise fees.

SUFFREDIN TO SEEK HIGHER OFFICE

Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin, an Evanston Democrat who represents part of Glenview, has announced plans to run for Cook County state's attorney. In an e-mail to supporters, Suffredin says, "Now that Richard Devine is retiring, I have decided to seek the office of Cook County state's attorney. As a lawyer, I have had the opportunity to practice and gain valuable experience in many different ways. I have tried 136 jury trials to verdict, hundreds of other bench trials and hearings, and handled appeals at every level of both the Federal and the State Court system.

Suffredin pledges to "protect our communities from guns, crime, domestic violence, environmental problems, bad payday loan operations and bad mortgage companies." His list of campaign co-chairs includes Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, former Judge Abner Mikva, and MWRD Commissioner Debra Shore.

"While I am confident we can be victorious on February 5th, I first need your help in getting on the ballot," Suffredin says in asking supports to download a nominating petition and sign-up their friends. If you'd like to help, you'll find that document at: <http://www.suffredinforstatesattorney.org/PDFs/petition.pdf>

CLAYPOOL TAKES AIM AT STROGER AND COMPANY

Cook County Commissioner Forrest Claypool was back in the news last month with an Op Ed piece in the Chicago Tribune: "Cook County Board President Todd Stroger has slashed preventive care in county hospitals and clinics. Eight neighborhood clinics have been shuttered, along with a wing of the \$551 million Stroger Hospital. Mammogram screenings have been eliminated, and specialty clinics devoted to treating high blood

pressure and preventing heart disease and colon cancer have been shut down,” Claypool wrote.

“I don't mean to suggest that Stroger is insensitive to cancer-sufferers. As a decent man and a victim of prostate cancer, I'm sure he cares deeply about fighting that disease. But his policies have consequences for tens of thousands of Cook County residents who rely on the county for preventive health care. Stroger's interim health chief, Dr. Robert Simon, admitted to the Cook County Board earlier this year that residents will suffer from less access to basic care, longer wait times, less preventive care and a potential increase in cancer deaths.

“That's the price poor patients pay for a hospital system dominated by politics. The county has been a patronage dumping ground for years. Incompetent management has cost the county hundreds of millions of dollars that were never collected from Medicare and insurance companies.

“With layoffs of doctors, nurses and medical technicians, it is increasingly difficult for professionals to care for their patients. The chief of internal medicine at Stroger Hospital, Dr. Avery Hart, warned in a July memo to Simon of an "impending collapse of general medicine at Stroger Hospital" due to the rapid loss of internists who were laid off or quit.

“We can save this unique public asset if we finally remove politics from medicine. Last year, I joined a majority of the County Board to sponsor an alternative budget that would have averted health-care cuts by slicing redundant layers of management. But several sponsors of our measure switched sides, providing the margin of victory for Stroger's deep service cuts.

Editor's note: Among those who switched sides, Glenview Commissioner Gregg Goslin. We hope we can count on him this time to stand with Claypool in a fight for what's right.

PARK DISTRICT NEWS AND NOTES

-- **Woof:** The park district may opt to build a **dog park** along Milwaukee Avenue at Community Park West using its own personnel rather than contracting with an outside firm. Doing so would allow Glenview to move more quickly and make a temporary dog park unnecessary. The board meets at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 25. Canine owners can share their thoughts about that via Executive Director Chuck Balling: Chuck.Balling@glenviewparks.org

-- **Golftoberfest** will be celebrated Oct. 15-31 at the Glenview Park Golf Club, 800 Shermer Road with \$5 bratwurst, beer and chips lunch deals at the Cafe and end-of-the-season discounts on golf shop items.

-- **Scarecrow Scramble** is a 9-hole competition set for 8 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 21. It includes an Octoberfest-style buffet lunch (chili, brats, German potato salad and beer), for \$25/person. Call the golf shop at (847) 724-0250 for details.

-- **Grove Fest** offers a chance to learn about local history, enjoy live folk music, square dancing, nature walks, pioneer craft demonstrations and storytelling from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 7. Enjoy outdoor dining on old-fashioned American cuisine. Purchase handmade gift and craft items. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$1 for children 12 and under. Call (847) 299-6096 for information.

-- **The Glenview Ice Center** at 1851 Landwehr Road is offering seven-week mini sessions of its popular **hockey development and ice skating lessons** for girls and boys ages 3-8 starting the week of Nov. 1 and running through Dec. 22. Register in person at the Ice Center starting Oct. 8. Call (847) 724-2800 for detailed class dates and times or visit www.glenviewicecenter.org.

-- Sell your unwanted treasures or find a bargain at the Glenview Senior Center's **All Community Garage Sale**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13 at Park Center. Admission is free, and sellers can reserve a table for \$25. Stop by the front desk of the Senior Center to sign up or call 847-724-4793 if you need additional information.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Glenview kids will trick or treat from 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 31. The village asks parents to accompany their children or send an older sibling. Use make-up instead of masks so kids can see well, and make a map beforehand, so you know where they'll be. Remind children not to enter homes without your permission, to stay on sidewalks, to cross carefully at intersections (not between parked cars), and to bring all treats home for inspection.

THE GREEN SCENE

-- The Illinois EPA will accept household chemicals for disposal from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27 at Maine Township's Town Hall, 1700 Ballard Road in Park Ridge. For a list of acceptable items, go to www.swancc.org/hcw/hcwcollection.html

-- Keep your eyes on the skies. ComEd is asking residents to report any branches dangling less than 10 feet from a power line. Call 800-334-7661 to prevent those limbs from causing unnecessary outages. If broken branches are hanging more than 10 feet from a power line, the village suggests you call a private contractor to arrange for safe removal.

-- Don't be alarmed if you see or smell smoke near the Air Station Prairie, Techny Basin, Gallery Park, North Navy Ditch along John's Drive or the railroad right-of-way east of Lehigh Ave. The village will conduct controlled burns this fall to get rid of weeds and promote growth of native prairie plants. All burns will be supervised by trained personnel and overseen by the Glenview Fire Department.

-- A private landscaper has completed work on the Patriot Blvd. median just north of Lake Avenue, and the village wants to know what you think. The design is an alternative to the free-form planting of tall grasses and wild flowers on the Patriot median south of Willow Road. The village wonders which you prefer, and – on a scale of one to five with one being poor and five being excellent – what do you think of the plantings just north of Lake? Fax your views to the village at 847-998-1591.

-- Glenview's Natural Resources Commission will host a river bank clean-up from 9 a.m.-noon on Saturday, Nov. 3. Help clear brush and pick-up litter across from Kohl's parking lot off Willow Road. Tools, gloves, snacks and water will be provided.

READERS WRITE

CG is irked that The Watch isn't cheering the purchase of the former Dominick's site: "Why is it that every time the village tries to do something on the downtown redevelopment they're met with criticism from your biased newsletter? Obviously your group would rather whine about everything! Remember your fight concerning the Optima East project? All those businesses continue to thrive, and the condos are consistently a sought after property. It's fine to be anti-development. Just stop trying to portray yourselves as a citizens' watch group!"

The Watch replies: Sounds like you're a whiner too, CG. Welcome to the club.

PST is not happy to hear about cash woes at Village Hall: "It is always curious that when tax revenues are tight, it's possible to cut staff, reduce expenses and find efficiencies. Why do these excesses exist in the first place? Is it just the expectation of unlimited availability of tax dollars? If the village of Glenview was a publicly-traded company, the shareholders would drive down the price of the stock until someone got the message and decided to manage with an eye on creating surpluses, not deficits. This starts with reducing the entitled benefits of management. It seems the best jobs in America are going to be village workers with guaranteed pension benefits. Most public companies have long ago abandoned these. Time to start realizing that taxpayer dollars are a scarce resource."

JAS blames village management for the cash crunch: "Let's face it! If our officials didn't sit in a corner office figuring out how to get rid of loyal employees, how to short change the residents on protection, street cleaning, snow plowing, building Taj Mahals, and pissing our money away, maybe we wouldn't have such a

short fall. \$14 million short, but let's buy the Dominick's property for \$6.5 million, and then we can pay some more consultants a couple of million to figure out what to do with that land. Then we'll probably offer somebody money to build more condos and townhouses. To those who insist the village spend \$20,000 to get their stumps removed, put a lovely pot of flowers on top and enjoy. Problem solved. Instead, Glenview will solve its financial problems by raising the taxes."

Dolph Z fears higher taxes will drive more good people away from Glenview: "We've lived in Glenview for over 40 years, raised our children to adulthood here and enjoyed the pleasure of good neighbors all around us. I can hardly recall seeing as many FOR SALE signs as now proliferate in our community. Many properties have been standing empty for an unusually long period of time, particularly McMansions. In today's Sun Times, a reader wrote that the Chicago area resounds with a similar scenario, and commented that many of the FOR SALE signs might be a result of foreclosures and continuing property tax hikes. The author further noted that property owners may leave the area to avoid gouging by local government. I am wondering how long it will take in Chicago or Glenview for those in government to discover that the well of over-taxed residents has run dry. This thought occurred to me as I read that village officials are still spending, spending, spending, while threatening to increase property taxes."

And JNA says those McMansions are making flooding in Glenview worse: "Help! I'm the victim of a McMansion. It was insanely apparent in the recent storm, but even a light rain or the neighbor's lawn sprinkler would be enough to make a portion of my backyard a mushy mess. This is what happens when you take a 7,200-square-foot lot, make half of it impervious roof and pavement and the remainder impervious due to the construction equipment compaction of the already tight clay soils. Believe me, a six-foot layer of top soil over this compacted soil does not absorb much water. It is also the reason most mature trees on a lot will probably die within a couple of years of construction. So much for Tree City USA! When this developer finished his grading, the yard leading up to his house was about three feet higher than mine. That's a slope of three feet over a 30-foot stretch of land. And to top it off, the new development was 10 feet higher at our property line than the original existing grade, creating a sharp drop off between our yards. Since moving into my house in 2001, I have attempted to control the flooding issue in my yard so as not to impose on my neighbors. I have created swales, installed a French drain, a dry well, a rain garden, amended the soils to make them drain better, all of which were essentially negated by the building of a McMansion. I am now waiting for the developer-owned home immediately to the north of me to start construction. I called the village, and an inspector came out. He was helpful and understanding, and by the weekend the neighbor's landscaper had installed a shallow swale along the property line to intercept the runoff. That was an acceptable solution for me, but only a band aid to a larger problem. What I want to know is how can I get the developer or village to require that all new developments include storm water retention on their land or installation of a storm sewer. I urge others with this problem to read Section IV of the Village Engineering Standards which are available on the village website. And the next time we have another big storm, I invite you to bring your kayaks and rafts to my house. I'm pretty sure I had at least Class 1 rapids going down my driveway from the lots behind me."

Henrietta Saunders warns neighbors of an energy scam: "Yesterday I received a brochure in the mail offering "Guaranteed Lower Gas Price this winter." This was very appealing, so I checked it out with CUB, the Citizens' Utility Board of Illinois. They said the company that sent a mass mailing to Glenview is one of several currently scamming the public. CUB actually has a poster warning consumers about this. I hope neighborhood groups, the senior center and the park district will post it so people don't get tricked. I also called NICOR (1-888-642-6748) to have my number put on the Gas Utilities' Do Not Call list. More information and a press release on this scam can be found at www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org."

CCL was disturbed by our claim that free-roaming cats threaten populations of rare grassland birds that nest on the ground: "The destruction of natural habitat by human development causes much more harm to bird populations than cats. Did you know that cats are the animals most tortured by humans? I cringe whenever they are unfairly maligned, as I worry it adds fuel to those who feel justified in such behaviors. By the way, I do keep my cats indoors for their own safety."

YOUR TURN: Write to glenviewwatch@aol.com or 3537 Maple Leaf Drive, Glenview, IL 60026. If you haven't already done so, please consider making a contribution to support The Watch. Non-deductible checks should be payable to Glenview Watch. Thanks for your support and for reading. Dean Schott and Sandy

Hausman, Co-Editors.

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