rEmarks Data for May 20, 2025 Village Council Meeting

Agenda Section & Item: First Reading - MOT 2025-10783 A. Motion: Approve a Contract with Chicagoland Paving of Lake Zurich, Illinois for the Jefferson Avenue Reconstruction / Thornwood Intersection Improvements Project
Commenter: Kathryn Richert
Comment: I am concerned about a bike trail being put in front of Hillcrest school. On page 109 of 150 of this document there is a sentence about the trail being put in front of the school. I am concerned about the safety of this bike path. I am concerned about the loss of parking and how this would effect drop off and pick up. I am concerned about the trees that would be lost. I don't see other schools being as effective as Hillcrest and was wondering if communication with dg58 and especially the administration of this school is for this change and construction that would have to take place. In general this project is SO expensive- i would hate if this project was put in front of our schools and the safety of our children.

Agenda Section & Item: First Reading - MOT 2025-10789 D. Motion: Issue RFP for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Services
Commenter: Ken Lerner
Comment: Reviewing the options presented for the refuse contract RFP, and I am wondering why enhanced services such as a senior discount, leaf pickup and electronic waste pickup are being considered ONLY at the expense of ditching the sticker system.

The sticker system already serves as a sort of senior discount, in that smaller households usually generate less waste and may not need pickup each week. That is the case for our household (and can be for any frugal, conservation-minded household, senior or not). In addition, stickers create the correct incentive: since you pay by quantity disposed, there is an incentive to avoid waste and recycle as much as possible.

The sticker system is still popular, being used by 35% of DG households. Why do additional services have to be linked to abandoning the sticker system?

Agenda Section & Item: First Reading - MOT 2025-10789 D. Motion: Issue RFP for Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Services
Commenter: Ken Lerner
Comment: Forgot to mention before - also, free leaf pickup removes any incentive for the homeowner to compost or mow their leaves, which are more sustainable options (at least for some folks) and avoid having to pickup, transport and manage the leaves at a separate location.

Agenda Section & Item: Manager's Report - REP 2025-10779 A. Guiding DG: Comprehensive Plan and Related Projects - Draft Comprehensive Plan
Commenter: Ken Lerner
Comment: I appreciate the effort and engagement that went into this draft plan and applaud the new emphasis on environmental sustainability as an important factor to be integrated into many aspects of village operations and policy making.

However, a few comments and suggestions:

1. It seems a bit odd that neither the community profile nor the community facilities and infrastructure chapters describes DG's government – that we have a village manager form of government, with all council members and the mayor elected at large, supported by a village staff with a certain structure and size, and advised by a set of commissions and boards. That seems like the sort of thing that should be at least acknowledged, and possibly reviewed, every few years. Especially in light of recent discussion about changing one of the major boards, the library board.

2. Along the same lines, I think the Village should look at the role of the boards and commissions. At least the two that I have been involved with, the HPDRB and ECC, have a very passive role in the sense that staff set the agenda, and indeed determine whether they meet (with a long lacuna for the ECC where it did not meet for more than a year). Once we recruit village residents to serve on a commission or board, we owe it to them to take advantage of their knowledge, wisdom, experience, and ideas. To that end, the Comp Plan should indicate that each such advisory body will meet regularly, and – this is key – that they have the ability to develop new ideas, proposals and initiatives, within their purview, for the consideration of staff and Council. They should not be limited to "speak when spoken to."

3. Historic Preservation is addressed on p. 54 (or 60, depending on which number you look at) and the text notes that "To build on this, the Village should continue to offer incentives, education, and resources to support property owners in protecting and restoring historic properties." Good thought – an even better one would be to establish

that we have a historic preservation plan and program, with a regular budget and expected activities, events, etc. to promote preservation and a regular program of historical surveys and preservation assessment. Over the years, in addition to the landmarking program, there have been HP activities from time to time, on a catch as catch can basis – e.g., historic surveys and brochures. The last such effort was several years ago. There is no systematic plan or program. Example items that could be developed include a regular rotation of historic surveys, to assess the state of our preservation, and reports on the loss or preservation of historic structures. Kind of like our regular reports on parkway tree inventory. Also, a regular historic preservation awards program. There are examples of items like these in other Chicago suburban communities.

4. Page 55 or 61: Paragraph on tree canopy – says, “Street trees, located in the public right-of-way, are a vital component of the Village’s green infrastructure, offering environmental, social, and economic benefits.” I suggest that ALL trees meet these criteria and have these benefits.

5. In the development opportunities chapter - on a personal note, I wonder if the Grove redevelopment site at 75th and Lemont is large enough to attract a major home improvement center such as Lowes or Menards. Right now residents are pretty much limited to Home Depot. I don’t know if that option has been pursued but if not, it should be considered.

Agenda Section & Item: Manager's Report - REP 2025-10779 A. Guiding DG: Comprehensive Plan and Related Projects - Draft Comprehensive Plan
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: Comment on draft comp plan

Ecological sustainability trivialized and completely misunderstood.

As I predicated would be the case upon looking at the work HL did for Glen Ellyn’s 2023 comp plan

https://www.glenellyn.org/DocumentCenter/View/3964/2023-Glen-Ellyn-Comprehensive-Plan

Chapter 10 of DG’s draft plan discusses “sustainability” as part of

“SUSTAINABILITY, PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE”

As the Goal (p 135) states

——
PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY TO ENSURE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND TO PROTECT NATURAL SPACES. MEET THE RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY BY FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO MAINTAIN A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES WITHIN WALKING AND BIKING DISTANCES OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS.
—

Then there's this key belief (p 136):

"As Downers Grove continues to grow, the Village is committed to building a sustainable future through clean energy, green infrastructure, electric vehicle (EV)support, and enhanced recycling initiatives."

And other similar buzzword objectives, such as

strong energy partnerships, strengthen sustainability (whatever that's supposed to mean), grid resilience, and "support sustainable living and transportation."

Thus, the draft sadly confirms that VC, staff, and DG residents are no more prepared to deal adequately with the issue than they were prior to the big planning process.

Because the consultants themselves lacked adequate understanding.

The blind leading the blind.

The planning process NEVER examined the compatibility of ever more growth and ecological sustainability.

Because in DG and elsewhere in the US, the need for "growth" is never to be questioned.

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: Comment on Earth Day proclamation

The material below is a slightly modified (and corrected) reposting of an e-remark I submitted to the 06 May meeting. The remark was not accessible on the meeting's

webpage until the day AFTER the meeting. Given how receptive VC and staff are to my comments, I will presume the lack of access prior to the meeting was an oversight and not an attempt to censor me … again.

I re-post the remark in an effort to ensure the oversight does not render the comment invisible.

I have opted NOT to repost the 06 May comment I made about Metronet but leave it to anyone interested to find that remark for themselves.

One of CC's proclamations at VC's second April meeting was a proclamation about Earth Day.

This year's theme was "our planet, our power"; the phrase refers to this year's Earth Day being both a day of social action and an endorsement of increasing so-called renewable energy.

The latter refers to the contrast to non-renewable energy (NRE), that is, fossil fuel-based (coal, oil and nat gas) forms of energy, that for the past many years/decades have been the bogey man fomenting climate chaos thanks to associated increase in emissions of CO2 and methane into the atmosphere and oceans.

I have pointed out more than once in previous remarks to VC that believers in renewable energy routinely ignore the self-deception of the phrase 'renewable'.

Another common self-deception about renewable energy is the word 'transition', as in 'transition' from NRE to renewable forms of energy.

Turns out that notion is analogous to the deception perpetrated by the plastics industry in their claims about their products being 'recyclable.'

For the reality is that when it comes to using forms of energy, what we humans have been doing is not transitioning but ADDING. That is, when we learn to use a certain form of energy feedstock, we don't abandon using the other forms at all.

https://www.resilience.org/stories/2025-04-08/energy-transitioin-the-end-of-the-idea/

Notably, as presently constituted, NRE remains by far the dominant source of energy.

And that is a problem. Except of course for the climate chaos deniers.

The energy feedstock feeds our energy-slaves, the machines that give us the power to be as resource rapacious as we in the rich nations have become.

CC's proclamation reflects bias of understanding that it is our species job to save the planet, 'protect' the environment.

The dubious clause:

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WHEREAS, all species play a unique role in the complex web of life and contribute to the ecosystem services on which all life on Earth depends, and hence, protecting our species is crucial to the survival of this planet and its inhabitants,

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When the rapaciousness of our species is killing off other species, as reflected for example in the lack of biodiversity of the area known as DG, is it not self-evident WE are the problem — the invasive species — not the solution? Ergo, we are the culprit yielding the earth's "sixth mass extinction".

What is the ecological service WE provide?

Few humans show concern about such questions, largely because economics has encouraged school-educated humans to believe we will simply build manmade products to replace the 'natural' ones we kill off. A similar dubious line of thought underlies the fanciful belief in our species colonizing Mars or other planets.

These contradictions are the subject of a book entitled Ishmael by Daniel Quinn.

Tom Murphy, a physicist who has fallen out of love with modernity, has posted his summary of the book via installments on the website resilience dot com.

For example

https://www.resilience.org/stories/2025-05-01/ishmael-chapter-11/

It’s worth the effort to find and read all his postings on resilience dot org. The total number of such chapter postings is thirteen.

Quinn’s overview is here:

https://dothemath.ucsd.edu/2025/03/ishmael-overview/

Ishmael is a gorilla who tries to teach Alan, a modern human, about the self-deceiving and self-destructive folly of his ‘modern' way of living.

The sentiment CC voiced in the Earth Day proclamation — “that protecting our species is crucial to the survival of this planet” — is a wonderful example of the arrogance of the myth known as ‘human progress’ widely shared among the subset of humans Ishmael calls the Takers.

The Leavers, in contrast to the Takers, are the subset of humans willing to accept they can never fully control EVERYTHING; that is, they will never have the capacity to judge what is best according to “the knowledge of good and evil.” So Leavers are comfortable ‘living within the hands of the gods’ — within ecological limits — within what Ishmael calls the Law of Life.

The contrast in attitude and way of living is reflected succinctly in the questions Ishmael leaves behind for Alan upon his (Ishmael’s) passing:

With man gone, will there be hope for gorilla? With gorilla gone, will there be hope for man?

VC’s recently approved ESP is further evidence of how far DG, like Ishmael’s Alan, has to go to understand … in order to change its way of living to be ecologically sustainable, i.e., to adopt a way of living compatible with the Law of Life.

Simple examples from the ESP:

1) The ESP acknowledges the great majority of IL’s prairie has been destroyed and yet applauds DG for preserving its minuscule prairie as though this is evidence of DG’s concern for the environment.

My questions: DG's prairie constitutes what percentage of the space of DG? What percentage of the space of DG is not manmade?

Along that line …

2) The ESP identifies as a metric for biodiversity within DG the number of residences who replace their golf-course grass lawns with prairie grass and the like.

On the one hand, it should be obvious such a metric lacks scientific soundness/credibility.

On the other hand, it should also be obvious such a metric verifies my contention the goal of the ESP is NOT ECOS but simply community participation.

3) The ESP claims (p 23) a "community goal" to "work towards becoming a carbon-neutral community" and a "village (government) goal" to "strive to become a carbon-neutral organization by 2035 and carbon-negative by 2045."

The community goal as stated is basically useless — no target year and no intention of the community's way of living becoming carbon negative —

which makes village government's goals basically useless AND

abdicates village government from having any responsibility for encouraging/enforcing/guiding/regulating behavior/effort toward the community goal.

Furthermore, no rationale is given for the target dates; reinforcing the bigger problem: data shows we've already failed, in that carbon neutral aka 'net zero' is the short-hand phrase referring to reducing emissions in order to avoid increasing temperature by 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. We've already exceeded that level already!

https://www.commondreams.org/news/15-degrees-paris-agreement

In short, if we were really serious about the goal, we should already by striving for being carbon negative!

Instead, emissions have been rising relentlessly, consistent with the point made earlier … that humans ADD to the feedstock used for their energy slaves. "Drill, baby, drill!" It's as if the big 2015 Paris Climate Accord never happened!?

The ESP avoids any discussion of reducing energy consumption of the village community's way of living or village government's way of operating — their total reliance on energy-slaves, especially for transportation of people, goods, and services in and out of the municipality.

A recent addition to our self-deceiving mythology is that AI and limitless renewable energy will 'save us', will be the solution to all our problems.

What ecological services will we provide if armed with those tools?

Q: Will the new VC do any better than previous ones in pursuing the goal of ecological sustainability?

A: Not when DG's residents' most important metric is rising property prices and VC's most important metric is generating increasing real estate and other taxes.

Agenda Section & Item: Council Member Reports - REP 2025-10787 A. Report: Joint Ad Hoc Committee of the Village Council and Library Board of Trustees
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: is not accessible for public viewing as of 8:30 PM on 19 May.

Agenda Section & Item: Mayor's Report - REP 2025-10780 A. Materials to be Placed on File: Sher Akbar Corporation, D/B/A 7-Eleven, Upgrade to Class "P-1" Liquor License
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: is not accessible for public viewing as of 8:30 PM on 19 May.

Agenda Section & Item: Mayor's Report - RES 2025-10786 B. Resolution: Appoint Mayor Pro Tem
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: is not accessible for public viewing as of 8:30 PM on 19 May.