rEmarks Data for November 10, 2026 Village Council Meeting

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: David Ungari
Comment: There have been many posts on Nextdoor regarding the difficulty parking in downtown. I was looking at the village parking map and I learned a few things.
The civic center and lot V are available M-F after 4:30 and all day on weekends. I did not know this. I think this should be publicized. Maybe signs directing to these lots.
The parking deck allows parking on all levels M-F after 3pm. Other lots are available after 11am. Why not the parking deck? How many commuters are parking after 11am?
Thank you.

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: Nathan Williams
Comment: Downers Grove Public Library (DGPL) did not record the special meeting held on October 21, 2026 in which the Library Board of Trustees (LBOT) approved (i) the separation agreement between DGPL and the former library director and (ii) the appointment of an interim director. I abstained from voting on the first matter. I voted against the appointment of an interim director.
The LBOT approved the separation agreement by a vote of 4 to 1, with one abstention. LBOT approved the appointment of an interim director by a vote of 4 to 2. Former trustee Jessica Nastal voted against both resolutions.
I am surprised that DGPL did not create a video recording of the special meeting given the substantive matters to be approved at the meeting.
The LBOT approved the board minutes at its October 28, 2026 regular board meeting as part of its consent agenda. The minutes summarized my trustee comments, but omitted certain information. Therefore, I am submitting my public comments to the Village Council in the form of an electronic remark. This will provide transparency to the community and a historical record for the public.
My comments are provided below.
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Separation Agreement (ABSTAIN)
The separation agreement is reasonable. I have no concerns regarding the terms of the agreement.
I wish Heather the best.

Appointment of Pilar Shaker as Interim Director (NO VOTE)
I have a few comments on the agreement with Stacks.
I'll remind everyone that I recommended that we appoint Stacks as the search firm when we conducted a search late last year. Thus, I'm pleased that Stacks will likely be involved in that capacity now.
The interim director contract is inextricably linked to a potential search because the hourly consulting fees vary depending on whether Stacks assists in a search.
You may recall that our contract with Deiters & Todd allowed for us to use their firm for a new search at no cost if the library director did not serve for at least a year.
We will now pay another firm more taxpayer money.
Putting that aside, the interim director contract is problematic for four reasons.
1. The contract includes a generalized list of responsibilities for the interim director with no board-level priorities for what she will accomplish and no framework for the board to assess her performance.
2. We have an undefined budget for the work. I am concerned that the budget for the interim director work would be better allocated to performing other tasks, even if those tasks were done at a later date.
3. Our top priority should be a workplace culture assessment. The next permanent library director will not be able to succeed unless an independent third-party workplace culture assessment is conducted prior to hiring a new director. To provide objective insights into the senior management, board and staff dynamics, a firm that does not provide other services to the library should be hired to conduct the workplace culture assessment and provide recommendations to the board.
4. We appear to be hiring an interim director not to provide operational continuity, but to mitigate conflict between senior managers. This is not something that can be effectively done by someone onsite at the library for no more than 15 hours per week.
For these reasons, I am concerned that the interim director's role will not address the core issues at the library.

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: Comment on the Imminent Shattering of DG's cocooned way of living and thinking, 1

Summary of what follows
Downers Grove's (DG's) cocooned way of living and thinking is coming to an end because its way of living is not ecologically sustainable (ECOS).
And because the way of living in the US is not ECOS.
Which is why the US has been engaging in WWIII, a war against the rest of the world to be its hegemon, since the end of WWII. The purpose of that war is to maintain the US way of living by exploiting the people, resources, and products of the rest of the world.
While Americans, including residents of DG, are somewhat aware of a need to change their way of living and have taken small steps in that regard, history indicates DG and Americans more generally will begin to change 'enough' only when we have no other choice.

Evidence is accumulating that that time has come. Just as the US has no good options in its current theaters of battle against Iran and Russia, the rich world's leaders and citizens have arrived at that moment in history when we have no good options in our war against the planet and its Global Majority peoples.

Thus, we are about to discover if we are capable of changing our ways willingly and peacefully rather than unwillingly — dare i say hatefully — and violently.

Do we Americans give up global hegemony and the American way of living hegemony made possible? Do we become part of a global shift toward an ECOS way of living within limits, as the nations of the world unite to address the chaos that currently surrounds us? Or …

Do we promote ever greater chaos everywhere, on the presumption our nation will be the last one standing, remaining hegemon even as we (humans) all grow poorer and struggle to survive?

But how can we remain hegemon — for that matter, how can we even be the last one standing — when we have become a nation mired in hubris, duplicity, cruelty, and intellectual and cultural ignorance, our institutions are broken, and our citizenry so polarized and irresponsible?

Resentful that hegemony is lost and believing unified pursuit of ECOS is a bridge too far, do US political leaders ultimately resort to the so-called Samson option and deploy the nation's nuclear arsenal, setting off a chain reaction of nuclear MADness?

Thrilling the psychopaths, sociopaths, and eschatologically minded amongst us.

Or will enough of us recognize that the only sensible 'choice' we have - in the face of socio-political economic chaos, climate chaos, and nuclear annihilation — is to live ECOS, i.e., to live within ecologic political economic limits?

Life in DG's future is NOT going to be a smooth extension of its past.

VC's Long Range Planning and Comp Plan have yet to recognize this reality.

History suggests VC's preferred approach is to react to disturbances to the cocoon.

The challenge facing VC and residents will be their need to change DG's way of living far more and far faster than any prior disturbance to the cocoon has required.

The key question: Will DG choose to support a destructive path or a constructive path to an ecologically sustainable way of living and thinking?

++++++++ Part One

Background

As expected VC adopted its latest, dubiously named Long Range Plan (LRP). 'Dubiously named' since 2 years is hardly considered long range, except of course in the US, where politicians assume/rely on the idea/fact most citizens can't remember/don't know what happened three months ago.

Discussion of the LRP prior to its adoption affirmed once again that DG residents and members of VC behave as if life inside DG is a cocooned existence in which what happens outside DG has little to no impact on the good life inside.

Of course that attitude is understandable if events outside the cocoon are favorable, for those inside the cocoon hardly notice. If events are unfavorable on the other hand, those inside the cocoon will notice and make some adjustments; but they assume events outside the cocoon will soon resume being favorable again.

VC's plans at root always strive for more population and economic growth. The objective is an article of faith at every level of government in the US. It is an article of faith because that is what

a capitalist economy is supposed to do. And Americans are taught to believe theirs is the model capitalist economy, the one everyone else in the world tries to emulate.

Covid should have broken the cocooned way of living and thinking within DG and VC, but instead reinforced it. Why? Because fed government handouts minimized covid's financial impact on local governments, their local economies, and the US economy more generally.

With both the US government and the private sector seemingly able to keep increasing their respective debt levels with no ill effects, it's hard not to believe — as American leaders contend — America's debt doesn't matter.

In fact, debt doesn't matter until it does. Notably, from a balance sheet perspective, one person's/entity's debt is someone else's asset, the appearance of wealth. That identity manifests as the growing economic inequality and political polarization of American society.

The increasing financialization of the US economy in recent decades— the growing economic dominance of the so-called FIRE sector (finance, insurance, and real estate) — is tracked in GDP terms not as the negative it is but as a positive. This misunderstanding has meant that even as the US de-industrialized, our political economic leaders and the media were telling us to believe the US is the richest nation in the world and has the largest, most productive economy.

In the initial decades after WWII when those two claims were true, the US dominated the world's political economic activity and institutions. In that context Americans were told to believe the US was a benign force for good, spreading the 'gift' of democratic capitalism to the world, with everyone in the world benefitting from US-led global economic growth this would bring. Albeit some, notably those in the rich nations, benefitting more than the rest.

What has become increasingly evident in recent decades however is that the US has in fact been operating not benignly but in imperialist fashion, producing an inequality that worsened both within and between nations. With some notable exceptions.

Michael Hudson's book Super Imperialism explicates this history. He explains that the world order the US constructed after WWII took advantage of the US coming out of the war unscathed and much more economically powerful than everyone else; that is, the rest of the world basically had no choice but to accept US terms and conditions. US leaders intended for the resulting world order to keep the US dominant, even as the world recovered from and rebuilt after the war.

Though the US went from being a net creditor in trade immediately after WWII to a net debtor nation, it retained its dominance by threatening to use either its military dominance, including its nuclear arsenal, or its financial dominance — or both — to destroy any nation who tried to escape.

Except of course for the communist bloc, notably the USSR now Russia and China. Soviet leaders recognized the US-centric/dominant nature of the global economic order the US was building and refused to submit to it, fearing doing so endangered its national security (as subsequent events proved true).

US leaders remain committed to bringing both Russia and China under US domination, but the political economic reality is that at this juncture it's too late.

China's economic miracle, its amazing growth over especially the past 50 years, and the international structures it is helping build, now provide the world with an alternative. Ironically, it's an alternative the US helped make possible thanks to the US de-industrializing — US corps off-shored production to attain higher profit margins using China's less expensive workers to make things. China is now 'manufacturer to the world'. Much of what Americans consume is

made in China, either in part or in toto. China even makes products such as electric cars US leaders prevent/discourage Americans from buying.
The US is so far behind China as a manufacturing capacity at this juncture, it is difficult to imagine what it can do to catch up. What may be its most insurmountable problem is China's greater output of home-grown engineers and scientists compared to the US.
The US has relied heavily on immigrants to supplement its production of engineers and scientists. With the rise of China's education system compared to the US and if immigrants feel less welcome in the US, the direction of that flow may change even more to China's advantage.
While the US competition against the USSR led for a time to an emphasis on STEM education during the initial decades after WWII, less clear is how much the ongoing funding inequity of K12 education in states across the US and the greater financial rewards of employment in the FIRE sector hinder US production of scientists and engineers.
Russia too has grown economically since ridding itself of US pernicious influence in the 1990s after Russia gave up its set of socialist republics and state control by the Communist Party. Though Russian leaders voiced a desire for good relations with Europe and the US, both showed their definition of 'good' is Russian subservience. Thus rebuffed, Russia has now turned 'eastward', toward China and the non-European part of the Eurasian continent, and to nations in Africa and to a lesser extent Latin America.
With the US unable to bring Russia to heel, Russia along with China and Iran now form the core of the alternative to the US dominated world order. This alternative offers the peoples of the poor and previously poor nations a way to escape continued colonial exploitation and expropriation of their resources, products, and labor by the global ruling class, the 1% of the so-called "golden billion," as the populations of rich nations are sometimes called.
While conventional thinking treats as independent the many conflicts in which the US has been engaged since the end of WWII, I cpntend the appropriate understanding is that US has been waging WWIII since the end of WWII. (Which is the self-evident explanation for its ever increasing military spending during those decades. "A military so powerful no one would dare challenge it.") As implied above, WWIII is a hybrid form of war waged militarily, economically/financially, and psychologically, grounded in US maintaining technological dominance that underpins them. The war's objective is to keep the US global hegemon.
In WWIII the US opposes any nation's move toward national independence, self-determination, and sovereignty that threatens not to align with US. For example, the US has never forgiven Iran, China, Cuba, the USSR now Russia, and N Korea for attempting to chart a course independent of US 'leadership.' WWIII has wreaked havoc in places like Vietnam, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Palestine (via its subsidiary "land-based, Middle East aircraft carrier" Israel), Guatemala, Chile, and on and on.
The so-called Cold War between US and USSR and the Global War on Terror (GWOT) that followed 9/11 were each a labelling that failed to acknowledge them as phases within WWIII.
Contrary to the propaganda Americans are fed by US media, the main current kinetic (aka military) theaters of battle, the US proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and the direct war by the US and its co-belligerent subsidiary Israel against Iran, are motivated precisely by US intention to remain hegemon.
[Lest the point be missed, the US proxy war against Russia strives to prevent European nations from being integrated more closely with other Eurasian nations, especially Russia, China, and

Iran, than with the US. The US has worked diligently over the years to cultivate a political class in Europe that will protect US interests, even if to the detriment of their own nations' interests. As a Machiavellian hegemon, the US doesn't particularly mind seeing others fight, when the fight means the combatants will be weakened and less able to challenge the hegemon. Elections results this year and in 2027 will reveal how the populations of each of the countries involved interpret the nature of WWIII and their nation's role in it.]
That essence is what Americans should (but likely don't) understand when the media and almost all analysts refer to US attack on Iran in 2026 as a 'war of choice'. The 'choice' to go kinetic is the 'choice' to remain hegemon by any means necessary! US relations with Iran should be understood as driven by this motive going back not just to the 1980s (as Trump wants Americans to believe) but to the 1950s, when the US helped overthrow Iran's democratically elected president! It was one of many such acts around the world the US undertook to ensure everyone did the 'right thing', i.e., "stayed in their place" as the US defined that geopolitical economic location.
Control of global production and distribution of oil, with trade conducted using US dollars, is a core mechanism of US hegemony and thus a central aspect of WWIII.
US hegemony is the fabric of DG's cocooned way of thinking and living.

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: Comment on the Imminent Shattering of DG's cocooned way of living and thinking, 2
++++++ Part Two
VC's way of thinking and operating reflects an inadequate understanding of ECOS
I have on multiple occasions observed to VC that the American way of living, including here in DG, is not ecologically sustainable (ECOS for short).
I have also observed to VC that a) VC's way of operating falls short in addressing the lack of ECOS AND b) that which is not ECOS is not financially sustainable.
Let's review a bit my concerns.
In spite of a growing awareness of the environmental damage the American way of living has done and is doing, we have made little progress altering it. For all the concern we (humans) supposedly now have about reducing CO2 emissions worldwide by reducing consumption of fossil fuels, it's not happening. Both fossil fuel consumption and CO2 emissions continue to rise.
A key part of the failure is the failure to properly understand the meaning and nature of ECOS, as VC's latest comp plan's enviro sustainability component affirms. VC's belated signing on to the GRC (the Greenest Region Compact), its misguided hiring of an ecologist instead of an ecological economist as part of the comp plan development consultant team, its hiring of a sustainability coordinator, and its resurrection of the ECC have done little to dent the ignorance of either VC or DG residents.
The problem starts with the phrase "environmental sustainability." As typically understood and used, it's a synonym for "more environmentally concerned." Which is generally interpreted to

mean “pollute less” and “consume less” or “consume differently.” Hence, the name and focus of VC’s Environmental Concerns Commission.

Almost no one interprets ‘sustainability’ literally and holistically, in theory or in practice.

Thus, for one notable example, VC’s sustainability plan makes no effort to reduce fossil fuel consumption by DG in any way other than the usual, politically acceptable way of encouraging less consumption in the future than was the amount in the past.

The ECC’s big pledge program is a perfect example of encouraging the goal of ‘less’ on an individual basis, leaving it to the individual to choose whether or not to participate and what amount of ‘less’ one can tolerate.

As of this writing (Nov 2026), VC gives no indication how and when — if ever — it will measure the cumulative total of these individual efforts to pursue ‘less’.

Nor does VC try to gauge if ‘less’ is ‘enough.’ Why not? Because “enough” invokes what to VC is the forbidden idea of limits, including limits to growth.

Together these two omissions allow VC to continue to pursue both population and political economic growth, unencumbered by any concern about ‘environmental sustainability’.

I have repeatedly reminded VC and residents that neither is possible in DG without Chi’s political leaders being willing to commit municipal self harm by selling water to its suburban neighbors. When these towns are located outside the Lake Michigan watershed, that action violates a key tenet of the great lakes compact, since none of them, including DG, return that water to the lake as the compact purportedly requires. GRC’s muni signatories conveniently turn a blind eye to this transgression.

Not surprisingly then, VC refuses to address the basic questions I have put to it repeatedly over the years:

Is the capitalist economy of the US compatible with ECOS,
is democracy as practiced in the US compatible with ECOS, and
is pursuit of endless population and econ growth compatible with ECOS?

Why doesn’t VC address these questions? Because as DG’s belated signing onto the GRC suggests, VCs and DG are followers not leaders. Since no muni or state govt in the US has provided either a practical or theoretical example adequately addressing these questions, DG simply follows the examples available to it, adopting or adapting those that are politically acceptable within DG — which is to say, politically conservative ideas.

Not surprisingly then, DG residents offer no social pressure for VC to think or act differently. The village’s primary volunteer organization concerned about the environment, Greener Grove (greenergrove dot org), aligns perfectly with VC’s ‘lifestyle choices’ approach to alleviating one’s ‘concern’.

VC’s ignorant-of-ECOS way of thinking is typically on display in its planning and zoning discussions and decisions. Such as its discussion of the rezoning request to permit 1020 31st St be converted from commercial office space to residential apartment living.

In that discussion, VC tacitly acknowledged that first among its primary goals is ever more property tax revenue. The justification for rezoning? The need to repurpose the building since apparently no one believes it will ever again succeed as commercial office space.

VC’s approval of the request is consistent with VC’s pattern for DG: ‘develop’ “empty space” in one way or another wherever it exists, with a few notable exceptions; redevelop filled space with something more lucrative, always in pursuit of increasing amounts of tax revenue.

A key mechanism of VC's push for growth is its wholly owned subsidiary, the EDC (Economic Development Corp). Not surprisingly, EDC's regular quarterly reports to VC, such as the one at VC's 04 Aug meeting, focus on its effort to promote commercial development within DG and make no mention of environmental sustainability as a factor influencing its work. Because it isn't a factor. But hey: Three cheers, tax collections were up!!!

VC's ECOS-ignorance underpins its siloed method of thinking and operating. Notably, while the ECC pledge encourages residents to reduce one's individual environmental (?) footprint, VC ignores the key question: How does ADDing residents and businesses to DG — that is, always expanding the capacity to increase resource consumption within the village — reduce DG's total ecological footprint?? Let alone reduce it ENOUGH!

Particularly damning in that regard, for example, was the unsurprising data from VC's "attainable housing report" that most of the people who work in DG live well outside DG. Similarly, much of DG's employed population works outside DG. Does DG or VC ponder how sustainable that arrangement is? Not that I see.

Likewise, almost everything consumed within DG is produced outside DG, Does VC or DG show any concern about the sustainable availability of those supplies in future? Not that I see.

The failure of siloed thinking is demonstrated by the new Village Hall itself. VC has never shown how the facility's purportedly more environmentally friendly impact compares to the environmental impact of the multi-story, multi-unit building on Lot 2 that VC sold to a private developer to help pay for VC's new home. My working hypothesis: the net effect of the two facilities increases resource consumption. By at least the ratio of occupants of the new mid-rise to occupants of the village hall.

The insightful observer will appreciate that the question of doing enough applies at every level of government. It suggests why the GRC as presently practiced is another instance of failure, little more than political conscience laundering. Stated differently, efforts like the DG pledge and GRC thus far fail to address the structural underpinnings of our ecologically unsustainable way of living.

Evidence of the problem may be seen from the announcement on DG's website that VC and staff won the top award in the two categories of competition at the Sep 2026 DuPage County Mayors and Managers Conference Innovation Celebration, Best Overall Program and Best Presentation. DG's 'innovation': its sustainability program, featuring its Greener Way Guide encouraging citizen participation; its presentation: a humorous video promoting the program. The problem? The Innovation award reflects VC's inadequate understanding and effort; and their fellow govt officials in their own inadequate understanding reward it! Which is to say: Muni govts congratulate themselves for showing environmental concern and encouraging concern amongst their residents, but more often than not ignore structural issues, avoid setting target goals, and do not measure actual muni-wide/county-wide performance that would be appropriate/essential if one were truly striving for ECOS.

[Sidenote: Some political conservatives actually have the chutzpah to argue economic inequality in the US has a positive sustainability effect because, even in their conspicuous consumption, the upper classes consume an amount less than the amount that would be consumed were society more equal.]

In a nutshell, the prevailing attitude in VC — as is true with other munis and at higher levels of government — is "what we don't want to know won't hurt us."

Given this history and context, one readily concludes that VC and DG will persist in its ECOS ignorance unless forced to do otherwise.
What lies ahead at this moment in history will compel those inside the cocoon to re-examine the aptness of their ECOS-ignorance and their relentlessly pursuing growth.
+++++++ Part Three
The US-dominated world order is restructuring; Its impact will affect DG's way of living and thinking and (one hopes) VC's way of operating. DG's future is not going to be a smooth continuation of its past.
VC's ignorant-of-ECOS way of thinking was also evident in its discussion of future budgeting and the need to deal with major issues of its pension fund, health fund, and facility replacement/refurbishing needs.
In particular, in discussing ideas of how to deal with the looming budget concerns, the VM indicated that revenue projections for the near term can be extrapolated from the recent past to anticipate continued steady increases.
I would argue on the other hand such expectations/projections blithely ignore not only the stimulative impact of the monetary policy decisions made at the federal level in recent years — indeed, decades — but also the many substantial challenges Americans and the peoples of the world face that the stimulation exacerbated, most importantly
increasing climate chaos, global peaking of oil production, and the restructuring of the international political economic order, including the threat of nuclear annihilation (mutually assured destruction) by rogue states such as the US and Israel, whose ruling class and elites and their supporters see their way of living endangered by the restructuring.
Each of these alone would dramatically affect the American way of living; together they will produce a level of tumult for which Americans, including DG residents, are totally unprepared.
This larger, long-term threatening reality is most evident in the immediate, near-term threatening reality of the WWIII battlefronts, the US war against Iran and its allies in West Asia and the US-led, NATO-supported war against Russia via (thus far) its/their proxy Ukraine.
The fighting in West Asia and Eastern Europe/Russia revealed that nukes are not the only way humans have to end life as we know it. In spite of the concept's logical defensibility, the notion and implications of "peak oil" have been ignored or discounted in the US for decades. "Logically defensible" in the sense that petroleum is a non-renewable resource, which by definition means its supply is limited and depletes when it is extracted and used. 'Peak oil' refers to the top of the world's oil production curve, the 'moment' when half the total worldwide supply has been extracted and used. Energy analysts monitoring the issue anticipate the moment is not too far off.
In spite of the fighting, petrol prices had not risen as much as many observers expected … until gas/petrol and diesel/jet fuel prices spiked higher in mid Sep 2026.
Why did they spike? Because the factors pinching supply could not be negated forever, factors such as a) the attacks on oil facilities in the Persian Gulf region by Iran in response to its being attacked by US and Israel, b) the shutting down of oil shipping out of the region — 20% plus of the world's exported oil from the Strait of Hormuz alone, b.1) shutting down shipping through the Bab al-Mandeb strait and Ansar Allah attacks on KSA oil facilities, c) Russia's decision to stop exporting diesel in response to Ukraine's US/British guided drone attacks on Russian refineries,

d) the US drawing down supply in its so-called strategic petroleum reserve in an effort to hold down prices (Sidenote: energy industry analysts contend prices were in fact held down in large part because China reduced purchases during the initial months of the West Asia fighting), and e) the increase in “ton-miles” of oil shipping (barrels multiplied by distance traveled) the war has caused, longer trips per vessel yielding a shortage of available vessels (beyond those ‘stuck’ in the Persian Gulf), which in turn drives up the cost of employing a tanker by eye-popping percentages (from five figure amounts to low seven figure amounts), https://sonar21.com/heading-back-to-the-usa-where-diesel-is-still-rising/
e.1) the rising cost of insuring tankers e.2) the literal reduction in the number of available tankers due to military attack, both inside and outside the Persian Gulf.
Under such conditions, manipulating the benchmark price of crude in the futures market — to give the impression adequate supply will be available in the not-too-distant future — becomes increasingly difficult, Trump and Trump Party candidates for political offices assurances to the contrary (‘less than $2 a gallon’, “right after the US mid-terms”) not withstanding.
Indeed, these factors argue against the belief fighting in these theaters can go on “for years.”
It remains to be seen if/how much the war in fact brings forward the peak oil moment because the war’s impact leads to irreparable damage of oil fields.
Which begs the crucial questions:
Will nations come to value the remaining fields as a treasured resource needed to ease the task of shared (non-zero sum) transitioning to an ecologically sustainable level of geo-political economic complexity? Or …Will nations destroy the fields as a tactic in the war between rich nations (exploiting nations) and poor nations (previously exploited nations) or some variation thereof as they pursue a destructive (zero sum) path to an ecologically sustainable level of geo-political economic complexity? Furthermore, the danger to us all is not simply with nuclear bombs and damaged oil fields. The fighting in the Ukraine and West Asia theaters revealed that so long as humanity accepts war as an acceptable means of settling differences, nuke power plants, nuke waste retention ponds, nuke reprocessing facilities, and the like, and fossil fuel energy and chemical production, processing, and distribution facilities, and the means of transporting product from one location to another amount to pre-positioned biochemical weapons. And these days, they’re everywhere!
(Sidenote: The icing on that cake? The adverse health after-effects of 9/11 suggest widespread military destruction of urban areas in rich countries will yield harmful chemical exposures from damaged buildings and their contents.)
Clever as we well-off humans living in rich nations want to think we are, the question we confront could not be more basic: Does our species choose life or self-destruction?
The Ukraine and West Asia conflicts indicate the days of US hegemony are numbered. Why? Because the US has no path to victory in either theatre short of bringing down the entire world through either direct attempt at nuclear annihilation of Iran and Russia, which opens the door to nuke response, or indirect nuke/missile-induced global economic catastrophe as a consequence of Iran’s and Russia’s and their allies’ responses to being attacked. Can/will the US give up hegemony without bringing an end to life on earth as we know it?
The US pursued hegemony because since the nation’s founding its way of living and thinking ignored the paramount requirement of ecological sustainability. Its unsustainable way of living reinforced its leaders’ desire to achieve ‘greatness’ for the nation; the nation needed to exploit

the rest of the world in order to maintain its way of living once it depleted the resources within its continental boundaries.
Unfortunately, since neither major political party in the US is prepared to give up the pursuit of national greatness or acknowledge the geo-political economic ramifications of the imperative of ecological sustainability, they join together to keep the American people in the dark about nature of the nation's situation. 'In the dark' notably that the resistance the US now faces around the world is resistance to its imperial effort to put the ecological and political economic cost of its ecologically unsustainable way of living onto everyone else.
In other words, unable to restrain itself and facing no resistance from Americans beneath their upper class ranks, the US ruling class forces the rest of the world to restrain it and the nation's unsustainable way of living.
Are VC and DG residents prepared to give up their cocooned way of thinking and living?
Are VC and DG residents prepared to deal with the repercussions and responsibilities of the US no longer being global hegemon? Are they prepared to live within political economic ecological limits? Are they prepared to re-examine their belief in capitalism? in the American version of democracy?
(Sidenote: The two together are usually labelled by the euphemism "liberal democracy," where 'liberal' is the code word for 'capitalism'. In other words, democracy in polity, capitalism in the economy. Americans are taught to believe the former works best only if the latter holds.)
If they were, then they would start by questioning VC's Comp Plan and the financial projections VM cited as the means for implementing the LRP.
They would join me in doubting that VM's financial projections for either the near term or out to 2040 and 2050 include scenarios built upon assumptions of stock market crash (the US stock market has never been more overpriced than it is right now), economic depression, widespread bankruptcy and defaulting on debt (including mortgages), debauching of the nation's currency (aka bond market crash), the peaking of global oil production, resource shortages and rationing, disrupted and/or blocked supply chains, or worsening drought, famine, plagues, floods, wildfires, windstorms (tornados and hurricanes), heat and/or cold waves, sea level rise, and the like, and the need to deal wth the associated breakdown and rebuilding of the political economic order, both intra and inter nationally.
In other words, if they were, they would realize DG's future is NOT going to be and should not be a smooth continuation of its past.
If DG's goal is truly ECOS, DG residents will recognize they should have started years ago changing dramatically DG's way of thinking and living.
Since they didn't, they/we must hope trying to do so now is not too late.

Agenda Section & Item: Comments of a General Nature
Commenter: David Rose
Comment: Comment on the Imminent Shattering of DG's cocooned way of living and thinking, 3
++++++++++ Part Four
The Choice We Face, The Task Ahead.
In the US, financial imperatives often drive policy. DG's VCs have been fortunate that their effort in recent decades to make up for past failure to collect sufficient tax and to pay some attention

to what VC calls “environmental sustainability” took place at a time when larger trends in the US facilitated VC’s preferred policy options.
VC’s overriding goal has been to pursue population and economic growth. It’s hardly unique among muni governments in that regard.
VC’s concern for the environment is not sustainability but ‘protection’, particularly of the environment within DG’s boundaries. So long as the concern doesn’t interfere with VC’s pursuit of growth.
For both DG and the US, a proper understanding of ecological sustainability recognizes that relentless pursuit of growth is a death trap. At the national level in the US, relentless pursuit of growth unrestrained by a proper understanding of ECOS has led to a world order in which a significant portion of the rest of the world now strives to restrain the US, both for their own well-being and sovereignty and, one hopes, to avoid a planetary-wide death trap.
Which is precisely what makes proper understanding of ECOS in places like DG so important. Absent that understanding and associated change of direction, continued pursuit of growth at the micro level (in munis like DG) drives and is driven by continued pursuit of growth at the macro level (in the US pursuit to remain global hegemon).
Which is to say: WWIII ends either when the US chooses to change direction and pursues ECOS or when the nations in the rest of the world defeat it militarily and force it to stop its rapacious behavior.
All of which is to say: Either DG chooses to abandon its cocooned, unsustainable way of thinking and living or events in the larger world will force it to.
Like anyone facing a death trap, we can make a bad choice and continue on. Or we can make a life-saving choice and change direction.
The latter will require changes to DG’s way of thinking and living far beyond what VC and residents currently contemplate.
The guiding principle going forward? Rapacious behavior by anyone is not acceptable because it is incompatible with ECOS.
The task ahead is straightforward to describe but extremely difficult to achieve.
Under our current (capitalist) way of living and thinking, pursuit of growth is theoretically intended to ameliorate problems and yield “a better life for everyone.” The rewards of growth under capitalism are not evenly distributed; some receive more than others. But growth is intended to make everyone happy and happier than before.
Growth as it happened in practice in recent decades, however, has led to extreme inequality. A relative few reap the bulk of the rewards, a portion do ok and are satisfied, but the majority feel they are not reaping the benefits of growth at all and struggle to hang in there. This result is true both domestically and internationally.
The reality of ecological sustainability imposes the requirement of sustainability as THE priority of a society’s economic activity. It requires a society’s way of living be sustainable relative to its ecological limits. If it is not, then the society must reduce its rate of resource production/consumption to a sustainable rate. How that reduction is to be achieved and distributed is the key question. In particular, does the process also strive for equality and equity, what I would term a constructive bottom-up approach path; or does it strive to maintain inequality and inequity, in a destructive, top-down approach? The former is a democratic approach in which decisions are made and implemented by the people; the latter is a fascist approach in which decisions are made by elites and affirmed and implemented by their minions.

The destructive top-down way kills people and destroys things, starting with the least powerful and poorest, working up from there, until the remaining numbers of people and their capacity and skill to do work yield a sustainable rate of resource production/consumption. The elites and ruling class of the society strive to minimize the impact of the society-wide push for sustainability on their own way of living. Stated differently, during the period of degrowth (demand/supply destruction) ahead, instead of the rich willingly reversing the pattern practiced during growth periods and giving up proportionately more than everyone else, they cling to their prior unequal rewards and expect/require everyone else to sacrifice disproportionately more.

By contrast, the constructive, bottom-up way involves the society's members democratically determining what constitutes a minimum acceptable standard of living for every member such that the total amount produced/consumed remains below the sustainable rate. Because shifting from an un-sustainable to a sustainable way of living is a process of degrowth (demand/supply destruction), the rich are expected/required to reverse the pattern followed during periods of growth and give back/up proportionately more than everyone else.

For a society whose current way of living and thinking is not sustainable to reshape both, the constructive way entails

i) figuring out its society-wide sustainable rate of production/consumption, given the ecological limits of the world in which it lives,

ii) figuring out how to reduce its overall society-wide rate of production/consumption by

iii) deciding the standard of living that constitutes an acceptable minimum for everyone in the society because that standard allows everyone to be a contributing productive member, i.e., able to contribute to both their personal human and society's collective development,

iv) lifting up those in the society below the minimum to the socially acceptable minimum while

v) reducing the resource consumption of everyone else to the extent required to stay below the society-wide sustainable rate of resource consumption the society has decided and worked to produce.

Note: If that socially determined acceptable minimum standard yields a gap relative to the amount available by the sustainable rate they decided to produce, the members then further decide how to distribute that 'surplus amount' available for consumption. Members decide how to distribute that amount among themselves and their enterprises, for public and private, individual and collective, productive and non-productive, maintaining and exploring, present and future purposes.

The goal of the constructive approach is not a way of living that pursues ever more growth. The goal is a way of living that is ecologically sustainable and promotes sustainable human development.

The coincident challenge the constructive approach obviously faces in a rich nation like the US is gaining enough political economic power to bring about the structural changes required to pursue its course of action.

At present, DG by VC's own admission continues to pursue growth.

History suggests DG will pursue ecological sustainability only when it has no other choice.

My assessment is that we are at or near that moment.

What will DG do: will it choose to support the constructive path or the destructive path to ECOS? That is the question.

If pattern holds, DG will stay well behind other munis facing the same choice … unless the 'moment' makes everyone's 'choice' unavoidably 'obvious' and urgent.

++++++ Semi-technical corollary note:
ECOS is measured accurately if and only if measured relative to a closed economically self-sufficient social system. Which is to say: a society that trades with one or more others cannot declare itself ECOS because it is not self-sufficient. ECOS in that situation is accurately assessed relative to the closed system defined by the set of trading partners. In today's world of widespread global trading, ECOS can be assessed accurately only as a global metric.
CO2 emissions have gotten the attention they have as a key metric because their impact on oceans, atmosphere, and land cannot be compartmentalized. That is, emissions by residents living inside the US do not remain confined to the land, water, and airspace above the US. Likewise, as implied above, a muni such as DG cannot measure its ECOS by focusing solely on activity within its boundaries when almost all of its economic life depends on activity outside its boundaries.
This in turn complicates its effort to determine both its ecological limit and its most efficient path for undoing.
The default answer to the first question might refer to the history of the region before its 'development' using non-renewable resources.
Obvious difficulty with this interpretation is the implicit path to it: the smaller population occupying the land coincident with that limit and the difficult question of how to reduce population willingly/voluntarily. Similarly difficult is the issue of the physical structures of 'modern' living and how to remove those that are not maintainable under the sustainable way of living one seeks.
If this default seems impossible to reach, an alternative approach would entail some kind of iterative process in which at each step the task is to demonstrate a way of living that can be sustained in a period/context of diminishing supply of energy-slaves. That is, the society/nation adopts reducing its energy consumption at an annual rate as an objective, and figures out how to adjust its way of living accordingly.
A constructive approach in this case would target energy usage of the rich and work 'down' from there.
A destructive path would target usage by the poor and works its way up.
That a destructive approach could be 'managed' as an orderly reduction of usage is highly unlikely, however. Undertaken during a time of shrinking supply of energy-slaves, it would be recognized as simply an indirect way of killing off the poor. The name for such an approach? Relying on the market and market pricing.
Or a destructive path might simply kill off people more directly, again starting from the bottom. War, disease, and famine are humanity's/history's usual tools in this regard. Again, however, that such culling could be confined to a bottom-up approach seems highly unlikely. Unlikely that is unless one believes the bottom will welcome the opportunity to sacrifice their lives so the top can delay for a brief period the moment when their own way of living must shrink.
In other words, both destructive paths obliterate any claim/notion of shared humanity
Unfortunately, aggravating humanity's problem at this moment in history is the fact its toolkit of (self-) destruction includes nuclear weapons. According to discussions of war gaming exercises about which I've heard, nuclear exchange will be instantaneous and all-encompassing not iterative and 'manageable'.
The destructive path, in other words, obviates the need to determine either ecological limit or efficient path to it. The destruction opens the way for nature to repopulate and avoids the

difficult societal problem of deciding whose ox will be gored during degrowth … because everyone's ox gets gored.

To state the obvious inference from this line of argument: rich nations such as the US have thus far chosen the destructive path. This is true regardless of the political party in charge at any level of government.

The conflict with Iran demonstrates that in today's globally connected world the effects of destruction cannot be confined to one's intended target of destruction. The scientific reports about climate chaos, global warming, and the like should have been sufficient warnings in that regard, but clearly weren't. The future availability of energy or lack thereof will not be so easy to discount or ignore.

The era of ignoring the imperative of ecological sustainability is coming to an end.

For no one has proven that the level of man-made complexity we have built up is ecologically sustainable. That task would include proof of the capacity to perform the 'miracle' of turning non-renewable resources into renewable resources. Even were we to realize that miracle, the imperative would remain the same: the need to limit rate of consumption to a rate less than the rate of renewal. Assessed holistically, systemically.

Which begs the related question: Will our current era of zero-sum way of thinking and living give way to an era of non-zero-sum thinking and living? both within our species and between our species and the universe and planet that gave birth to us and will continue to sustain us for a long time to come … though only if we show ourselves grateful enough and wise enough to let it? That is the question.

What have we done to our species-selves we even have to ask that question?

The time has come to believe in our shared humanity and behave accordingly. That is, to believe and behave in our species members' shared capacity to develop one's individual potential and thereby to contribute to development of one's community's potential (in mutual reciprocity) and so on up the level of socio-political economic complexity to contribute thereby to the development of our species' potential. Potential to begin to understand and appreciate both the beauty and the incomprehensibility of what it means to be alive, to be part of the Community of Life.