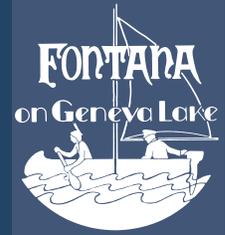


Village of Fontana Newsletter

Winter 2005



President's Report: 'Government Never Listens'

"It is easiest to live with a decision if it is based on an earnest sense of right and wrong."

John Chatterton

There is a general impression that government bodies don't listen to the public, but in fact do what they please. There is plenty of basis for this, particularly if you come to a Village Board meeting, express an opinion and the board then does something totally different.

The fact that your "new idea" is not instantly acted upon is based on the government's filtering system. Most projects and major decisions that the village makes originate in a committee.

These projects go through several months of shaping and refining by committee members and village staff (the village has weekly staff meetings with public works, protection, and building inspectors).

By the time a project reaches the public portion of a board meeting, dozens of alternatives have been suggested and the final committee recommendation to the board is a composite of all the brainstorming. It is quite possible your idea was already taken into consideration. Without knowing the background, the visitor is left with the impression that their time and effort has been wasted. Not so. Suggestions from village property owners are always welcome, appreciated and folded into the solution. Let me give you a few examples:

Skip Bliss, Al Klein and others asked, after the general election in November, to open the polls earlier than 9am. They felt many people missed the opportunity to vote, despite absentee ballots being available for the month prior. It was a good suggestion. The Village has appointed some new election workers and will make every effort to expand the voting hours during general elections.

Ray Garlanger from Country Club Estates wrote us and explained that the Public Works Department had just hacked up his pristine landscaping during our routine roadside trimming. Mr. Garlanger was very upset.

Both Craig, our Public Works Director, and Kelly, our Village Administrator, visited with Mr. Garlanger and made a plan to improve the situation.

See **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** - Page 6



Tom and Geri Whowell

Administrator's Report: The Year in Review

By Kelly E. Hayden-Staggs
Village Administrator

Where does the time go? It seems like only a short time ago we were preparing the year in review for 2003.

The Village of Fontana's team members and government officials maintained their standard aggressive pace, and accomplished a significant amount of work this year.

The following are highlights of 2004:

1. Abbey Renovations

Early in 2004, the Abbey

withdrew their \$100 million plan for a complete tear down and rebuild, and submitted a revised version that simplified the project to remodeling the existing rooms. In March of 2004 the Village approved a condominium plat that enabled the Abbey to sell 334 rooms to individual owners and turn the Abbey Resort into a Condo Hotel.

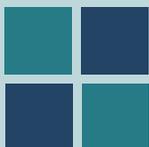
The Abbey closed down the hotel in late November and began their remodeling project, with the intent to reopen the facility in January of 2005.

2. New Assessor

After soliciting RFPs (request for proposals) from assessment firms across the state the Village Board contracted with Accurate Appraisal, LLC, located in Menasha, Wisconsin. The village-wide revaluation process will commence in 2005. The revaluation process will ensure that all property owners are assessed at a fair and equitable rate.

Those homeowners who have not already had their property

See **ADMINISTRATOR** - Page 5



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New Lift Station Location Addresses Two Concerns

Reid Park Plan Saves Village Funds, Upgrades Restroom Facilities

By Craig Workman, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Do you think the residents of Northern California had second thoughts before proceeding with Joseph Strauss' plan to build the Golden Gate Bridge?

The answer is, "Yes." In fact they had third and fourth thoughts before obtaining a \$35 million bond in 1928 to build the 1.2-mile suspension bridge. Before its completion in 1933, it was referred to as the "Bridge that couldn't be built" because of the persistently foggy weather, 60-mile-per-hour winds, and strong ocean currents, which whip through the deep canyon below. However, the bridge was built and is now considered one of the architectural marvels of the 20th Century.

I would now like to discuss with you the Village of Fontana's new plan to relocate our Main Lift Pumping Station (MLPS) to Reid Park. Does this project even begin to compare in scope to the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge? Obviously not; however, the Golden Gate Bridge is a perfect example of a project that sounded ludicrous to construct, but wound up becoming an accomplishment that will be included in engineering curriculum forever.

At this point, you may be asking yourself, "What happened to our plan to relocate the MLPS to the west side of Highway 67?" Well, in order for that location to become a reality, we would need to install approximately 1,000 feet of sewer main

through the northwest corner of the Abbey Resort property. During easement negotiations with the Abbey, it was quickly realized that this main would not be installed under mutual agreement. Without an easement in place, it will be nearly impossible for us to construct the MLPS on the west side of Highway 67.

With this in mind, allow me to walk you through the benefits of the Reid Park location.

Multi-functional Structure

The most important thing to keep in mind as you read this article is the fact that we will be constructing the new MLPS below ground. In addition, the proposed site of the new facility would allow us to rebuild the existing restrooms in Reid Park.

Although this restroom facility was constructed just a short time ago in 1998, the last six years have proven that they are not quite as functional as the original design of the facility, which was much larger before being reduced by budget cuts. Anyone who has been to the annual Lions Club Lobster Boil since the erection of the structure will quickly agree.

Constructing the new MLPS in the location of the park restrooms will allow us to create a restroom facility that will be much more attractive and better meet today's needs.

Most importantly, by installing the majority of the lift station components below ground, the above-ground structure will be approximately the same size as the current restroom facil-



A BELOW-GROUND facility under the Reid Park restroom building is being designed for the location of the Village's new Main Lift Pumping Station.

ity.

Stringent new stormwater management regulations introduced by the DNR will require the Village to treat the stormwater collected by the new storm sewer that is being installed in 2006 as part of the Highway 67 project. The location of the MLPS in Reid Park appears to be the perfect place to achieve this goal. In doing so, we will be able to use the same 1,200-foot stretch of trench to bury both the force main that will need to be replaced as part of the MLPS project, as well as the storm sewer that will need to be installed to convey stormwater from Highway 67 to the lake.

Similar to the lift station components, all of the stormwater treatment components will be constructed below ground, with the only sign of their existence being a manhole cover.

Project Cost

Although the idea of relocating the main lift station to the west side of Highway 67 made sense for a lot of reasons, we anticipated project costs to be as high as \$2.6 million. By

changing the location of the MLPS to Reid Park we will save several hundred thousand dollars.

Pipe Elimination

By constructing the MLPS in Reid Park, the Village will be able to eliminate approximately 750 feet of failing sewer interceptor that currently runs beneath Reid Park and the main parking lot. In addition, we will eliminate and/or replace approximately 1,500 feet of problematic force main that runs from the existing MLPS to Douglas Street.

There is no question that I have focused this article on the benefits of the project. But make no mistake, during the construction phase of the project the central portion of the park will not be accessible, nor will it look like a park. However, we will plan on beginning the construction a few weeks after Labor Day, which should allow us enough time to have the restoration completed by the following Memorial Day.

In fact, when it is all said and done, I think we will have our own little piece of Northern California

Fair Market Value:

State Statutes Dictate Village-Wide Reassessment in 2005

Accurate Appraisal, LLC Provides Answers

By **Dennis Martin**
Village Clerk

Wisconsin State Statutes dictate that all municipalities must set property assessments within 10 percent of fair market value at least once in a five-year period.

After receiving notification from the state that the Village of Fontana must comply with this State Statute by 2006, the Village Board contracted with Accurate Appraisal, LLC, Menasha, to conduct a village-wide revaluation of all property.

Accurate Appraisal is a statewide assessing firm that has a mission "to provide premium service and a product that meets the selected needs of its clients in an accessible, responsive, professional and courteous manner," according to its Website (located at www.accurateassessor.com). Accurate Appraisal has provided service to communities of all sizes throughout the state, including the cities

of Elkhorn, Beaver Dam, Portage, Stoughton, Delafield, Rhinelander, Brillion, Chilton, Ripon, De Pere, Fort Atkinson and Edgerton, and the villages of Necedah, Cambridge, Sullivan, Pardeeville, Cambria, Paddock Lake and Genoa City. They also work for more than 10 townships in the state.

The main contact for the Village of Fontana's revaluation is James Danielson, and Rick Vanden Boogart is the project manager. Vanden Boogart and his field staff will conduct site visits this summer.

Danielson stated his firm's goal is "to be fair and equitable, as well as to educate the village on the process" of conducting a revaluation.

"In order to value property on a fair and equitable basis, we will be

physically viewing the properties within the village," he stated.

"This process entails a walk-through of the home that takes approximately 10 minutes, and a check of the exterior dimensions to correctly figure out the square footage of the home. If you are not home upon the initial visit, we will measure the outside and send you a letter requesting an appointment to view the interior at your convenience. This process insures accurate data collection, which is an integral part of an equitable assess-



James Danielson



Rick Vanden Boogart

• **Will my property value change?**

Most likely, yes. Some neighborhoods and property types may have increased in value and others may have remained the same. One purpose of a revaluation is to make sure that the assessed values reflect the changes that have occurred in property values.

• **When will the revaluation start?**

The revaluation is scheduled to start in the summer. The new assessment values will be the basis for the tax bill which will be mailed in December of 2005.

• **Is it necessary for the assessor to view the inside of my property?**

Yes. To make a proper assessment on a building, it is desirable that the assessor see the inside as well as the outside of the property.

• **What if I refuse to let assessment personnel in**

my property?

To ensure an accurate assessment of your property, it is to your advantage to allow the assessment personnel inside your property when an inspection is requested. By denying an inspection, you lose your right to appeal your assessment to the Board of Review.

• **How can my assessment change when I haven't done anything to my property?**

As property values change in the marketplace, those changes must be reflected on the assessment roll. Economic conditions such as recent home sales in your neighborhood, sales of reasonable comparable buildings, and inflation will influence the value of your real estate.

See REASSESSMENT - Page 4

Accurate Appraisal, LLC

Contact Information:

Telephone: (800) 770-3927

Address: 1428 Midway Road, P.O. Box 415,
Menasha, WI 54952-0415

Fax: (920) 749-8099

E-mail: info@accurateassessor.com

ment," Danielson stated.

Common Questions

Danielson provided the following list of common revaluation questions and answers:

• **What is a revaluation?**

A revaluation is an update of all assessments in the municipality under the direction of an assessor or assessing firm. Accurate Appraisal is a state certified firm that has been contracted to discover, list and value all taxable real property in the village, in a uniform and equitable manner.

• **Why is the revaluation necessary?**

Municipalities are required by State Statutes to maintain property assessments within 10 percent of fair market value at least once in a five-year period.

Piers & Harbor Gearing Up for 2005 Summer Season

The Lakefront and Harbor Committee had a successful summer in 2004 and is already gearing up for the 2005 season! Area residents should watch for the help wanted ads to hit the local papers in February and consider applying for a part-time summer lakefront position with the Village of Fontana. Jobs available are beach house, launch ramp and parking lot attendants. Hours are flexible and we encourage senior citizens to apply.

The 2005 leases for Village moorings (shorestation slips, buoys and ramps) will be mailed in late January and will reflect an increase. The lease costs for 2005 are as follows: Slips - \$1,650, Buoys - \$650, and Ramps - \$200, plus applicable sales tax.

We receive many questions at the Village Hall about where people can moor their boats. The Village of Fontana currently has 30 pier slips (for shorestations), 27 buoys, and 22 ramp spaces that are available for lease. There are waiting lists for these moorings and anyone can get on the waiting lists by registering at the Village Hall and submitting a \$75 deposit. The waiting list for slips currently has 95 names on it, the buoy list has 52 names, and the ramp list is at 43 names. The waiting lists have priorities in this order:

- Priority 1 = Grandfathered in (on the list as of November 20, 2002).
- Priority 2 = Full-time Fontana resident (property taxpayer and registered voter).

• Priority 3 = Part-time Fontana resident (property taxpayer, but not a resident nor voter).

• Priority 4 = Resident needing access to buoy (for ramps).

• Priority 5 = Non-resident. Applications only considered if the above priorities are met.

The maximum length of a boat that can be accommodated is 25 feet on buoys or slips. Season launch passes are sold at the Village Hall and they cost the same as the sum of 10 individual launch fees. If you launch your boat more than 10 times in the season (April 15 to October 15), purchasing a season launch pass may save you money! A current boat registration card is required to purchase a season pass.



THE PARK Commission's new signs have been installed throughout the Village by the DPW crew.

Fontana Library: Notes From Nancy

It doesn't seem possible that 2004 is drawing to a close! It was a very busy year for the library.

One of the most successful events of 2004 was a reception held for Fontana

photographer/artist Bruce Thompson to introduce his "Seasons of Geneva Lake" posters. Bruce donated 25 percent of all the proceeds of the poster sales to the See **LIBRARY** - Page 5

Reassessment

(continued from page 3)

• Do all assessments change at the same rate?

There are differences between individual properties and between neighborhoods. In one area, property sales may indicate a substantial increase in value in a given year. In another neighborhood, there may be no change, or even a decrease.

• Will I be notified if there is a change in my assessment?

Statutes require that property owners be notified of changes in the assessed value of their property.

• What if I don't agree with my assessment?

You can schedule a meeting with the assessor. During this informal session, the assessor will explain how your assess-

ment was made, view the property record for your property, discuss what factors were considered in determining a value for your property, and view comparable house values.

• What if I still disagree with the assessment?

You can arrange to appear before the Board of Review.

• What evidence do I need to present to the Board of Review?

The best evidence of value is the recent sales price of your property. To ensure an accurate assessment of your property, it is to your advantage to allow the assessment personnel inside your property.

• What if there hasn't been a recent arm's-length sale of my property?

The next best evidence is the arm's-length sales of reasonably comparable properties. These are properties similar in location, age, style, condition and other features that affect market value, such as the number of bathrooms and bedrooms, and size of garage.

• Do everybody's taxes go up after a revaluation?

No. If the total tax levy remains the same, only those properties which are not presently paying their fair share will pay more taxes after the revaluation. Properties presently paying more than their fair share will pay less.

• How will my taxes change as a result of a new assessment?

Though the value of your property affects your

share of taxes, the actual amount you pay is determined by the budget needs of the schools, village, county, Gateway Technical College and the state.

• What is assessed value?

This is the dollar value placed on a parcel of property by the assessor. It is computed by analyzing individual sale transactions and inspections of property within the village.

• How is estimated fair market value (also known as equalized value) determined?

This value estimate is determined by the State Department of Revenue. It is used to apportion tax levies among municipalities and is used in the distribution of shared revenues.

CDA Moves Forward With Highway 67 Planning

The State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation has scheduled the Fontana segment of the State Highway 67 reconstruction project to begin in March of 2006. District representatives at the DOT, project engineers at Crispell Snyder, Village of Fontana Public

Works Director Craig Workman, the CDA and our planners, Planning and Design Institute (PDI), have been working to have every detail of the reconstruction planned before any physical work commences.

Improving pedestrian-, bicycle- and vehicle-cross-

ing-safety at the intersection of Fontana Boulevard, Highway 67 and Porter Court is one of the primary goals of the STH 67 Plan. It was decided early in the process to shift Porter Court to the south so it aligns with Fontana Boulevard, and alleviates the congestion and

confusion at that corner.

The proposed alignment involved working around a groundwater source and consequently, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approval of the plan was necessary. Because approval has now been given, the
See CDA - Page 6

Library

(continued from page 4)

library in honor of his mother, Mary Munn Thompson. Gordy's Boat House and the Geneva Inn were generous in donating fabulous hors d'oeuvres, which were the highlight of the evening. Bruce's donation will help the library expand and update its collection of art and photography books.

Now that winter has arrived, its dark and cold nights make this a perfect time to be indoors reading or listening to a good book. The library has an extensive collection of mysteries, suspense, and other books by best-selling authors. For those nights when there is nothing to watch on TV, remember that the library loans DVDs for free.

The library is member of the Lakeshores Library System, which shares materials among 22 other libraries in Walworth, Racine and Dodge counties. If our library doesn't have an item, or if our copy is checked out, we can borrow the item from another library. Another feature is that you can

reserve materials on your home computer, and pick them up at the Fontana Library. Access to this service obtained by logging on to the Lakeshores Library System Website at www.lakeshores.lib.wi.us. For assistance with accessing the service, or if you don't have Internet access but would like the materials, call the library at 275-5107.

Another addition to the library's online resources is HeritageQuest, a Web-based resource for genealogical information. More than 1.6 million genealogical and historical articles from over 6,500 periodicals are available. All that is needed to access this resource from the Lakeshores Library System Website is your library card.

Thanks to everyone who visited the library in 2004, and helped make it a great year. On behalf of the staff, I want to wish everyone a happy and healthy 2005. We look forward to seeing you in the library - stop in and "check us out!"

Administrator

(continued from page 1)

inspected should expect to hear from Accurate Appraisal in the immediate future.

3. Direct Legislation

In April of 2004, the electors of the Village of Fontana adopted an ordinance that requires the Village to solicit approval for any project that is in excess of \$1,000,000. In September of 2004, the Village adhered to the guidelines of this ordinance and placed on the ballot a referendum seeking approval to spend \$2.6 million relocating the Main Lift Station.

Approval for the expenditure was granted, and since then through the engineering design phase a new location for the Main Lift Station was determined and approved. The new location, under the Reid Park restrooms, will save the community money and enable the Village to come in under the estimated \$2.6 million amount approved by the voters in September.

4. Staff Additions

This year the Village welcomed aboard Dennis Martin as our new Village Clerk. Dennis was the former Lake Geneva Regional News editor and brought to our team 14 years of journalism experience and parallel experience with local governments. Dennis and his crew of Election Inspectors were able to declare Fontana as one of the few municipalities that had a flawless November Election!!

5. Boundary Agreement and Emergency Water Agreement

The Villages of Fontana and Walworth teamed up this year and adopted a boundary agreement between the two communities along with an Emergency Water agreement. The boundary agreement maps out future expansion areas and established a mechanism for joint planning. The Emergency Water agreement provided for an interconnection between the two

communities that would service the neighboring community in the event of a short term water supply shortage.

6. TID Boundary Amendment # 1

Just recently the Plan Commission, Village Board and the Joint Review board all approved an amendment to the previously adopted Tax Increment District boundary. The new amendment now includes the vacant land originally outlined in the Redevelopment plan (the Quarry, Fen, and additional Village owned lakefront property) and the duck pond recreation area.

The Village will continue to keep the property owners informed by distributing the quarterly newsletter, posting notices on the Website, and holding Town Hall meetings.

We have many exciting projects coming to the Village of Fontana in 2005 and look forward to the days to come.

CDA

(continued from page 5)

CDA, with help of the Park Commission, can move into the detail phase of the landscape design development.

The committees are working with PDI's landscape architect, Brad Drefencinski, to prepare landscaping details for the area within the STH 67 right-of-way. The documents created from this phase of the planning can easily be transformed into construction documents, specifying manufacturers,

product types and plant species.

Paving variation at the intersections, median and roadside plantings, as well as material specifications for the sidewalks and paths also require planning decisions. Additionally, the landscape design detail work will include the public space planned for the south side of the newly aligned Porter Court.

Prior to materials and designs being presented for

serious consideration, all elements will have been approved by the STH 67 reconstruction project engineers, Crispell Snyder and the DNR.

Because of the environmental sensitivity of the areas adjacent to STH 67 including the fen, Van Slyke Creek and Pottawatomi Creek, Cedarburg Science has been asked to do a habitat assessment and interim management plan. Their work product will include taking exist-

ing plant inventories, establishing plans to control invasive species and stream bank preservation, and making restoration recommendations. The purpose of the plan is to provide preliminary management and stewardship goals.

Long-term site goals will be established through this planning process and will likely include habitat rehabilitation for fish, and native vegetation landscape plantings.

President's Report

(continued from page 1)

Within several weeks we had an arborist out to redress some of the original work and he also spent parts of several Friday afternoons sharing some of his techniques with our road crew.

Mr. Garlanger was happy, the road crew is now more knowledgeable and the village got a nice thank you for the extra effort.

Fred and Geri Leonard wrote us about the Lake Geneva Triathlon sports event that the village hosts the second Saturday in September. This is a swim, bike, run competition that begins about 6:00 am and continues to about 2:00 pm.

The Leonard's pointed out that despite the general success of this event, there were areas that needed improvement. Some competitors and some event staff had a few discourteous moments, dogs in the park seemed excessive, and village costs were a big concern. Was the village receiving any reimbursement for the set up and take down?

The Leonard's letter initiated a series of review processes. First, we had a debriefing with the event promoter, Frank Dobbs. The Protection Committee, Parks, Beach and Harbor as well as the administration staff all participated. The purpose of the debriefing was to summarize all defects (as well as assets) and make a plan for overall improvement. Several weeks later, we met again to document antici-

pated changes for 2005. A few examples are:

- Some participants and event supporters were rude to residents. Event coordinators will be more polite to area residents and we will remind all participants that they are our guests.

- Parking is difficult for people on the lakefront. Unfortunately, parking on Triathlon day will always be a challenge; however, we will try to open up all church parking lots and all available areas for parking on this day. The good news is that it is a problem only until about 2:00 pm.

- We will better police the spectator areas (parks, etc.) to remind guests that all dogs should be on leashes, and to make sure that they pick up after their pets.

Approval of the 2005 event in Fontana was conditional on these changes taking place. With respect to reimbursement, in 2004 the village collected approximately \$7,500 from the triathlon group for police and public works assistance.

In addition, there was another \$8,000 contributed to local charities, including \$2,000 to the Walworth-Fontana Rotary, \$3,500 to the Geneva Lake Water Safety Patrol, \$1,000 to the Boy Scouts, \$1,000 to Lakeland Little Learners, \$300 to the Fontana Dive Team, etc., all which are big Fontana and lakes area assets. Geri and Fred, thanks for the suggestions. I believe we will have a better event for both the

community and the competitors because of your concerns.

My final example is Jerry Hammes. He wrote us about the reconfiguration of the boat trailer parking lot. His letter captured so much of the heritage of Fontana that I used an extensive part of his recollection in the summer newsletter.

The letter by itself gave everyone the opportunity to think about various options. And the village has struggled with these options.

The first half of the summer was spent with different lot configurations, different launch numbers and a variety of traffic controls. We're not much closer to the practical solution despite plausible theories.

The final decision has not been made on the village's parking lot summer issues.

This spring the village will have another Town Hall meeting and public hearing on issues relating to the lakefront, including the beach house, launch ramp, community building, retail center and yes, the boat trailer parking lot. To all the village residents and property owners, if you are here, come and join us. And let me wish you Happy New Year and a prosperous 2005.

Your opinions, suggestions, advice and recommendations are appreciated, keep those cards and letters coming. After all ... *We all do better when we work together.*