

Village Chronicles



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Forest Preserve Bears Watching

Back in 2002, the DuPage County Forest Preserve District considered the construction of a new Fleet Services Maintenance building in the Blackwell Forest Preserve. At that time, District President D. "Dewey" Pierotti vetoed a proposal to proceed with the project.

Five years went by and nothing happened. Then in June, 2007, the district authorized the expenditure of upwards of \$500,000 in design and architectural fees for the building, a sure sign that it intended to revive the project'

Sure enough, at its budget meeting last June 30, the district approved a new fiscal-year budget that accommodates the expenditure of approximately \$7.5 million on the proposed project.

Meanwhile, on May 5 of this year, the district held an "open house" at which residents of the county were encouraged to share their concerns, ask questions, and gain more insight into the details of the project.

Shortly thereafter, according to Dennis Clark, President of West-Win Homeowners Association, whose members live close by, the district promised to hold a meeting in June to consider the project. That meeting was never scheduled, and Clark says the project was slated for discussion at a meeting on July 14 that has now been moved to July 21.

However, the district's public relations department has told Clark that the matter will not be discussed on July 21, while President Pierotti says "indeed it will be discussed."

All of this leads to the conclusion that the district is waffling and attempting to tire out its constituency, so that this fall the project can proceed. This is a typical political ploy, and perhaps can be thwarted if enough people show up at the districts July 21 meeting and voice their concerns.

The merits of the project are not the real issue here. What is clear is that the district has not done its due diligence or incorporated this project into its long-range plans in appropriate fashion. Until it does its homework, we urge residents to be vigilant, since the Forest Preserve is immune from such things as public hearings, bidding, and other processes that the ordinary Joe would have to endure in order to get approval of a project of this magnitude.

In its July 3 issue, the Village Chronicles published a story concerning this project, outlining a number of valid concerns and questions that we feel are appropriate and deserving of answer and response. We urge you to review these and make your concerns known to the forest preserve district either in person at a district meeting, or via email or other form of communication.