

Conversation with the Mayor – August 14, 2009

Vicky Daly

Working on Multiple Fronts

A resident commented to me this morning that the parades and festivals are just fine, but the village should work to bring in businesses. That's what we need. His words startled me because the village is, has been, and will continue to work to bring businesses and the jobs they create to Palmyra. The revolving loan fund, established through a Governor's Office of Small Cities grant several years ago, enables us to offer micro-enterprise loans to qualified current and potential business owners in the village. You have probably seen the "We Are Investing in Palmyra's Future" signboards in front of participating businesses after the loan is awarded. Another small pot of money provides matching grant money for façade paint and toward signage. (The paint for the façade work must be purchased in Palmyra. We walk the talk.) Neither of these sources of money can be moved to the general fund and used for day-to-day expenses. Nor can they be used to reduce the village tax rate. I believe we are the only village in the county which offers these options to their business community.

Pirates Weekend, which probably prompted the comment, Trick or Treat on Main Street, Memorial Day in the Park, Bird Fest, movies and music in the park, and the other events which I have undoubtedly forgotten, serve multiple audiences, as do Canal Town Days and the Fair, both of which are staged by private corporations. These events make living in Palmyra pleasant. They are great, free, family outings within easy walking distance of most of the homes in the village and a 5 minute drive for folks in the town. They are the sort of events that bring families and neighbors together. They create memories which will be talked about at dinner tables for years. They make visitors want to be part of it or replicate the event at home.

And they make people who are thinking about opening a business consider that this would be a good place to do so because there is clearly a sense of community in Palmyra and a sense that village government understands that the people of a community are important, should be listened to and worked with. Our successful local merchants realize that and contribute generously to the events, not just in funding, but in time and brainpower. Our brand new Pirates Puppy Parade is a prime example of that. Suni Bowman, our local florist suggested it; committee member Jim Murray set it up, and the owners of the Il Dog Barkery contributed generously by providing prizes and tee shirts for proud owners and treats for all the pups. These events become family affairs in themselves.

One last thought: It occurred to me some time ago that many Palmyra Town residents feel a connection to the village. More than once I have heard them refer to it as 'my village'. I see the Village of Palmyra as the front door to the Town of Palmyra, welcoming visitors, making them feel welcome and encouraging them to get to know us and become part of Palmyra, town and village. We share more than just the same name.

About the original comment: No municipal government has the luxury of focusing on only one effort. In our case, we focus on our assets and work hard to promote them to make Palmyra an even better place to live, to work and to prosper. Come to a Village Board meeting and you will get a sense of the complexity and variety of our responsibilities. Because of Labor Day, the next meeting is on Monday, September 14th.