

Conversation with the Mayor August 4, 2008

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As It Should Be

If you were not at the last Village Board meeting, you missed something. It was a demonstration of what village government should be, how it should function. (Actually, it should work that way at any level.) The Trustees' Room was full of Palmyra residents who came to speak their minds at public hearings. There were hearings on four proposed local laws dealing with a tightened animal control ordinance; a proposed curfew; restrictions on the residency of level two and level three sex offenders, and the addition of a stop sign on Mill Street at the intersection of Vienna and Prospect Drive. It is interesting to note here that the four topics were brought to the attention of the Board by four different sources - Chief Dalton, Village Attorney Art Williams, a village resident and a Village Trustee.

People came to speak to different topics, but most stayed for all and for the meeting which followed. It was at that meeting, the regular Village Board meeting, that the Board members discussed the proposed ordinances, or laws, and considered the comments provided by the people who took the time to attend. News accounts will tell you that the animal control ordinance was passed with 'non-material' changes. The curfew ordinance, which elicited many, many comments (as was expected), was approved without changes. (The following day we received requests from other communities for copies of the ordinance.)The new stop sign was also approved after much discussion. The proposed ordinance dealing with where level two and three sex offenders may reside was tabled for further research and discussion with the goal of making it more stringent. All this happened before we went to the regular agenda which was heavy as there had been only one Village Board meeting in July.

What impressed me about the meeting was the number of people who took the time to acquire and read the proposed ordinances and then to come and sit in an un-air conditioned, un-windowed room on a hot and humid evening because they were concerned about the welfare and well being of the people of the Village. They came; they spoke, and the Board listened and took action as a result of their

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presence and comments. Seven years ago, I started this Conversation. I had expected written or emailed responses and I do receive a few, but mainly it is as it was at the meeting- face to face questions, comments and complaints. We talk over breakfast, lunch and dinner at one of our many restaurants; at Rapid Repeats or Candy Corner; Cranberry Cove; Family Dollar - virtually any place in the community, even after church or while dog walking, and, of course, in the office. That's one of the biggest pluses of living in a community this size. People know each other and feel comfortable in speaking up. Complaints? Sure, but also questions, suggestions and an occasional thumbs up.

A very big thumbs up is deserved by Breen's IGA and the Breen family on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary. On August 23, 1908, the first Breen's market opened in Palmyra and for the past one hundred years, Breen's has been an integral part of this community as it is today. They provided jobs to generations of local kids, supported virtually every community activity, from Crop Walk to the Salvation Army Bell ringing. They epitomize small town America and we are lucky to have them.