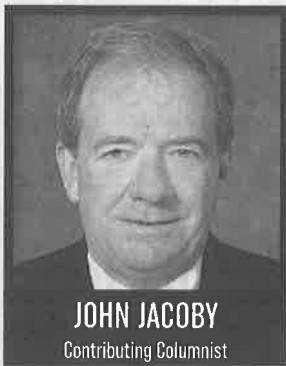


A WORD FROM THE (FORMER) PRESIDENT

Things to come in 2017



JOHN JACOBY

Contributing Columnist

• Wilmette’s west side storm sewer issues will return to the forefront when a “value engineering study” of the pending \$77 million proposal is completed this summer. The Village Board told residents last fall that if the cost of the proposed project were to be paid through an increase in the sewer fee (which is based on water consumption), the average household increase would be \$625 per year. However, as I mentioned in a previous column, water consumption varies widely from household to household, so the \$625 figure has limited value in assessing the project’s financial impact on individual homeowners. Wilmette’s businesses and institutions use significantly more water than households, and the variation among them is even more dramatic than among households.

The storm sewer proposal raises fundamental questions: Is a project costing \$77 million simply too much for the community to swallow, regardless of the financing method selected? Is financing the project through a sewer fee that’s based on water consumption good public policy, when (1) water consumption has little

correlation with storm sewer usage, and (2) some activities that consume the most water (recreation facilities, private schools, the Laundromat, restaurants, lawn watering, and gardening), while benign or beneficial to the community, would be burdened disproportionately? Are there flood control measures besides those presented in the proposal that would be less costly but reasonably effective? Should the proposal, when it’s finalized, be submitted

to voters in a referendum?

On April 4, there’ll be a contested election to fill three Village Trustee vacancies. Before then, I hope residents will get answers to some of these questions from the candidates.

• Avoca School District 37 will be deciding the future of “Avoca Central” and its four-acre site at 3013 Illinois Road. Built in 1957, the building was originally called “Avoca

Please see **JACOBY, 19**

VENDORS WANTED

Sunset Ridge School | **Saturday**
 525 Sunset Ridge Road, | **February 25**
 Northfield, IL | **10 am–2 pm**

Meet potential new camp families, reconnect with old ones or put your business in front of camping families at 22nd Century Media’s Camp Expo!

Event will feature dozens of vendor booths and interactive activities for children and teens.

Free admission! Free parking!

Booths Start | Vendor Booth Deadline:
at \$400. | Feb. 8, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Call: 847-272-4565 or
Email: h.warthen@22ndcenturymedia.com

EVENTS 22CMEvents

JACOBY

From Page 17

East" elementary school. When enrollment declined in the 1970s, the school was closed, and the building was leased to New Trier High School. More recently, sections have been leased to a daycare and preschool provider and to Arlyn School (a not-for-profit therapeutic day school). The building needs \$7 million in renovations, and the School Board has unanimously agreed that this expenditure wouldn't be in the District's best interests. Options include selling or leasing the building to someone willing to pay for the renovations, selling the property for development of roughly twelve single family homes, or selling the property to

Wilmette Park District, which already leases 6.5 acres nearby. In my opinion, WPD would find it hard to convince taxpayers that four more acres of parkland are needed.

- The revised proposal to create affordable housing at 1925 Wilmette Ave., the former American Legion property, has been submitted to the Village but hasn't been scheduled for a Plan Commission hearing yet. The earliest possible date is March 7.

- Several weeks ago, I reported that WPD's 2016 tax levy, as then proposed, would increase by only 0.13 percent over the 2015 levy. As finally adopted, however, the levy will increase by 1.94 percent. The reason for this 1.81 percent bump is a recent decision by the Park Board to add more revenue to WPD's "Special

Recreation Fund." This revenue will be used primarily to bring park facilities into ADA compliance. But for the retirement of some outstanding debt, the levy increase would have been 4.45 percent. The 2016 levy affects taxes paid in 2017.

- Come one, come all! At 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 29, yours truly will speak at

the Wilmette Historical Museum about "Forty-Five Famous Folks" of Wilmette. I'll introduce a group of residents, now deceased, who achieved celebrity on a regional, state-wide, or national level, from sports heroes to entrepreneurs. This is a free event, hopefully worth at least slightly more than the price of admission.

THE WILMETTE BEACON

SOUND OFF POLICY

Editorials and columns are the opinions of the author. Pieces from 22nd Century Media are the thoughts of the company as a whole. *The Wilmette Beacon* encourages readers to write letters to Sound Off. All letters must be signed, and names and hometowns will be published. We also ask that writers include their address and phone number for verification, not publication. Letters should be limited to 400 words. *The Wilmette Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters. Letters become property of *The Wilmette Beacon*. Letters that are published do not reflect the thoughts and views of *The Wilmette Beacon*. Letters can be mailed to: *The Wilmette Beacon*, 60 Revere Drive ST 888, Northbrook, IL, 60062. Fax letters to (847) 272-4648 or email to eric@wilmettebeacon.com.

www.wilmettebeacon.com