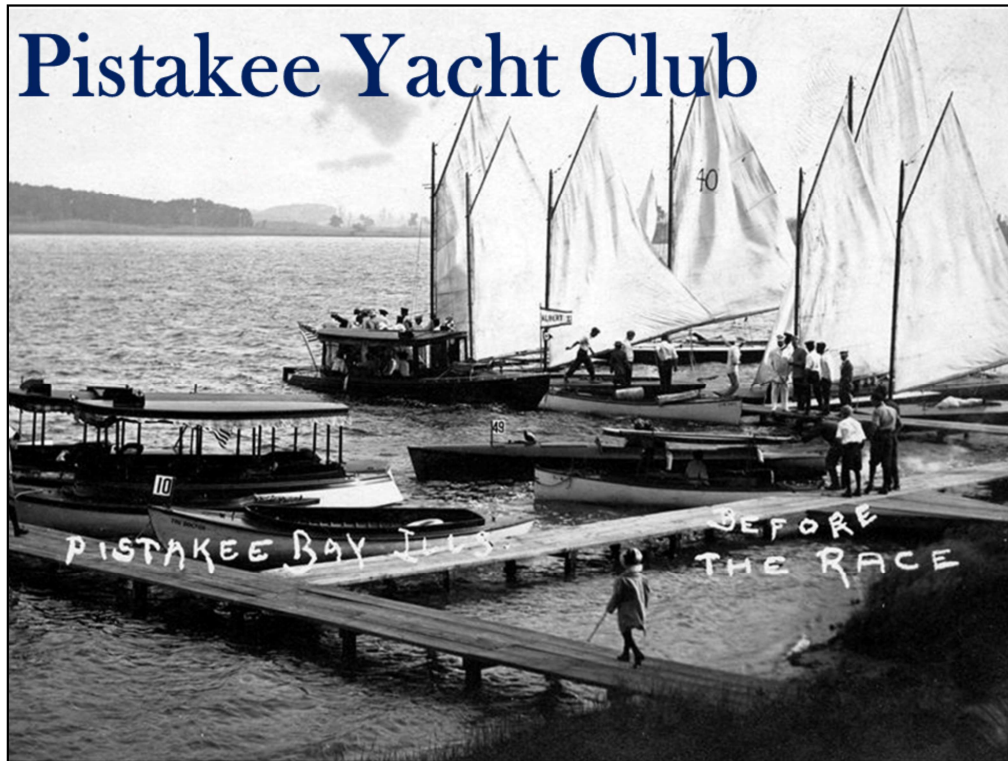




Welcome to the 2022 State of the Village! Thank you for granting me the opportunity to speak with you tonight. It is wonderful to be back before you talking about our incredible community and the people that make it that way. I am especially excited about being here this year to talk about this past years accomplishments and the progress we are making in meeting our goals.



Before we begin, I would like to recognize the Johnsburg Area Business Association for hosting this 11th Annual State of the Village event and extend a special thanks to JABA's President Sarah Hagen, Vice President Donna Adams and the organizing committee consisting of Josh Hagen and John Huemann for their efforts in coordinating all of the arrangements.

I would also like to thank Amy Hodges and Denny Norton and their team at McCullom Knoll Restaurant for preparing our dinner tonight. Amy has always been a great supporter of the Village contributing much through her Johnsburg business, Sunnyside Tavern. Thanks also goes to the Pistakee Yacht Club for the use of this historic facility and both Cheryl and Joe Twomey for their help this evening. Let's please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.



I would like to start tonight's event by applauding the citizens of Johnsburg for their strength and resiliency in response to the pandemic. The last couple of year's have been challenging for us all and I'm proud of how we supported one another through that difficult period. Even though the resulting economic and lifestyle impacts of the pandemic have been severe, our community united together and rose to the challenge.

Despite the pandemic, this past year has been a busy and exciting year in the Village of Johnsburg. I have so many great projects and achievements to share with you tonight so let's begin with the most obvious, the David G. Dominguez Municipal Center.

David G. Dominguez Municipal Center



As you know, we've been talking and planning for this expansion project for quite awhile, and after year's of analyzing alternatives, interviewing architects, and debating designs, construction finally began last Spring. We kicked off the project with a ground breaking ceremony at which Dave's wife Sue and members of the Dominguez family attended to help us commemorate the event.



Immediately thereafter our contractors got to work. Out of 17 general contractors submitting bids, Manusos General Contracting was the low bidder and they proved to be a great partner on this project. Manusos was the general contractor on our wastewater treatment plant more than 20 years ago and it seemed fitting that they would be building the facility that was named in honor of the man responsible for making that wastewater treatment plant a reality. With the weather working in our favor, site work began and forming the foundation for the addition quickly got underway.



Once the initial site work and foundation were complete, Manusos got to work framing out the addition.



The weather remained cooperative and we were able to get the project under roof before the winter weather rolled in.



With the holidays quickly approaching, Manusos busied themselves with mechanical and interior work.



In addition to creating the new space, the project included renovating portions of the existing Village Hall to accommodate the overall design.



By the new year, things quickly began to take shape and the administration department temporarily moved over to the new side of the facility so that painting and carpeting could be completed in the existing Village Hall.



By the end of January, the administration department moved back to their wing and the police department began moving into their new home.



On the morning of the dedication, everything was in place thanks to the hard work, ingenuity and determination exhibited by our A-team. They kept the project moving along by working with the contractors to provide feedback and make daily decisions on site. They also sought opportunities to contain costs on furnishings and other incidentals enabling the Village to retain much of the contingency monies planned for the project.

Special thanks is extended to Village Administrator Claudett Sofiakis, Assistant Administrator Vinny Lamontagna and Chief Keith VonAllmen for all their efforts in coordinating the construction activities and handling all of the details. They along with Joe Kleinhanzel from our Parks and Facilities Department and our public works team lead by Foreman Dave Walsh spent countless hours putting on the finishing touches that really make our new facility special. Several of our A-team members are here tonight, please stand and be recognized.



On May 15, 2022, we held the official dedication ceremony. I was so pleased to be surrounded by the many members of the Dominguez family that came out to commemorate our new Municipal Center in honor of a great man who was instrumental in making Johnsburg the community we know and love. I get approached from time to time by residents new to our community who ask me “who is David Dominguez and why is your Municipal Center named after him?” For those of you who don’t know, Dave served the Village from 1989 to 2009, first as a Trustee and then as Village President. Prior to the 1991 Johnsburg annexation, Dave served as a Village of Sunnyside trustee and played an active role in working with members of the Johnsburg Community Club during the campaign to merge the two communities together. At the dedication I shared stories of those early years following the annexation when the board meetings would go late into the night while planning for the future of Johnsburg. Dave provided valuable leadership during those times. So much of what we enjoy today would not be possible without Dave’s wisdom and vision helping to lead the way. He knew that in order to secure Johnsburg’s future it would take a dedicated team of people with a common vision willing to work hard and take a leap of faith.



A lot of hard work went into determining where the center should be located and how to design it to meet our needs, but when it came to determining how it would be named, we did not have to ponder the subject for long. It was only fitting to name our new municipal center after Dave.

The dedication event had me thinking back to the many people that contributed so much to get us to where we are today. Former Trustees Harry May, John Huemann, Rick Quinn and Kevin McEvoy joined us at the dedication. They and many others played an important role in what got us here today. Most of you here tonight serve the Village in some capacity. I hope you know that every thing you do, no matter how small makes a difference and contributes to what we've built. I want to thank you all for your contributions.

Johnsburg Heroes

Dan Barroso
Pam Bethel
William Boston
Casimer Cios
Hal Davis
Ken Dodge, Jr.
* Jim Eichhorn
Richard Fredericks
* Don Gaylord
Irma Gunther
Mary Harrington
Rich Janusz
* William Linden
Harry May
Joseph Metzger
* Bill Mitchell
* Ray Nolan
Elmer Pflug
Rick Quinn
Kathy Rogers
William Sandell
Janice Sisk
Bob Tomsa
Ivan Wendall

Bruce Bennett
Dan Bischof
Arthur Brink
Paul Colomer
Ron Denson
* Dave Dominguez
Kathy Fleming
Lloyd Freund
Irene Gerrity
Eugene Halcolm
Jim Hayman
Hildegard Kerr
Harry Mackinson
Kevin McEvoy
Richard Mickelson
Harvey Murray
Greg Nowak
Lyllin Pomonis
John Ripley
Evelyn Sandell
Ken Schaefer
Carl Thonn
Armin Von Obstfelder
Chris Williams

Steve Bethel
Ron Bosse
Mae Casey
Wendy Corso
* Fred Diedrich
Andy Eichhorn
Phil Fleming
Leah Fritz
* Leonard Guge
Lillian Halcolm
John Huemann
Ed Lehman
* Phil Mangold
Betty Messer
John Miedzianowski
Bill Neumann
Bonnie Oziminski
Ted Prell
Roberta Roggenbuck
Elbert Schuberth
August Tomsa
Richard Wadecki
Ron Zanko

Each year at this event, I take a moment to recognize individuals and organizations who go above and beyond in support of and in service to our community. This year I would like to recognize all of the elected officials that have served our community since 1956, when Sunnyside was first incorporated. For those of you who are new to the area, in 1991 the unincorporated area of Johnsburg annexed into the Village of Sunnyside and by mutual agreement the name of our town was officially changed to Johnsburg the following year. Since the original incorporation in 1956, many men and women volunteered their time serving the citizens of our community. Many of them are no longer with us, but I would like to give thanks to all of their contributions over the years. They are our Johnsburg Heroes this year.

Representing our Vision



Before we proceed, I would like to take a moment to introduce our Board of Trustees. Beth Foreman, Tom Curry, Kyle Frost, Josh Hagen, Scott Letzter and Greg Klemstein. As a Board we oftentimes have to make difficult decisions and we don't always agree, but focusing on what's best for our community helps to point us in the right direction.

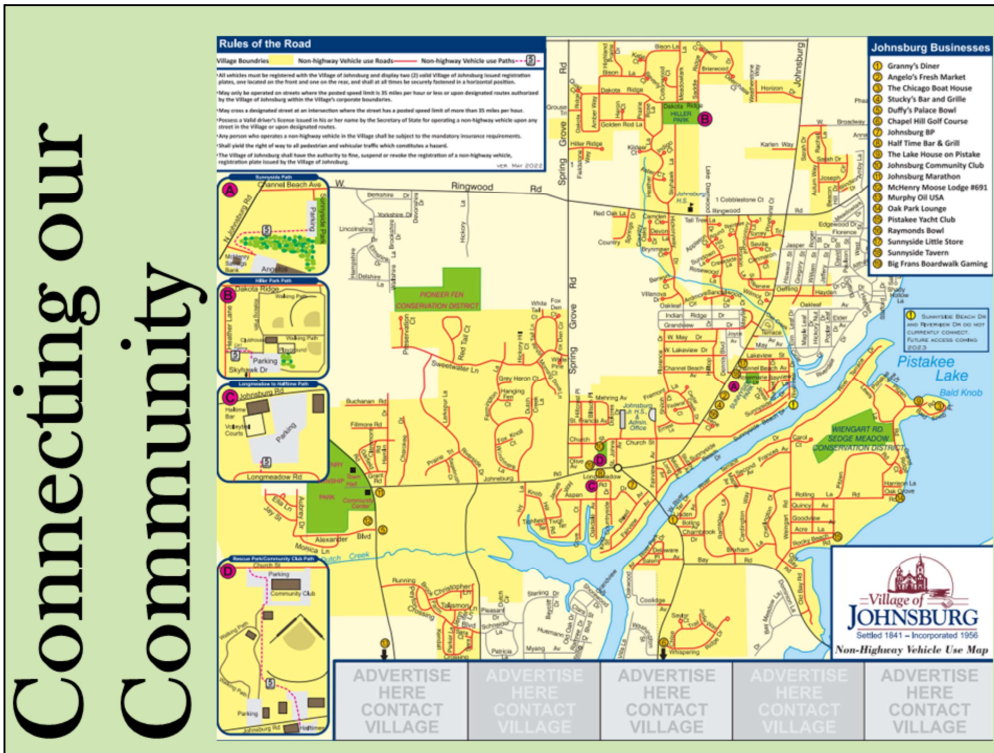


I also would like to take a moment to recognize the hardworking volunteers that serve on our committees. We are fortunate to have many committed residents that generously donate their time and talents serving on one of our committees. Tonight's program includes a list of committee members to whom we are truly grateful for without them our successes would not be possible. Several of our committee members are in attendance tonight. Could you please stand. Thank you for your continued service to the Village.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the many local organizations whose members generously volunteer their time to make Johnsburg the community we are proud to call home. I see some members of those organizations here tonight. If you serve as a volunteer through one of our local organizations, please take a moment and stand. I commend you for your commitment to our community and am truly grateful for all that you do.



I know I've spent a lot of time talking about our new municipal center, but I'd like to talk about several other projects we completed this past year as well. At the same time as we started the Municipal Center project, we also kicked off the North Sewer Extension Project which included a lift station and sewer mains extending from Sunnyside Beach Drive north to Lakeview Avenue. With the extension complete, we can now serve residents and businesses in need of waste water treatment alternatives such as Angelo's Market, Raymond's Bowl, Sunnyside Tavern and Johnsborg Mobile. We are now positioned to pursue future extensions to adjacent neighborhoods and eventually up to the Oakcreek Townhome property. The timing of this project also enabled us abandoned the septic at the Village Hall and tie the new Municipal Center into our sewer system.



Connecting our Community

Last year I discussed the efforts being made to secure permission from private property owners to install paths on their property for non-highway vehicle use. We were successful in securing permission from some of those property owners and our efforts continue. Additionally, thanks to the contributions received from private fund raising efforts coupled with a portion of the registration fee, the Village was able to budget for path improvements this year. We are fortunate to have organizations such as the Johnsburg Lions Club and the local Cart Club who raised funds to help cover the cost of improving and expanding the pathway system. I thank them for their contributions to this program.

Staff is also finalizing the details on our first Non-Highway Vehicle Map which will be posted on the Village's website and circulated to establishments throughout the community.

When we first decided to allow the use of non-highway vehicles on Village streets, our goal was to encourage people to get out and experience our great community and the people who live here. The initiative has really taken off and to date we have nearly 400 registered vehicles and the number continues to grow. We frequently get inquiries from other communities who want to follow in our foot steps and learn how our program was established. I am pleased that our initiative has been so successful and that our community has set a trend for others to follow. I am also hearing from business owners that more and more residents are dining and shopping in town because they can use their golf carts and side by sides to travel to Johnsburg businesses.



Last year I shared with you the outcrop improvements we installed at our fishing pond on Hickory Way Drive. This past weekend we held our first fishing derby at the pond which was a great success. Thirty eight children ages 15 and under participated in the catch and release event. Participants were grouped into four age categories and prizes were awarded for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners for three different fish species in each age category. Thank you to Trustee Foreman and the Community Affairs Committee members who organized the event. Special thanks also goes to Assistant Administrator Vinny Lamontagna, Joe Kleinhanel from our Parks and Facilities Department and the volunteers who have been working to clean up the property over the last few years in preparation for this event. My thanks are also extended to the Johnsburg Lions Club and Greg Klemstein on behalf of Remax Plaza for sponsoring the event.



Last year I also discussed our efforts to establish a pollinator site on Sandalwood Lane in Lake Dawnwood Subdivision. We have continued to nurture that site and are expanding our efforts to encourage pollinator sites throughout the Village by participating in the Monarch Pledge Program to educate residents about their importance. This year we are also circulating seed packets of flowers known to attract pollinating insects to expand this effort. We have some of the seed packets here tonight. Please take one before you leave.



This past year the Fox Waterway Agency, in coordination with the Dutch Creek Homeowners Association, completed the dredging of an area at the mouth of the Dutch Creek Bay. We were fortunate to have the cooperation of nearby property owners Joe and Kathy Huemann, who allowed the Waterway to place some of the dredged material on their vacant parcel to dry out. Once dried, it can then be sold for topsoil. Working in cooperation with other agencies and private property owners is one of the ways we get things done in Johnsburg.

In past presentations I spoke about a project that we've been working on to restore the Dutch Creek Bay. Recently we were advised that the Army Corp of Engineer's Chicago Division has placed our Dutch Creek Aquatic Restoration Project as their number one project for funding. When funding is approved, we can move forward with engineering and submit for additional funding for construction. We are hopeful that our patience will pay off as it has in the past.



Maintaining the Village's infrastructure is a top priority and it keeps our Public Works team very busy. Consisting of only four full time and a handful of seasonal employees, the department maintains nearly 60 miles of roadway, our sidewalk and path networks, shoulders and curbs, storm water systems, and our water and waste water systems. I am often amazed at how they get it all done. We are fortunate to have a hardworking and resourceful team of people who know how to do more with less.

In addition to all of the maintenance and replacement work carried out by our Public Works Department, the Village pursues a road resurfacing program each year selecting roads most in need of attention based upon a comprehensive road rating system. Last year, the Village solicited bids to resurface approximately 2.5 miles of road at a cost of \$486,000. This year we again pursued a 2.5 mile road program however because of the escalating oil costs, the low bid came in at \$637,000. Maintaining our infrastructure assets is crucial and gets more challenging each year as costs continue to rise. Despite the rising costs, we are committed to insuring that our infrastructure will last well into the future by placing a high priority on maintenance and upkeep. We seek grants to help offset the cost whenever available and have been fortunate to receive millions of dollars in funding to maintain our roads.



Last year I discussed the Strategic Planning Session that took place in February of 2019 right before the pandemic. With social distancing relaxed, we were finally able to meet this past year to identify priorities and develop strategies in response to the report developed by Village resident Frannie Glosson who facilitated the session. We reviewed what had already been accomplished since the session and assigned the remaining tasks to teams made up of Village trustees to perform research and develop a recommendation for the Board's consideration. That exercise was enlightening as it showed us how much we were able to get done despite the restrictive nature of our world.

I'd like to take a few moments to discuss some of the priorities identified, what has been accomplished and what has been assigned to complete.

Golf Course



During the session, maintaining and improving the golf course to increase utilization was identified as strategy. Since the session, our Golf Course team met with GolfVisions to discuss course conditions and review the success of the previous season. The team has also been working to develop a plan to pursue improvements at the course through donations, grants, and public/private partnerships. Efforts are underway to solicit donations to construct a shelter which can be rented for golf outings and other events. The shelter would be designed to function under both pleasant and inclement weather conditions.

Downtown Infrastructure



The need for infrastructure improvements in our downtown to support economic development was identified as a high priority. Since the session, the Village has committed to further extending our sewer system which I will discuss later in the presentation. Additionally, a grant application has been submitted to construct the downtown parking lot and add street scape enhancements along Chapel Hill Road.

Affordable Sewers



The cost of sewers was identified as a Weakness during the Strategic Planning Session. Even though grants became scarce over the last several years, the cost to connect to the Village's sewer system has been held flat for the past 9 years because we have been successful in containing the cost by strategically initiating sewer extension projects and by pursuing public/private partnerships whenever possible. The Sewer Team continues to seek grants and common sense approaches to expanded our system so that we can service those areas in need of an alternative to on-site septic systems and to help bring about new business development.

Diversified Housing



The lack of Diversified Housing and loss of the younger demographic was also noted as a Weakness during the Strategic Planning Session and the Board concurred and placed it high on their list of priorities. I am happy to report that we are experiencing an increase in interest by developers who wish to pursue housing products not currently offered in the community which will help us address both the lack of diversified housing and the loss of our younger demographic. A townhome rental developed has been presented to the Village and will be acted on by the Village Board shortly and more will likely be soon to follow. It is important that we remain open to new concepts in housing alternatives in order to create a balanced and healthy community.

Marketing



Our Downtown District, the waterfront and our Route 31 Corridor were identified as areas of Opportunity during the Strategic Planning Session. Even though we have planned, sought and acquired grants, and invested in infrastructure, the need for sound marketing is still needed to make these areas successful. Several years ago we established the Village of Johnsburg “brand” which is recognized throughout our community and McHenry County. Now we need to build upon that brand and market what makes our community unique. The roundabout, Fox River, Chapel Hill Golf Course, Route 31 Corridor and being a golf cart friendly community draw interest in Johnsburg. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel but rather learn from what other successful communities have done to market their attributes. In order to help us accomplish this goal, Trustees Hagen and Frost have been performing research on how we can further our marketing efforts so that they can develop concepts for the Board to consider.

Parks & Programs



At the Strategic Planning Session, some participants suggested that the Village should look into the pros and cons of developing a Park District in order to develop programs and pursue more amenities. Since the Session, we have researched the matter and found that many communities, such as Lake in the Hills and McHenry, have effectively provided programs and amenities through their Parks Department rather than a Park District, saving their residents substantial money by not adding another taxing body. In conclusion, it was determined that establishing a Park District is costly and not beneficial to the community. To help further our programs and add amenities we need to look into ways of increasing what the Village has to offer in coordination with sports organizations, public/private partnerships and donations.

Trustees Foreman and Curry have been meeting to develop an inventory of our assets to include land, improvements and programs, and assess our short and long term needs. The goal is to develop a Comprehensive Park Plan for the Board's consideration that will include concepts of how we can fund future programs and improvements. When developing the Plan, it is important that we consider amenities that will serve a diverse demographic in hopes of drawing our young men and women back to the community.

Non-Highway Vehicles



Non-highway vehicles were considered to be both a Strength and Weakness during the Board’s review of the Strategic Plan Report. While being a golf cart has had positive impacts on our community and it is appealing from a marketing perspective, we need to be cognizant of the impact experienced when the activity is disruptive to our residents. Even though the occurrences may be limited, it is important that we address those situations so that the experience is positive for everyone.

It is also important that we provide for the necessary path network that facilitates safe travel throughout the Village. Trustee Letzter and Klemstein have been working to further our efforts in that regard. They have been scouting out areas through which we can extend our path network and are developing recommendations on how we can secure the funding and the easements necessary to accomplish this goal.

Celebrating Life



Finding time for Fun



Making Magic



Weary of sheltering in place, our community came out in full force this past year at the several events scheduled. Although the Celebration in the Park event had to be moved to Hiller Park due to the building expansion, the location proved to provide great accommodations.

I applaud the creativity of the participants in the Holiday Magic Parade. They take holiday decorating of their golf carts to a whole new level.

This year's Easter Egg Hunt was also a huge success. It doesn't seem to matter how many eggs we put out, the children seem to quickly find them and clear the field of eggs in what seems like only minutes. Even though preparing for this event is labor intensive, we were fortunate to have a great group of volunteers who helped and the reaction received from the kids was well worth the effort. I would also like to thank HR Green, Prem Magnetics and Rick Quinn for their contributions towards the event.



Looking forward now to the year ahead, we had a great start last night approving a balance budget which is quite an accomplishment considering the inflationary impacts we are experiencing and the many projects we are pursuing. In addition to covering general operational costs, this year's budget includes nearly \$3.5 million for infrastructure projects and \$285,000 in capital purchases, some of which are supported by grants and donations. We also committed funds towards our Capital Fund and Reserves to insure that monies are available for future projects.

The year ahead will be bring about more progress in the Village. The parking lot at Sunnyside Park will be resurfaced and street name signage will be replaced along roadways on the east side of the river. New score boards will be installed in Hiller Park, and we will be replacing park signage and installing additional signage designating Non-Highway Vehicle Routes.

More dead tree removal and fence line clearing will be pursued at the Chapel Hill Golf Course and the roof will be replaced at the 19th Hole. Orchard pruning and new T markers will also be pursued at the golf course.

The Sunnyside Beach Road Improvement Project is expected to get underway which is supported by a Special Service Area bond pursued at the request of the residents. By designating a special service area for the project, the Village was able to pursue funding on behalf of the residents at an attractive interest rate so that they can improve their private road and pay their share of the cost over time through their tax bill. Once completed, the road will be accepted by the Village and the residents will no longer be responsible for its maintenance. Several larger projects will begin to get underway as well.



Engineering is wrapping up on the Church Street realignment project. The Village received \$750,000 in funding for this project which involves the construction of 600 feet of road needed to realign the intersection of Johnsburg Road and Church Street. The improvements will include a new crosswalk with ADA ramps at each corner. We will also install 1540 feet of sanitary sewer main along Church Street and Johnsburg Road to further our sewer extension project



Engineering is also wrapping up on the Riverside Drive Road Improvement Project which will be under construction in 2023. The project includes the replacement of the storm structures under the Riverside Drive bridge and the resurfacing of Riverside Drive from Johnsburg Road to the Village limits at Running Brook Farm subdivision. Sidewalks and a bike path will be installed to safely separate pedestrian and bicyclist movement from vehicular traffic. The project is expected to cost nearly \$3 million dollars but fortunately we secured a \$1.5 million grant to help cover the cost. Riverside Drive is a major arterial roadway and the inclusion of multi-model improvements along this stretch of road is a huge step in furthering our bike and pedestrian network. We want to encourage a healthy community that supports active lifestyles and in order to do so it is crucial that we provide accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclist.



I often get approached by residents questioning what is being done about the Johnsburg Road bridge. Over the past couple of years we have experienced lane modifications and other restrictions that were implemented to keep traffic off of deteriorated beams in an effort to safely extend the life of the bridge until it can be replaced. This section of roadway is under the jurisdiction of the McHenry County Division of Transportation and I am happy to report that some improvements are expected to be pursued this year to insure that the bridge remains safe for travel. Several options are being considered that will likely be performed late this fall. Watch for e-blast updates and notices regarding potential construction impacts.

River Sewer Extension



For some time now, the idea of moving this next project forward was unimaginable because of its costs but thanks to nearly \$870,000 the Village is receiving in ARPA funding, we are finally in a position to extend our sewer infrastructure under the river to the east side of the Village. ARPA funding can only be used for very limited purposes and wastewater treatment improvements is an allowable use for the funds. The project includes a regional lift station and the extension of 1400 feet of carrier pipe and force main at a cost of approximately \$1.8 million. In addition to the ARPA funds, the Village will support the project with approximately \$400,000 of capital funds on hand and a \$500,000 grant received through the State. Once complete, businesses such as the Waterfront Hotel and Granny's Restaurant will be able to connect to the Village's sewer system and the table will be set to extend the system to nearly 500 homes and businesses on the east side of the river. It will also provide opportunity for economic redevelopment of underutilized properties and for new development on vacant parcels along Chapel Hill Road.



In the past, funding has always been one of the major hurdles we face in accomplishing our goals. That is still true today, however to tackle the funding challenges, our dedicated team continues to be very successful in securing grants to help achieve our goals. Those efforts are more important than ever as we face growing inflation, unfunded mandates and the constant need to improve infrastructure and provide services.



We don't know for certain what lies ahead but we will keep adapting to change and mold our future. We have accomplished great things in the past and there are many more to come.

I thank you for your support and urge you to join us as we work to make sure
Johnsburg continues to be the place we proudly call home.



I thank the Johnsburg Area Business Association for the opportunity to present to you this evening and all of our residents and business owners who have given me the honor of representing them as your Village President.

Thank you for sharing your time.