

Mayor's Message Vol. II - December 29, 2021

Thomas Bergman | Mayor, Village of Genoa

In the Fall 2019 the Village outsourced its utility billing operation to munibilling, as a result we can no longer do mass mailing to residents without paying for separate postage. However I am willing to print these updates and hand deliver them! If you would like to be on the list, please contact me or the Village's Secretary Beth St. John. Please leave your name and address and I will make sure you receive a physical copy.

Sanitary Sewer Improvements - The Village's sanitary sewer projects, the largest overhaul in a generation, are moving along. Last spring, our \$2.1 million filtration house was completed. Work on rebuilding the \$500,000 main pump station off 9th Street is underway, which is scheduled for completion in 2022. Afterward, work will move on to the system's peripheral pump stations, this phase has an estimated cost of \$1.4 million.

The bad news is that while much of this work was funded by grants and 0% loans, the Village still took on considerable sewer debt. Council ordered our engineering firm, CT Consultants, to conduct a rate study to determine a rate increase to fund the debt payments--and importantly, to **share the system's costs fairly between Village and non-Village users**. This rate increase came out to about \$6 per month for the average user.

The good news is that this past summer the Village submitted an Ohio BUILDS application, a special program distributing American Rescue Plan Act dollars for sewer and water projects, and to our disbelief we were among the first batch awarded! The Village will be receiving \$1.2 million in grants for these remaining phases. Since the remaining projects have an estimate of \$1.4 million, this would leave just \$200,000 for debt amortization.

2021 Paving Program - The 2021 Paving Program was a big success. After postponing this alley effort in 2020 due to COVID-19, we wanted to hit the ground running and repave as many dilapidated alleys as we could afford. I think we knocked out about half of them. I know a lot of very bad alleys were not done--don't fret there will be more work in 2022!

Town Hall Renovation - Exterior work on the Town Hall has been completed, and the interior phase for the Genoa Civic Theater will be ongoing through the winter. Fresh paint, new bathroom improvements, new carpet, etc will all be welcome improvements. The exterior phase of the project restored the bell tower and a few of the chimneys. This project was funded from being awarded \$150,000 via the State Capital Budget, \$50,000 via CDBG grants, and the remainder through American Rescue Plan Act funds. *No village taxes will be used on this project.*

State Route 51 Development - Vacant spaces on the commercial corridor are filling up, and new construction is breaking ground. Family Dollar and Dollar Tree have had a corporate merger and their new management has decided to reestablish a presence in our community. It will be nice to no longer have a vacant building on such a visible corner.

The owner of the Taco Bell has decided to build a new structure and that this process is moving along. I imagine a late spring opening is planned. I have been told that a tenant is in line to occupy the previous space, though it is TBA.

The largest potential project, a Discount Drug Mart, seems to be moving along. Talks are still ongoing with Discount Drug Mart about the possible construction of a store. The developer, Giltz & Associates, has also expressed interest in residential development on the 40+ acres of fields behind the proposed store.

It would be unwise for me to make a specific comment on the matter without any plan submitted, but I want everyone to know that the Planning Commission has worked hard during the last two years to strengthen our zoning codes, subdivision regulations, thoroughfare plan, etc to **require the types of good development** that Genoans would expect from a developer. Also, in the event that a proposal is submitted, thorough public review is a necessary phase for approval. Public comment would be invited at Planning Commission meetings.

North Coast Inland Trail Grant - The Village submitted an application for a \$150,000 Ohio Recreational Trails Program grant to ODNR last spring, and we were told that winners would be announced by the end of October. ODNR has since postponed this announcement indefinitely. So keep your fingers crossed because this project (bringing the multi-use path up from the back of the park to Washington, along the south edge of the quarry) would be a great addition for our town and park. In the event that we are not selected, “there’s always next year” so we will be resubmitting until we win this grant.