

5. What changes, if any, would you make to improve transparency, communication, and public engagement in Village government?

Dennis Faber's Response

I believe we are the only community west of the interstate that broadcasts its Village Board meetings on YouTube. I have always made it a point to explain some of the subjects we vote on to communicate better what the issue was all about. Over the last few years, I have received numerous calls from citizens asking for more detailed explanations of issues.

If you are on our email list, and if you go to our website calendar, you can open our monthly agenda. When you scroll down, you will see all the pertinent details of virtually every item on the agenda. Public engagement is always welcome at our workshop meetings. As another example of our transparency, this past year our budget workshops were open to the public, and after those meetings citizens were welcome to ask Board members questions.

Checking one neighboring community, I could not find where they posted even one budget workshop. The only budget they had posted was their November meeting for budget approval. They possibly have their staff prepare their budget, nothing wrong with that - but in comparison, our Village is substantially more open and transparent than virtually all our neighbors.

Naturally, if someone is not getting the answers they are looking for and the Board disagrees with their argument, it is easy for them to say the Village is not transparent.

Steve Dunn's Response

First, open up comments on the Facebook page. Second, minimize the number of closed-session meetings. Third, hold open houses for developers so they can hear

what the community wants and stay away from deals the community and/or commissions don't support.

I encourage residents and business owners to get involved and engage with Village government. I want to hear what people have to say, good, bad, or ugly.

Adam Miller's Response

We need fewer closed-door meetings and more open dialogue. Residents should be able to ask questions during Village meetings and receive answers directly from the Board. I also support giving citizens more opportunities to vote on or provide input into major decisions.

Kerry Verenski's Response

I believe residents deserve full transparency and trust in their local government. I will advocate for greater openness, clearer communication, and limiting closed-session meetings to only when necessary and legally appropriate. Compliance with open meeting laws is essential to maintaining public confidence.

James Woodke's Response

The Village Board, with staff support, needs to have regular "Listening Sessions" to let Village residents express their views and concerns. During these listening sessions, the Board should take note and acknowledge the concerns. If appropriate, the Board should try to inform and educate residents about how and why things work. Sometimes there are legal, regulatory, or procedural reasons that complicate the issue.

I have found that with government, nothing is easy or makes sense, especially if you don't know the rules. We need to make it easier for Village residents to be involved and communicate with the Village Board and staff.