

TO: Administration Committee of the Village Board  
FROM: Village President Bob Bielinski  
DATE: August 31, 2020  
RE: Appointment Process for Village's Boards and Commissions

Introduction

The Village President's responsibility of recommending individuals for appointment to boards and commissions is an important and time consuming process, and I take the responsibility very seriously. The Village's boards and commissions are part of Village government, and their members are government officials.

Since I took office on May 14, 2013, I have submitted 127 recommendations for appointments and reappointments to the Village Board for its approval, as shown in the table below.

Recommendations for Reappointment to Current Board or Commission	62
Recommendations for Appointment to New Board or Commission	65
Total Recommendations	127

As the Administration Committee continues its review of the Village's boards and commissions, I thought it would be helpful to summarize the process I undertake when recommending appointments and the results of the process over the past seven years. I hope the members of the Committee find this information useful to their review.

Recommendation Process

When making a decision on a recommendation, I look for a match between an individual's experience and interests with the current needs of the Village's boards and commissions. Finding the right mix of experience and subject matter expertise for each board or commission is important for a board or commission to function well and best serve the residents of Wilmette. When the Village Code specifies desired types of experience for members of a particular board or commission, that guidance is informative to the process.

Generally when there is an upcoming vacancy on a board or commission, I consult with the Village Staff to seek their input regarding the current needs of the board or commission and what experience or expertise would help ensure a well-rounded body. Subsequent to that discussion, I review Talent Bank Questionnaires (TBQs) which have been submitted to the Village for that board or commission to identify candidates with an interest and relevant experience. Since there isn't always a good match for each individual at the time a TBQ is submitted, the Village retains TBQs for future vacancies.

Prior to making a recommendation, I schedule a conversation (almost always in-person) with a potential candidate to discuss the individual's experience and interests and to explore how their experience and interests match up with the current needs of the various boards and commissions. Often, we discuss boards and commissions which may not have been indicated as an individual's preference because there is a current need or because I see another good fit for the individual's experience and interests. For

example, direct transportation engineering experience is rare, but individuals with an analytical background are also well suited for the Transportation Commission given the data driven decision making which the Commission undertakes.

Several of the Village's boards and commissions are land use related, and specific experience/expertise is very helpful to the proper functioning of these groups. There is not an overabundance of well qualified applicants with both experience in architecture, real estate development, construction, urban planning or engineering, and the time and willingness to volunteer for a Village board or commission.

When a vacancy is upcoming on a land use related board or commission, Staff often asks the existing members of the board or commission for suggestions of potential new board members. Tapping into the professional networks of these land use practitioners is an important part of the process for identifying new members with relevant experience. In addition, because there is a natural progression in terms of the learning curve on boards and commissions (especially land use related ones), I have asked existing members of a board or commission to move to a more time intensive board or commission (almost always to the Zoning Board of Appeals or the Plan Commission).

In general, I take a patient approach to filling vacancies to try to find individuals with relevant experience for each board or commission, and there are not always available volunteers with the appropriate technical expertise at the time of a vacancy. After a period of time when efforts to find the best qualified candidates are unsuccessful, I look for individuals who have previously expressed an interest in serving on a board or commission and would be a good fit.

Collaboration between the Village's boards and commissions and the Village Board is also important because the boards and commissions are not policy setting bodies, but only advisory bodies. Boards and commissions can play an important role supporting the Village Board in their policy making duties, and it's important to find individuals who are interested in working collaboratively and constructively inside of Village government to serve on boards and commissions.

#### Appointments, May 2013 to July 2020

As I mentioned above, over the past seven years, I've made 127 recommendations for appointments and reappointments to a board or commission. These recommendations include three members of the Village Staff, our liaison from Commonwealth Edison, two former Village Trustees, and two unsuccessful candidates for Village Trustee.

Excluding reappointments, transfers of individuals from one board to another, and the individuals mentioned in the paragraph above, I have made 47 recommendations for new appointments to boards or commissions. The table below shows how each of these candidates came to my attention.

TBQ submission / direct outreach to me from individual previously not known to me	36	77%
TBQ submission / direct outreach to me from individual known to me	2	4%
Introduction to me	6	13%
Direct outreach by me	3	6%
Total recommendations for new appointments	47	100%

It should also be noted that I have reached out unsuccessfully to many other residents (especially architects, real estate developers and others with land use expertise) to encourage them to consider joining one of the Village's boards or commissions. Encouraging qualified candidates to join the Village's boards and commissions is a responsibility of the Village President.

Because I have been patient in my approach to filling vacancies, our boards and commissions are comprised of individuals with diverse and relevant experience and expertise. For example, the Environmental and Energy Commission has an amazing mix of valuable real world experience among its members because I've consciously waited for individuals with relevant technical expertise. The Police and Fire Pension Boards include individuals with investing and legal expertise, and the performance of our pension funds have benefited from their guidance. And, of course, the land use related bodies include many experienced land use practitioners among their members.

Given my approach of matching resident experience and expertise with the needs of each board or commission, I have refrained from recommending appointments to the Housing Commission and Human Relations Commission while their responsibilities have not been clearly defined. I understand the Administration Committee has made significant progress in refining the roles of these commissions, and I look forward to recommending well qualified individuals to fill these vacancies after the Committee's and Village Board's review is complete.

### Conclusion

The Village President's responsibility of recommending individuals for appointment to boards and commissions is an important and time consuming process, and I take the responsibility very seriously.

There are multiple sources of candidates for the Village's boards and commissions, but the vast majority of new appointments come from Talent Bank Questionnaires submitted to the Village.

Finding the right mix of experience and expertise for each board or commission is important for a board or commission to function well and best serve the community. Being patient and waiting for individuals with relevant technical expertise has allowed for the creation of boards and commissions with a great mix of talented professionals.

We are lucky to live in a village where so many talented residents have a desire to volunteer to serve the community. Service on a board or commission can be a significant time commitment, and we should all appreciate the contributions made by the Village's board and commission members.

Recognizing the importance of the Administration Committee's review, I will refrain from making any recommendations of appointments, other than reappointments of existing members, to any of the Village's boards and commissions until completion of the review.