



The Villager

August 2022

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- Where'd the Money Go? A Review of Godfrey's Property Tax
- Getting To Know Village Staff — Karen Sinks
- Featured Business of the Month: Mister Donut
- Oh, and one more thing...

Village of Godfrey Office of Economic Development

6810 Godfrey Road

Phone: 618-466-3325

E-mail: jmager@godfreyil.org

**You can see your future from
here.**



Michael J. McCormick

Mayor

Maintaining An Inventory Of Available Commercial Properties



It is fairly common to receive requests about available properties or sites for business locations. When these inquiries occur, the lead

time for response is usually limited — sometimes a matter of only a few days. Given the importance of a quick reply, it becomes necessary to identify available property and related information ahead of time.

The type of information requested in these inquiries is:

- the availability of the property,
- the size and type of any of structures
- utilities,
- Zoning,
- whether or not the property is eligible for any business incentives offered by local or state government; and,
- pricing.

Godfrey's Office of Economic Development maintains a list of known available properties not on public listings. For example, the list may have properties in which the owner would entertain selling if an opportunity were to arise — but there is no active attempt to sell.

Identifying available properties includes monitoring the websites of local real estate offices, and other platforms that have property listings. It also requires quite a bit of networking and phone calls to property owners in order to identify sites that might be available.

If there is a property that may be available for sale, is zoned for commercial use, and could be considered should an appropriate inquiry be received by the Office of Economic Development, please notify that office. Information about the property will be kept confidential as appropriate.

Jim Mager

618-466-3325

jmager@godfreyil.org

"The run of super-low interest rates is over, at least for the foreseeable future, forcing borrowers and lenders to rethink their strategies and generally lowering expectations for deal volume in 2022."

"Lenders Pull Back As Interest Rates Rise"
Heartland Real Estate Business

Did you know.....?

If you should ever be a big Lotto winner of over \$250,000 in Illinois, you can remain anonymous. Just in case that should ever apply to you....



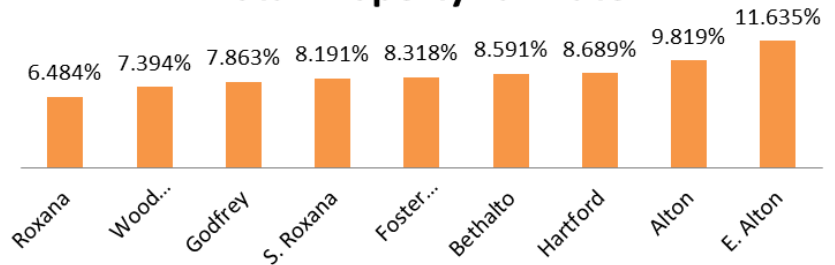
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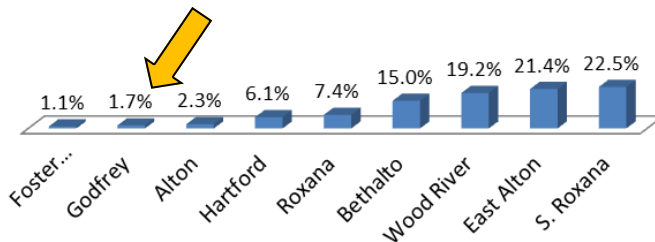
Often times we complain about property taxes being so excessive. It probably is a safe assumption

that nobody really enjoys paying taxes. Without getting into the debate of whether taxes are too expensive, or not, it might be beneficial to review

Total Property Tax Rate



Percentage of Total Property Tax Bill



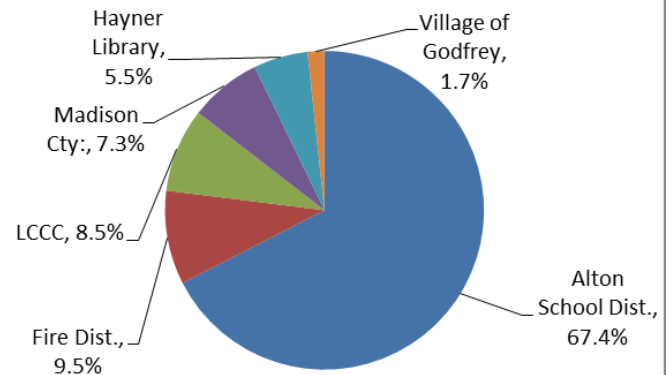
how the Village of Godfrey property tax compares to surrounding communities and how those tax dollars are allocated across the various taxing bodies within the community.

First, let's look at how Godfrey's total property tax rate compares to nine surrounding communities. Godfrey's "Property Tax Rate" is 7.863%. We see that Godfrey ranks third, with Roxana being the lowest at 6.484% and East Alton the highest at 11.635%. It should be noted that Roxana and

Wood River have the refineries generating hundreds of thousands in tax revenues.

Just looking at the total tax rates of the different communities does not really tell the full story. If we look at the percentage of the total tax bill that goes to the actual municipality, we begin to gain some insight as to how much money is actually generated for operations. When comparing Godfrey with the same set of communities, we see that Godfrey is the second lowest at 1.7%. That means that less than \$.02 of every property tax dollar goes to the Village. The only municipality that is lower is Foster Township.

Let us take a look at how tax dollars are allocated across the tax-



ing bodies within the Village of Godfrey. Most notably is the Alton School district takes almost \$.68 of every property tax dollar paid. The second highest user of property tax is the Godfrey Fire Protection District at \$.095 of every tax dollar. Following the fire district is Lewis and Clark Community College, Madison County, and the Hayner Library District. Lastly, the Village only takes \$.017 of dollar of property tax.

Although not outlined in this article, many of the surrounding communities have additional taxing bodies that Godfrey does not have. Many communities have additional road and bridge districts, airports, and other townships. By contrast, Godfrey takes care of all roads and streets through its general fund that is generated by taking just \$.017 on every property tax dollar paid, along with a motor fuel tax that is collected by the State of Illinois. Godfrey also eliminated the Godfrey Township some time ago.

District	Tax Rate:	Extension:
Alton School Dist.	5.3033	\$ 2,305.34
Fire Dist.	0.7443	\$ 323.55
LCCC	0.6720	\$ 292.12
Madison Cty:	0.5746	\$ 249.76
Hayner Library	0.4351	\$ 189.14
Village of Godfrey	0.1340	\$ 58.25
Total:	7.8633	\$ 3,418.16

Finally, looking at an example of an actual tax bill shows that of a total property tax amount of \$3,418.16 the allocation that goes to the Village of Godfrey is only \$58.25.

The Mayor, the Trustees and the staff work to maintain effective and efficient operations within the Village. With the amount of property tax allocation that actually goes to the Village of Godfrey, its fiscal position is extremely sound. It has no debt and maintains an approximate \$1M balance in the general fund. In addition to the resources of the general fund, there are also dollars in the TIF District, the

Business District and Motor Fuel Tax accounts that are utilized to fund village operations.

Getting To Know Village Staff — Karen Sinks, Administrative Aid to the Mayor



Every operation needs that “go-to-person” who seems to be able to handle whatever comes along. Be it handling difficult situations that come into the Mayor’s office or helping put the final touches on a press release. Meet Karen Sinks.

Ms. Sinks, a member of Mayor McCormick’s administrative staff, works very closely with the Mayor and each department within the Village of Godfrey. In addition to providing administrative support to the Mayor, she completes

all in-house accounts receivable and accounts payable. Karen processes all financial transactions received by the Village, including tax and grant payments, permits, fees for programs, fines, etc.. Additionally, she processes all bills generated by the Village and makes payment.

Ms. Sinks possesses a Bachelor’s of Science in Psychology from SIUE and has worked in a variety of capacities utilizing her degree. She spent years at Beverly Farm Foundation and also as a community social worker with the Illinois Department on Aging, Healthy Moms & Healthy Kids, and Children’s Home & Aid Society. After more than a decade working in social services, she was ready for a complete change of pace and obtained a certification in database management programming from Lewis and Clark Community College. Armed with her new skills Karen went to work as a defense contractor for the U.S. Air Force.

Karen’s personal interests include spending time with family, reading, walking, and being outdoors. Her daughter just graduated from Millikin University and her son will be starting his freshman year at ISU. She says, “Being a Mom, no matter how old my kids are, will always be the thing that brings me my biggest joy.”

Karen feels a challenge in doing her job is working to change people’s perceived biases pertaining to government. Everyone at the Village of Godfrey, despite working for a government entity, strives to be of assistance to residents and to keep the community clean, safe, and prosperous.

Karen takes great pleasure in providing good customer service and in helping others, and works diligently trying to disprove the ‘Karen’ internet memes! “I enjoy working for Mayor McCormick and the Village of Godfrey and am happy to be of service to area residents,” said Karen.

Godfrey 311

Electronic 311
Smartphone App

Easily report potholes, broken street lights and other problems.

Call or email local officials, the police department, city offices and others.

Access activity calendars, receive village alerts and more.

Village Department Contacts:

Mayor Mike McCormick	618-466-3324
Clerk Bethany Bohn	618-466-3381
Richard Beran, Engineer	618-466-4319
Laura Dixon, Building and Zoning	618-466-1206
Jim Lewis, Street Department	618-466-3133
Chris Logan, Park and Rec	618-466-1483
Jim Mager, Economic Development	618-466-3325
Susie Stephen, Animal Control	618-466-5211
Police Non-Emergency Dispatch	618-692-4433

“Be yourself; everyone else is
already taken.”

— Oscar Wilde

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According to Mister Donut's website, there are 5500 stores. However; here in Godfrey, we have the only one in the United States!

Mister Donut was established in 1955. In the early 1990's, Mister Donut was bought out by Dunkin' Donuts. All Mister Donut owners were given the option to become a Dunkin' Donut or become an independent. Over time, the Godfrey operation is the only one left in the United States.

Mister Donut has vast operations in Asia, particular in Japan where stores are numerous. The concentration of Mister Donut in Japan is somewhat like Starbucks here in the United States.

There's the story about a family from Japan flying into LAX and rented a car to drive to New York. They actually made a

Oh, and one more thing.....

I used to advise my SIUE students that if you really want to know how a business works, go work in it. You can't really know how something operates until you are involved with it.

While I have lived in Godfrey for nearly 45 years, I really did not understand what goes on in running the municipality until I went to work for it. Like many, I'd complain about high property taxes.... heck, I still do. When I'm setting on the front porch looking out over the front yard, my wife will come out and ask if I'm getting my \$20 worth? That's about the property tax on a daily basis.

Folks come to the Village and complain that, "I pay all these property taxes and why can't I get this or get that?" You know, I can feel their pain..... I get it; but, at less than 2 pennies on the dollar, the Village of Godfrey is not the one taking your money. And still, we have great streets, parks, a safe community and a very good quality of life. That's quite a bang for the buck.

As the John Mellencamp song says, "I was borne in a small town, I live in a small town, I'll probably die in a small town.....that's probably where they'll bury me....."

There are a lot of things that go into the magic of a small town. One is the local coffee shop. A place where locals gather to get the daily happenings, a place to take the grandkids, a place to grab donuts after church. Mister Donut serves that purpose in Godfrey. Although I 'know' it was established in 1980, I cannot recall when it wasn't around. I remember 'back in the day' stopping at night after a band job to grab a coffee and a donut on the way home. Of course, now if I just look at a donut, it adds two pounds! But, thank you Mister Donut for being part of our small town.

Anyway, as the song says, "all my friends are from small towns....."

Featured Business of the Month: Godfrey's Mr. Donut

point to stop at Godfrey's Mister Donut and take pictures.

The Godfrey store was opened in 1980 at it's current location by Godfrey businessman, Fred Tieman. On September 1, 2004, the store was purchase by current owner Caesar Blanco.

Mr. Blanco had retired from the Navy after twenty-six years of service and reached the rank of Senior Chief. He found that "retirement" did not work for him and was becoming bored. In a turn of events, he found out the current owners of Mister Donut would be willing to sell the business. After a couple of conversations, the deal sealed with a hand shake.

When Mr. Blanco purchased Mister Donut, there were eleven employees. The current employment level is twenty-two. Caesar indicated that over this eighteen years over ownership, all 6 of his children have worked at the store at one time or another. A daughter is currently working in the operation.

A unique feature is the amount of product variety. "We have over fifty-three different donuts. Other shops don't offer that selection," said Caesar. Additionally, they offer

various breakfast sandwiches and tasty biscuits and gravy.

A typical day in operations begins with the donut "makers" starting at 5:00 p.m. These employees are responsible for starting the process of mixing the dough and 'hand making' the donut varieties. At 12:30 a.m. the "finishers" come in and begin the process of icing, sorting and getting the products ready for sale. The delivery vans head out at around 4:15. One van goes north as far as Carrollton and one goes south as far as Granite City. Of course sending vans out at that time does have its risks. "One time we lost three vans in a four month period because of hitting deer," said Caesar.

*Mister Donut is open seven day a week
from 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.*

Phone: 618-466-6327

2720 Grovelin Avenue, Godfrey



Jim Mager

Economic Development

618-466-3325

jmager@godfreyil.org