



The Villager

August 2025

The Importance of Civic Engagement in Local Government

Special points of interest:

- The Importance of Civic Engagement in Local Government
- Commercial Property Enhancement Grant
- Godfrey Good Neighbor – Dave Gentry
- Godfrey Business of the Month – OSF Healthcare
- Godfrey's No Knock Registry

If you would like to receive the monthly issue of "The Villager" by email, please contact Jim Mager at: jmager@godfreyil.org

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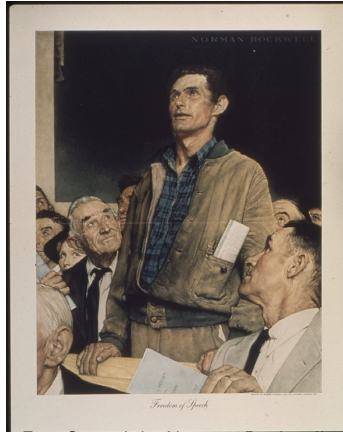
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You can see your future from here.



Michael J. McCormick

Mayor



Free Speech by Norman Rockwell

Civic engagement in local government refers to the active participation of citizens in the processes that affect their community's governance and decision-making. This participation can take many forms, such as attending town hall meetings, engaging in debates and discussions about local issues, participating in public consultations, joining advisory groups, or volunteering for community initiatives. The importance of this civic engagement lies in its ability to strengthen the democratic process by fostering a more informed and involved citizenry.

Civic engagement in local government is a cornerstone of functioning democracies. This involves actively participating in local government initiatives, attending town hall meetings, joining community boards, and engaging in dialogues about civic issues. Through this active involvement, citizens can influence policy-making and decision-making processes, leading to more equitable and effective governance.

Local governments play a crucial role in shaping the environments and quality of life in communities. Unfortunately, many citizens overlook the significance of engaging with local governance, focusing instead on national politics. However, engaging at a local level is where individuals can have the most direct and measurable impact. Local governments oversee essential services such as education, public safety, infrastructure, and community health. Understanding the ways individuals can participate effectively helps to build more resilient and supportive communities.

Civic engagement plays a significant role in enhancing transparency and accountability within local governments. Citizens ensure that government actions align with community needs and values. This process transforms governance into a system that listens to and values public input, laying the foundation for a more just and equitable society.

Empowering Communities

Civic engagement empowers communities by giving individuals a voice in decision-making processes. Local governments cannot function effectively in a vacuum. They require input from community members who are the most familiar with their own needs and priorities. Engaged citizens can advocate for changes that directly impact their daily lives, such as improvements in infrastructure, environmental conservation efforts, and social welfare programs.

Through participation, individuals can gain access to platforms where they can express their opinions and propose solutions to shared problems. Setting up committees or focus groups that address specific community issues is an effective way of engaging community members. These platforms encourage collaborative dialogue between community members and government officials, resulting in better-informed policies and initiatives. Empowering citizens in this manner not only enhances their agency but also helps governments develop more comprehensive and inclusive policies.

Improving Policy Outcomes

Engaged citizens contribute insights about specific issues faced by the community. This input helps in crafting policies that are not only pragmatic but also sustainable, as they reflect the lived realities and expectations of the people they aim to serve.

Furthermore, civic engagement aids in the implementation phase of policies. Policies that are backed by community input tend to garner broader support and cooperation during implementation. Citizens are more likely to comply with regulations and contribute to communal efforts when they feel ownership of the decisions made. This increased buy-in reduces opposition and resistance to change, facilitating smoother execution of policies and programs.

Strengthening the Democratic Process

Active civic engagement is fundamental to strengthening the democratic process at the local level. Democracy thrives on the active participation of its citizens, and when individuals engage with their local governments, they reinforce democratic values and principles. By participating in electoral

processes, advocating for policy changes, or serving in local committees, citizens play a crucial role in shaping their communities. The engaged citizenry becomes the bedrock of a resilient democratic system that can adapt to changing circumstances and societal needs.

Fostering Community Resilience and Integration

Civic engagement fosters community resilience by strengthening the ties between individuals, their neighbors, and their local governments. When citizens actively participate in governance, they develop a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility towards their community's welfare.

Through active engagement, communities become better equipped to respond to challenges, whether they are economic downturns, natural disasters, or social upheavals. The connections and trust built through sustained civic engagement cultivate a supportive environment wherein individuals can rely on one another and local institutions for support. This resilience is crucial in fostering a dynamic community capable of thriving in both stable and turbulent times.

How can individuals get involved in their local government?

There are numerous ways individuals can engage with their local government, and getting involved is often easier than it may seem. One of the simplest yet most impactful forms of civic engagement is voting in local elections. Participating in elections not only allows individuals to influence who is elected to represent their interests but also sets the stage for more significant involvement in local governance.

Another effective way to engage is by attending town hall meetings or city council sessions. These gatherings offer a platform to hear about the issues the local government is addressing; ask questions, and voice opinions. Additionally, many local governments stream these meetings online, making it even more accessible for individuals who cannot attend in person.

Citizens can also join community boards, commissions, or committees, which often seek members to provide diverse perspectives. These groups typically focus on specific issues—such as parks, libraries, zoning, or public safety—and allow participants to dive deeper into subjects they're passionate about.

Engaging in volunteer opportunities is another excellent avenue for involvement. Many local governments sponsor community events, initiatives, and programs that rely on volunteers. This not only helps improve the community but also builds networks and relationships with other civically minded individuals.

<https://socialstudieshelp.com/ap-government-and-politics/the-importance-of-civic-engagement-in-local-government/>



Opening
soon!

Don't forget.....

Commercial Property Enhancement Grant

Businesses located in the Godfrey Business District are eligible to take advantage of the "Commercial Property Enhancement Grant" program.

Funding: First \$30,000 maximum grant is 50% match; and \$30,001 to \$100,000 is 25% grant for eligible expenses; and above \$100,001 is 5% grant up to a total grant amount of \$40,000.

Eligible Expenses: Significant facade renovations, signage, awnings, doors, windows. Landscaping if it follows Godfrey Ordinance No. 15-2007. Parking lots if brought up to ADA compliance and Village codes. All appropriate permits must be secured.

Ineligible Expenses: Regular repairs and maintenance, demolition, design, permit fees; and expenses incurred or contracted prior to grant approval.

Eligibility Criteria and Conditions: Owners and tenants of properties within Godfrey's Business District (at time of application).

The property's primary use must be for commercial use. Tenants must provide written authorization from the property owner for the contemplated improvements and participation in the program. If the tenant or owner who receives grant funding should close, move, or remove work financed with a grant within five years of grant date, repayment of the grant may be required, pro rata for a period of the remaining three-year term. No additional grant funds are available for similar work at same space for a period of at least five years. Application for the grant does require three bids. *The grant must be approved prior to commencement of work.*

When contemplating purchasing of property in Godfrey with the intent of commercial or business use, be sure to check the zoning of the property. It is also advisable to determine if the property is in one of the business incentive districts:

- Business District
- TIF District
- Enterprise Zone

Having property that is properly zoned or in a business incentive district may have an impact on the intended use of the property. The time to make those determinations is prior to purchase.

Godfrey 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.

Godfrey Good Neighbor — Dave Gentry



There is that joke of how if you look up something in a dictionary you see a picture of “whatever.” Going along with that witticism, if you look up civic engagement in the dictionary you see a picture of Dave Gentry. Dave embodies the essence of civic engagement when it comes to the Village of Godfrey.

Mr. Gentry is a life-long resident of the Godfrey area. He retired from AT & T in 2021 after forty-six years of service to the company. He started there in 1975 as a customer service operator. Back then, that is where everyone started. After

three years in that role, he moved to the business office to handle commercial accounts. There he was responsible for providing service to business customers and configuring systems to meet their needs. He worked in that capacity for nine years when a consolidation took place and providing residential service also was added to his duties.

In 1988, he was promoted out to the field “climbing poles” in the East. St. Louis service area. Dave handled all the duties that go along with being a technician/line person for a phone company. Dave says, “God hands me opportunities.” In 2001, he landed a job working at the switching office at 3206 Godfrey Road where he worked until he retired.

Dave and his wife, Carol, both entered retirement at about the same time. They quickly realized they needed other interests to occupy their time. Carol gravitated to helping out at Senior Services Plus, and Dave somewhat followed along. “I found I really enjoyed the activities and comradery of the organization,” said Dave.

Dave explained that he would watch and read the news. Given that news originations had become house organs for whatever agenda they supported, he questioned if he was ever getting first hand information? He said, “I also came to the realization that the local level is where an individual could actually have an impact on governance that affects one’s life.” With that thought, Dave decided to participate in the governance of Godfrey as an engaged citizen.

Over the past few years, Mr. Gentry makes almost every Board of Trustees meeting that meets twice a month. He attends the monthly Park and Recreation Board meeting on the second Friday of the month. He also attends the Community Advancement Planning committee meetings. Finally, he is a member of the Planning and Zoning committee that meets on the third Thursday of the month. If not attending a meeting, it is not uncommon for Dave to stop in and visit with one of the department heads on issues of importance.

Dave’s attitude is that Godfrey is a wonderful community with much to offer. “Want to do my part to make Godfrey the best it can be. I’ve also come to realize the more I learn the less I say,” he said.

Below are descriptions of the departments that Dave supports.

The Village Building and Zoning Department

Issuing permits for new construction commercial and residential, additions, alterations, plumbing, roofing, pools, decks, fences, electrical, and signs. This also includes reviewing all plans related to permitting.

- Processing applications for rezoning and variance hearings.
- Issuing ordinance violations for weeds, junk, trash, derelict vehicles, and property maintenance.
- Verifying zoning classifications.
- Inspections for new construction as related to; footings, foundations, framing, electrical, plumbing, signs, fire damage and demolition

The Village of Godfrey Parks and Recreation Department

Takes a leadership role in promoting and developing parks and recreation by addressing local needs and supporting a greater role providing open space, parkland and recreation opportunities to effectively meet and serve the needs of its constituents, the citizens of Godfrey, and those who interact with the parks system.

The Office of Economic Development

Improves the quality of life in Godfrey through economic development. Priorities include the attraction of new businesses to Godfrey, the retention of current businesses, maintaining accurate demographic information, and updating the commercial and industrial building and site database.

Brick Bash Day at Glazebrook Park



The weather was great for a well-attended event that ran from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at Glazebrook Park in Godfrey on July 15.

The occasion featured a \$1,000 donation from Clearwave Fiber to Lewis & Clark Community College’s STEM program, supporting future STEM education and outreach initiatives for local youth.

Highlights included:

- Interactive LEGO® building stations
- A collaborative Build Challenge to promote problem-solving
- A Creative Building Competition with prizes
- A STEM-focused activity zone introducing engineering and technology concepts through play
- Free refreshments, raffle giveaways (including a new LEGO® set), and a community photo booth



Godfrey Business of the Month — OSF Healthcare



An element determining the desirability and quality of life for a community is the access to good health care. Godfrey is very fortunate to have a premier provider. OSF Healthcare strives to continuously meet the needs of patients and the community. In total there are over forty health care professionals ready to deliver comprehensive and convenient care focused on:

- One-stop medical services for the whole family that range from primary care, pediatrics and an on-site PromptCare clinic for urgent needs.
- Integrated on-site services that include x-ray and laboratory.
- A direct link to OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center allows their team to easily coordinate patient care with a full range of hospital services, from the emergency room to a network of expert specialists.
- The "Connect Bar" located in the lobby to offer resources to help patients with questions on using MyChart.

The Godfrey office is excited to introduce several new, exceptional providers to the team. This expansion means more availability and comprehensive care including:

- Three full-time PromptCare providers

- Seven primary care providers
- Three pediatric providers
- One full-time behavior therapist

OSF Healthcare at Godfrey exceeds its core mission of providing health care by going above and beyond the health service offerings for the community. The staff make up what it calls "mission partners" who work to provide assistance to people with non-health care needs. The compassion for the community is illustrated by the following programs and resources:

- The mission partners understand that health is about more than just medicine. To assist patients who are experiencing food insecurity, a "micro food pantry" is located inside the lobby that is available to anyone in need.
- The mission partners operate a "Giving Rack" initiative designed to provide free seasonal items to children and families in need, such as winter coats, Halloween costumes, school supplies, etc.
- The staff conducts themselves in what they call the "Care Beyond the Exam Room" attitude. They know the initiatives like the food pantry and giving rack are a tangible way demonstrating how they care about patients. Not only when they are there for an appointment, but other times. They believe caring attitude is a core part of what makes their practice special.

Another offering is the OSF OnCall Connect that makes it easier to get the care and support needed between doctor appointments. Once enrolled in OSF OnCall Connect, your care team can support you on your health



and wellness journey. This may include:

- Digital resources and personalized education 24/7 access to a digital care team.
- Regular screening and assessment of your needs to connect you to local resources.
- Technology and equipment at no cost to you to connect you to the care you need.

Experience world-class care and groundbreaking research at OSF HealthCare. From innovative digital health solutions through OSF OnCall, to transformative cancer treatments such as proton therapy and brachytherapy, advancements from the OSF Breakthrough Treatment Center and the leading-edge solutions of OSF Innovation, they are transforming health care every day.

To schedule a visit with a Primary Care or Pediatric provider, please call in the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The PromptCare is available for walk-in Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Phone: 618-467-1520

<https://www.osfhealthcare.org/>

6702 Godfrey Road
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A note of thanks to the following in preparing these newsletters:
Mayor McCormick, Judy Peipert, Sharon O'Neal and Karen Sinks

Village of Godfrey Adopts A Transient Merchant DO NOT KNOCK REGISTRY



All solicitors are prohibited from soliciting at any location listed on the Do Not Knock Registry or at any location with a sign posted prohibiting solicitation. Village of Godfrey Ordinance 14-2025 requires all solicitors to obtain a current Do Not Knock Registry list upon approval of a Transient Merchant License. The Do Not Knock Registry works similarly to a "Do Not Call" list; it prohibits solicitation at registered addresses. For your protection, only addresses will appear on the Do Not Knock Registry. If you would like to be added to the list, please complete the Application Form (available at www.godfreyil.org) and bring or mail to the Godfrey Village Clerks Office. Village of Godfrey Attn: Jacki Clayton, Village Clerk 6810 Godfrey Rd. Godfrey, IL 62035. Your Registration will become effective on the first day of the following month. All transient merchants will be given an updated list at the start of the month.

To report a violation, please call Madison County Sheriff's Department 618-692-4433. Violations of this section shall subject the licensee, solicitor, peddler or canvasser and/or their corporate entity to revocation of the license issued by the Village, denial of future license applications, a fine of not less than \$125.00 nor more than \$750.00, per occurrence, and potential additional civil or criminal penalties. If you have any questions on the Do Not Knock Registry, please call the Godfrey Village Clerks office 618-466-3381.