

Wilmette Seeking Input on How to Celebrate 150 Years in 2022!

Wilmette was incorporated as a municipality in 1872. This means that in 2022 the village will observe its 150th birthday. Last fall, the Village Board decided that this milestone should be celebrated in a similar manner as prior significant anniversaries. To that end, the Village Board created a 12-member Sesquicentennial Planning Committee (listed below). The committee held its first meeting in December and discussed a number of ideas but recognized that the community at large – not the committee – should set the direction for the celebration.

This is an invitation for you or your organization to submit your ideas to the committee. The easiest way is to send an email to Celebrate150@wilmette.com, but you can also contact any member of the committee directly. Better yet, you can attend and participate in the committee's meetings, either in person at the Village Hall (when in-person meetings resume) or remotely through the Microsoft Teams program. The next meeting will be held remotely on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. Email the above address or visit the village website for information on how to join the meeting.

Here are some general themes that were suggested at the committee's initial meeting:

- Celebrate with events throughout calendar year 2022.
- Generate community spirit, promote unity, and have fun.
- Draw new residents into village life.
- Celebrate the post-pandemic return to vitality and the renewal of the Village Center.
- Honor the village's history.
- Discuss the village's future.
- Recognize longstanding businesses.
- Create opportunities for new business.
- Emphasize the need to preserve the village's attractive features.
- Promote a "sustainable community" and undertake a "habitat enhancement" project
- Involve the village's youth.

In addition to these general themes, committee members suggested a number of specific events and activities as listed below. Hopefully, this list will inspire additional ideas.

- Village-wide block party or neighborhood block parties.
- Fireworks show.
- Scavenger hunt with historic message.
- Parade.
- Carnival.
- Juried art show featuring local artists.
- Antique auto show.
- Bike tour of historic and other significant sites.
- Musicals, plays, and concerts at Wallace Bowl.
- Beach bash.
- Street fair/community fair.
- New public spaces and public art.
- Logo contest.
- Talent show.
- Homecoming for former residents.
- Programs and displays at the Museum, Library, and schools focusing on history, current conditions, and the future.
- Events centered on the village's restaurants like food festivals or restaurant week.
- Appearances by Wilmette-connected celebrities.
- Interfaith Thanksgiving service.

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A significant sesquicentennial celebration will require a great deal of work and the involvement of many people and organizations. The committee will be asking the Wilmette community to help with the planning and implementation of specific aspects of the celebration. This invitation is a start in that direction.

Committee Members

Vernon Squires, Former Village President (1981 to 1989) (co-chair)

John Jacoby, Former Village President (1989 to 1997) (co-chair)

Nancy Canafax, Former Village President (1997 to 2005) (co-chair)

Chris Canning, Former Village President (2005 to 2013) (co-chair)

George Pearce, Former Village Trustee

Alan Swanson, Former Village Trustee

Beth Drucker, President, Go Green Wilmette

Anne Kelly, Advertising and Marketing Consultant; Member, Chamber of Commerce Board

Julie Yusim, Director, Chamber of Commerce

Kathy Hussey-Arntson, Executive Director, Wilmette Historical Museum

Lisa McDonald, President, Wilmette Public Library Board

Lindsay Thomas, Manager of District Operations, Wilmette Park District