

## The Truth About Barrington Hills -- From Robert Abboud

### Dear Friends and Neighbors:

*I have been honored to serve as your President for the last four years and as a Trustee 4 years prior. We have made great progress in the operations of our Village, transparency and individual participation, and preserving our unique rural, equestrian, and open space character. But there is still much work to be done. Working with our Trustees and the many volunteers on our committees, we can continue to keep Barrington Hills one of the most unique communities in the country.*

#### **The primary issue in this election is simple:**

- **Should we continue to preserve Barrington Hills as a unique rural, 5+ acre estate, equestrian, wild life, open space community of close neighbors, or**
- **Should we negotiate with developers for their convenience?**

*In this letter, I would like to make clear three main issues that have had some confusion surrounding them:*

1. *How our government works*
2. *The very sound financial health of the Village*
3. *The Duda Disconnections – why we won and why we oppose developers who wish to break our very unique zoning*

*Recently, you may have received a mailer from our opposition. This mailer is filled with misleading statements, inaccuracies, missing information, and frankly **outright lies**. For example, my opponent claims the President of the Village can spend money independently of the Board. This is patently false. Every budget we implement and every dollar we spend is voted on each month by the entire Board of Trustees. Over the last four years my opponent has approved every dollar we have spent and has approved every budget the Village has implemented. If my opponent was unhappy about any expenditure, he could have voted against it. These monthly votes are documented in the official Village records and many of you have actually witnessed this voting when you attended Village Board meetings. I am disappointed that Mr. Schueppert has run his campaign with a 'do-anything, say-anything' strategy to get elected.*

*This letter is dedicated to addressing how our government works, and my opponent's attempts to mislead you and to address the false statements he makes. I invite you to read through this letter – and I know it's long - and if you have any questions please contact me through [www.BobAbboud.com](http://www.BobAbboud.com), [Bob@RGALabs.com](mailto:Bob@RGALabs.com), my home 847-381-8174 or my cell 847-921-1932. The premise of an open and functioning democracy is that the truth is available so the electorate can make an informed decision.*

*I look forward to your vote on April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and your support of Trustee Gohl, Trustee Ramesch, and Peter Wessel. You can be sure that I will continue to protect and preserve the incredibly unique character of the Village of Barrington Hills without compromise.*

Bob Abboud  
President, Village of Barrington Hills  
[www.BobAbboud.com](http://www.BobAbboud.com)



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## 1. How Our Government Works:

The Village of Barrington Hills was incorporated in 1957 under the Illinois statute defining a President and Trustees form of government. Barrington Hills has implemented this form of government in classic Jeffersonian style whereby the President and the Board of Trustees serve as elected representatives and without compensation.

On our board, the President sets the agenda and is the chief executive officer for the Village. The employees of the Village report directly to the President.

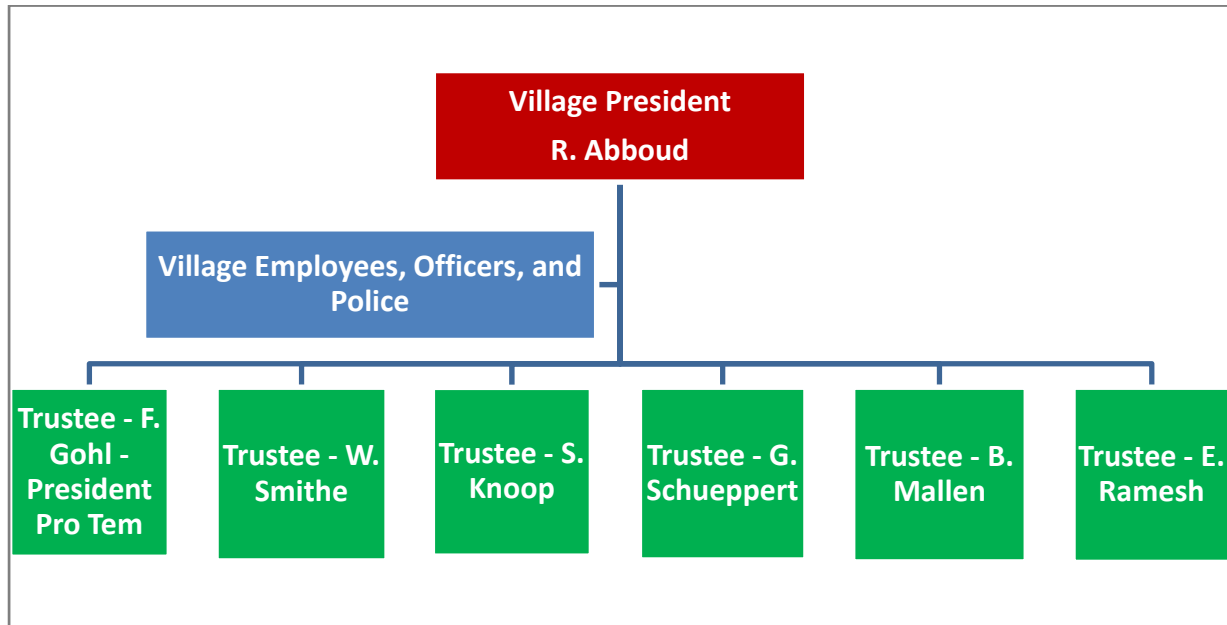


Figure 1 – Structure of Board of Trustees, Village of Barrington Hills, March, 2009

The President and the Trustees each serve four year terms. The Trustees serve on split election cycle so that three Trustees are up for election every two years. You vote for the President separately from the Trustees. There is no such thing as a slate vote in our Village, you vote for individual Trustees.

Deciding on actions to be taken by the Board, such as resolutions and ordinances and spending, the President and Trustees each have one vote. Items are passed with a majority of the Board independent of whether the President votes for or against the item.

In addition to the Village Board, there are some 15 different committees such as the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Plan Commission, Equestrian Commission, Communications Committee, etc. Each of these committees reports to the board through a Trustee or in a few cases directly to the President. There are some 60 residents who are appointed to serve on these various committees. None of these committees, with the sole exception of the ZBA in very defined instances, can take action. All of these committees are advisory to the Village Board.

**How we spend money:** The President and Trustees vote together to take actions and to spend money. Neither the President, nor any individual Trustee, nor Village employee may spend money independently without the approval of the Village Board as a whole. The Village Board votes each year

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to establish a budget, and an appropriation for each line item. In addition, the President and Trustees of the Village Board vote on each invoice presented to the Village for payment. The President and Trustees have an obligation to their constituency to vote YES or NO on each dollar spent.

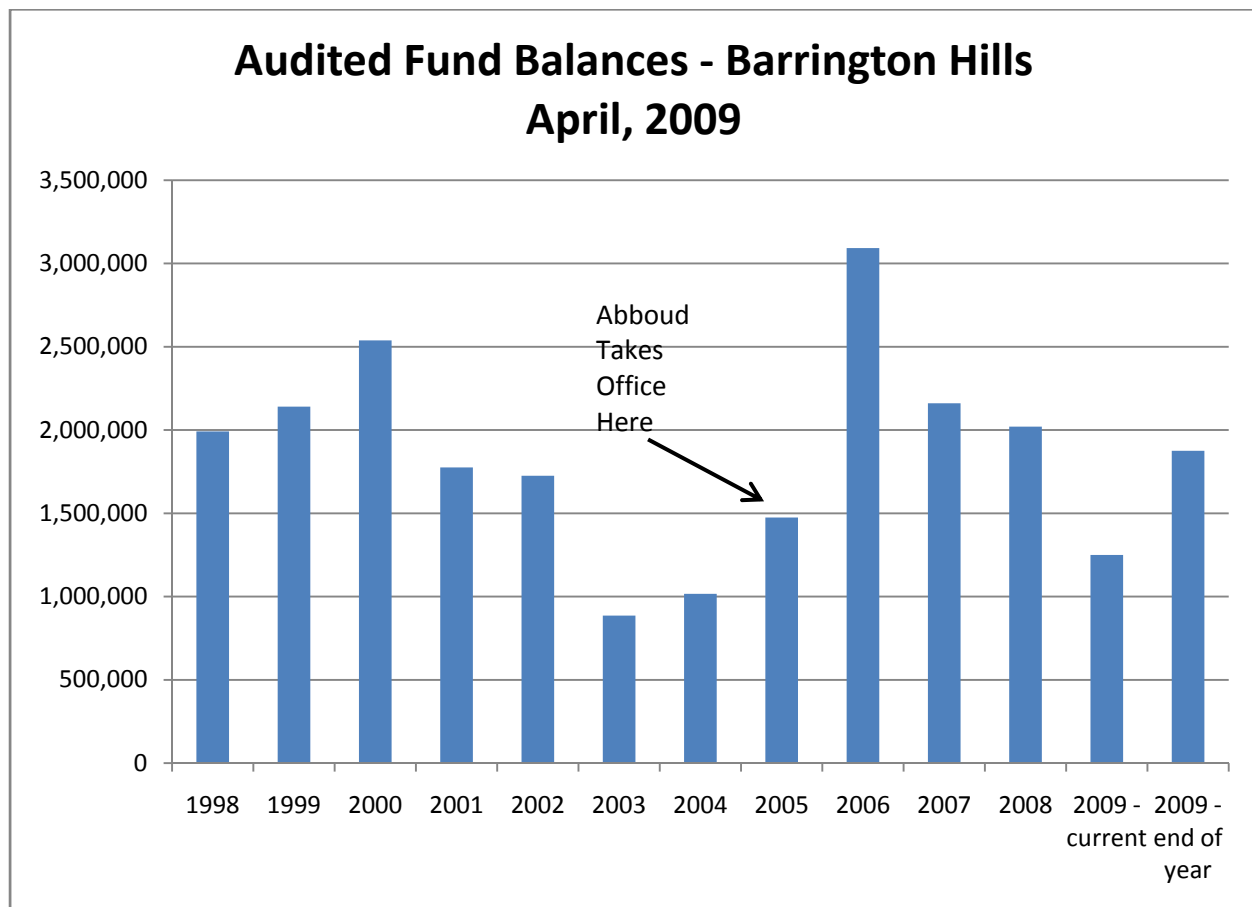
Shortly after each Village board meeting, the President, the Deputy Clerk, and the Treasurer physically sign the checks. No check is valid unless these three signatures appear on the face of the check.

These mechanisms provide the check and balance to ensure that our tax dollars are being spent correctly. Under this system, it is impossible for any elected official in our Village to claim that they were either unaware or not in control of any expenditure.

### 2. The Financial Condition of the Village

The Village is in its best financial health in the recent history with a current 2009 budget of \$8.409M.

I appreciate that there is some rhetoric being thrown about regarding our fund balances. So here is the current and historical picture.



**Note that our current Fund Balance is a bit over \$1.25M and will average \$1.8M during the course of this year.**

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Our opponent conveniently provided you with a graph in his mailing that only showed you the data from 2005 forward. Additionally, the data they showed for 2005 was incorrect.

Frankly, fund balance is not a good metric of overall fiscal health any more than looking at your checking account to determine your personal financial health. Fund balance goes up and down month to month depending on cash expenditures and revenue deliveries from the 4 counties we have jurisdiction in, and state and utility taxes. March and April happen to be our lowest yearly balance. Currently, we are just over \$1.25M in cash.

As you can see, this number is right in line with our historical finances. The highest fund balances the Village has ever had have been while I have been President since April of 2005. In fact, in November of 2006, we were so high in fund balance, Trustee Schueppert, and Trustee Smithe, who sit with me on the Finance Committee, voted to lower our fund balance by reducing tax 2007 and 2008 revenue from property taxes.

Again, our opponent seems to have forgotten this meeting so here is the excerpt from the Village's official meeting notes:

### **VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON HILLS**

**Minutes of the Finance Committee November 15, 2006.**

**Chairman Smithe called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm. Roll Call.**

#### **Members Present**

**Walter E. Smithe, III, Chairman**

**George L. Schueppert, Trustee &  
Treasurer**

**Robert G. Abboud, President, Ex-Officio Member**

#### **Other Attendees**

**Michael N. Murphy, Police Chief**

**Douglas Wambach, Village Attorney**

**Robert Kosin, Director of  
Administration**

**Karen Afseth, Vichrow Krause**

**Rosemary Ryba, Treasurer's Office**

**Neal Waltmire, P & Z Coordinator**

Mid-way through the meeting, we discussed the issues with cash position and work needed to take care of the Village Hall, pensions, and with our infrastructure. Note that Mr. Schueppert was acting temporarily as the Village's Treasurer as our previous person had just retired and we were in the process of hiring someone new.

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### **Actual and Project Liquidity**

Ron Heller presented his analysis of liquidity and stated that on April 30, 2007 the Village would have excess revenues over expenditures of approximately \$380,000 from April of 2006.

The Committee agreed that this excess revenue, along with some which accumulated in past years, would be applied to fund the Police Pension Fund. Also, some of the excess would go to the Buildings and Grounds budget, which has not been adequate to address infrastructure needs. The Committee also decided that in no point next year should reserves fall below 25% of the total budget. The Committee also agreed not to levy below the amount of last years\* levy.

You can see that we all elected to use monies in the cash reserve in order to address pension fund and infrastructural needs without having to increase the tax levy amount.

Overall, we have less debt than any time since President Kempe took out a \$3.2M bond. We are well funded in our IMRF pension (even given the devastating losses in the stock market), and we are well funded in our Police Pension and that fund is growing. We have the highest financial rating for a municipality with a first time bond offering - good enough that we do not have to carry separate default insurance. Our police salaries are now in line with the market place, and our Police Department is now equipped with the most modern systems and training. We have just completed major renovations to our Village hall. And our road maintenance program is continuing to expand including a much need drainage and water management program.

All this was done while gasoline went well over \$4/gallon, the stock market crashed, and salt went from \$55/ton to \$155/ton – note that we use 4,000 tons of salt annually.

Our budgets for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 were **unanimously** approved by the Board of Trustees. **Additionally, every month from April of 2005 to the present, the trustees have unanimously approved every expenditure the Village made.** If Mr. Schueppert felt an expense was out of line, then it was his fiduciary responsibility to vote against that expense. The President and the Trustees each have to have the intestinal fortitude to stand up and vote NO.

Regarding our pension liability, we have two funds: the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) and Police Pension Fund (PPF). We currently have 13 employees in IMRF, and 19 employees in PPF. We switched our officers over to the Police Pension Fund before I was President in order to create a more effective pension plan and better control the use of our investments. Our investments into IMRF are NOT controlled by the Village. The PPF controls our investments through a separate PPF board on which I appoint 2 members, thus, we have more local control.

Mr. Schueppert's mailer tries to insinuate that the Village made some kind of error during the conversion of IMRF to PPF. Nothing could be further from the truth. State statue prevents transfer of funds from IMRF to PPF. We were required to fund PPF separately. The investments in IMRF remain

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intact but of course are subject to market conditions as they invested in securities managed by the State. It is Mr. Smithe's and Mr. Schueppert's responsibility to ensure we make proper contributions to these funds as they are the chair and co-chair of Finance Committee respectively. To claim we have an unfunded future liability demonstrates their mastery of the obvious. When the PPF was created, the Village Board at that time was fully aware of the funding liability we would need to build up over the next 20 years. We are making good progress on this liability and it is part of our normal budget line items.

### **3. The Duda Disconnections – why we won and why we oppose developers who wish to break our very unique zoning**

Most of you are aware of the disconnections by the Duda/James team involving two major parcels of land stretching from Chapel Road on the north to County Line Road on the south. It runs east and west from the western boarder of the Village adjacent to Algonquin, and east beyond the power lines in certain spots.

These disconnections were precipitated under the previous Village President. Mr. Schueppert says he wants to return to this same style of Village management, which would make us vulnerable to continued disconnections, *ultimately threatening every acre of land in our Village.*

Mr. Schueppert's claim that he could have 'cut his own deal' with Mr. Duda is absolutely false. This was never brought to the Board. In addition, his claim smacks of him making ex-parte communications without the approval of the Board. Mr. Schueppert should tell the public how he was communicating to Mr. Fritz Duda outside the Village's effort; a person whom he claims he does not know and never met.

Mr. Hayward, a Village resident and attorney brought this development to us. He originally represented Mr. Duda in 2000 before I was on the board, and Mr. Hayward assisted with helping to attempt to develop the land at densities and composition inconsistent with our Village's comprehensive plan and vision. Disconnection from the Village was a key component of the developer's overall plan. Mr. Hayward continues to have a strong relationship with Mr. Duda and Mr. Schueppert, including raising money for Mr. Schueppert's campaign.

While we still have more work to do, the Villages character, its unique zoning, and the property values within the Village and surrounding communities have been protected.

Let me make clear some facts on the Duda case.

1. The current zoning of both Duda / James parcels is 40 acre, Agriculture A-1 in McHenry County.
2. There is no application before the County Board on a new plan and McHenry County and Algonquin have both advised the developer to return to Barrington Hills.
3. Duda / James have no authority to build anything on this site.
4. Barrington Hills is close to an agreement with Duda to bring ALL the property back into the Village at R-1 (5 acre) zoning with a few properties in the 2-3 acre range covered by our existing R-2 (3 acre) / R-3 (2 acre) zoning.

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5. The Duda / James group is most likely waiting until after the election since people with close relationships to them are helping to fund Mr. Schueppert's campaign.
6. We are working with the Duda / James group getting soil samples and borings to complete a land use plat for return of the property back to the Village.
7. The 2008 total Duda expenditures were: \$48,126.97. These are very small as compared to:
  - The total 2008 legal bill for the Village, including Police, was \$937,106.54
  - The total 2008 expenditures in all budget items for the Village was \$8,953,558.26.
8. Barrington Hills has controlling jurisdiction 1.5 miles from its borders by state statute and we have a boundary agreement with Algonquin giving us sole municipal authority on the jurisdiction covering the Duda / James properties.
9. The McHenry County Board and the adjacent and nearby communities are all in very strong support of Barrington Hills' position on the land use.
10. The Village of BH WON the ZBA hearing at McHenry County with a unanimous vote in favor of the Village.
11. Mr. Schueppert attended only 2 of the 18 hearings and never spoke in favor of the Village.
12. Mr. Schueppert never bothered to read the case transcripts on the most important land use case in the history of the Village so he was unprepared when the Village took the confirming vote.
13. Because of our efforts, we won decisively at the County Board supporting the Village and the MC ZBA hearing votes.

**Much has been made of our 'losses' regarding the Duda cases. *Nothing could be further from the truth.***

If we had 'lost', hundreds of homes in a development inconsistent with our character would be sitting unsold or only partially finished on the property today. Sort of a higher density version of South Barrington east of Rt 59, south of Penny Road.

As residents, our property values would have been crushed, we would have had to cover millions of dollars in roads and infrastructural improvements, more stress on our police department, and loss of our character and Village brand.

***So if we lost these court cases, why can't the developer develop the property for his sole profit?***

Part of the changes we made in Village government from 2005 to today was to create protective functions covering a wide domain of methods including legal, political, planning, health and safety, media, legislative, and grass roots efforts. By coordinating all these different mechanisms, into a solid front we were able to achieve protection of our zoning and character. All these other mechanisms, working alongside with the effort we put forth on in legal arena carried the day.

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In the end, we were able to **WIN** decisive victories at both the ZBA and subsequently the McHenry County Board rejecting the plans from the developer for high-density housing. This took some 18 meetings, which were heavily attended by Village residents. I cannot say enough good things about their participation in the process.

### **Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Mr. Schueppert:**

- Having attended only 2 of the 18 meetings,
- Never spoke in favor of the Village even when asked by the Village President to do so, and
- After 6 months of effort by the community never bothered to read the case transcripts causing us to have to hold up the Village Board proceedings on a confirmatory vote.

Because we worked closely with Algonquin and McHenry County, we were able to form a strong alliance with the County and surrounding communities providing a united front on next steps. Barrington Hills, and surrounding jurisdictions all believe that the disconnections were not helpful to the region and that the property should be returned to the Village, and zoned consistent with Barrington Hills zoning. To that end, Mayor Schmitt of Algonquin and Chairman Koehler of McHenry County worked with the Village to discuss future plans with the developer. I continue a close working relationship with these elected officials through my serving on the Executive Board at the McHenry County Council of Governments.

The current status is that we are close to an agreement that will bring all of the land back into the Village and any development will be consistent with our character. Since those with the developer's interests are helping to fund Mr. Schueppert's campaign, it's perfectly logical that the developer is waiting until after the election to sign off on any re-annexation agreement.

### ***Why do we fight developers who do not conform to our Comprehensive Plan and Zoning?***

There are 3 major disconnections we are dealing with at the moment: Duda I, Duda II, and Iatarola on the SE corner of the Village. Because we vigorously protect our borders, we protect the character of the Village for all residents, we keep your taxes low by limiting the need for new infrastructure including roads, police, fire, and schools; reduce traffic congestion; and we protect your property values by limiting the number of unsold and half completed homes. Municipalities that have not challenged aggressive developers are now saddled with unsold and half finished housing stock that cheapens the overall value of the community.

We have spent slightly less than \$2.328M since January of 2001 total costs for both the Duda and Iatarola cases. This includes not only legal expenses, but also engineering, documentation, and other associated costs. This costs you \$200/year per household on average – less than 6% of our overall Village budget.

Because we have been vigilant in these cases, other developers have shied away from challenging our Village and its dedicated residents. *This has saved us millions of dollars in avoided costs of infrastructure upgrades. The road impact alone for just the Duda I case was evaluated at more the \$3.5M in first year costs to you and me.* It has protected our character and community. Because we have been

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conservative in development and stuck to a plan that forms the basis of the Village character and vision, we are as well prepared as possible to weather the very serious situation in the economy today.

The fact is that while we did not receive judgment in a number of court cases in our favor, these are only battles in a larger effort. These court cases provided valuable information and case law that is critical to changing the state statute on disconnection (65 IL-CS 736) to a more balanced position and protection of community planning. We are working with a large array of municipalities to change this statute and protect our community in the future – I serve on 15 Council of Governments Committees.

Some of you may think that because you are not adjacent to an ‘edge’ or Village boundary, you are safe from the behavior of those developers who have little regard for community. Ask the residents who live near the western end of Otis road what they think about the development that stripped the land of its trees in direct violation of the Village code. Ask the residents near Lake Cook and Ridge road who stood strong on a development and protected our Comprehensive Plan and equestrian trail system. I can go on with a long list of zoning issues deep within the heart of the Village. ***To sell out the edges is simply to drive a stake deeper into the heart of the Village.***

All Barrington Hills residents have a right to enjoy the character of the Village and I and our supporting Trustee candidates will continue to fight for that preservation.