



## Riverside's new village president lays out his goals

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RIVERSIDE – In leading the village of Riverside into the future, Ben Sells wants officials and staff members to think efficiency.

Sells was sworn in last week as Riverside's village president, succeeding Michael Gorman. He ran unopposed in the April 9 consolidated election and served as a village trustee for six years before that.

"Money is always an issue," Sells said. "But the things we're talking about doing don't always cost money. We want to make operations more efficient."

Sells said he plans to work with different commissions over the next month or two to see if any of their goals or methods can be standardized. He wants to assess if there are any overlapping authorities so they can be streamlined.

Trustees previously served as Village Board liaisons to both the Riverside Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Commission, Sells said. Now, Sells will be the liaison to the Chamber while Village Manager Peter Scalera will be the liaison to the EDC, he said.

Retaining a strong business community is a priority for the Village Board, Sells said. Residents want to see more variety of shops in town, so he wants to focus on reinvigorating the downtown, he said. This will include increasing the parking space offered.

"The best economic development you can have is to support the businesses that are there," said Sells, adding that implementing the proposals made by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and approved by the board a few weeks ago is crucial.

Another goal Sells set for the village is to increase people's access to the Des Plaines River for recreational use.

Sells said that residents passed a referendum in 2008 pertaining to sustainability by more than 80 percent. The measure prompts the village to seek environmentally friendly ways to conduct business.

"I'd like to see that spirit carried forward," Sells said. "Every time we do a project, we need to look for green ways to implement it."

Keeping Riverside moving in the right direction will require prioritizing the most important goals and directing the appropriate resources to see them done, Sells said.

"What I've told the village manager and the staff is that this is my goal over the next four years: Let's do things the best that we can," Sells said.