



Glencoe considering new water plant

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Visitors to Glencoe might mistake the 1920s Spanish-revival style building along a lakeside bluff for an aging boathouse. But it's the Glencoe Water Filtration and Pumping Station, providing drinking water that in recent years was voted the best tasting in the state, and second best in the nation.

"The water plant has done a very good job keeping up with the demands of our community for 85 years, but now we need to ask ourselves if it has outlived its useful life," said Village President Lawrence Levin.

"When we brought in the appropriate engineers to review the plant, we discovered we've gotten to a point where it would be more expensive to do all the improvements that are needed, than it would be to build a new water plant," Levin said.

Levin said village officials are exploring the possibility of forging a partnership that would allow Glencoe to provide water to the Northwest Water Commission, with the agency potentially helping Glencoe foot the estimated \$35 million to build a new water plant.

"These discussions are very, very preliminary, but we were looking for additional sources of Lake Michigan water, and Glencoe appeared on our radar," Northwest Water Commission Executive Director John DuRocher said.

DuRocher said the commission provides water to Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Palatine, and Wheeling.

"While Evanston will remain our primary supplier of water, we are in early discussions with Glencoe about providing us with a redundant water supply, which would boost the reliability of the water supply to our communities in case there was a failure in the main line," DuRocher explained.

Glencoe Village Manager Paul Harlow said officials are also in discussions with the Glencoe Park District, considering not only the prospect of a partnership with the commission, but the possibility of relocating the water plant facility north from its present site.

"We are at the stage where we are looking at what our water plant could be, and talking about how if we negotiate with other agencies, what the financial benefits would be to Glencoe," Harlow said.

One preliminary plan would involve building a new water plant that reflects the old facility's historic architecture, with a similar size and footprint, he said.

Officials said that would keep the old plant operating during construction of the new facility, so the community's water supply would not be affected during the project.

Relocating the facility north would also create an uninterrupted swath of public beach adjacent to a sailboat launch area, officials said, connecting two popular community gathering spots that are now separated by the water plant.

Still, Harlow said the earliest any construction could begin on a new village water plant would be 2015, as officials are still in preliminary discussions, and they would like to hear the opinions of village residents before they proceed with any further plans.

"There are all sorts of real engineering issues to consider, and there are a lot of reasons to build a new plant, rather than rehabilitating the old one," Levin said. "But if we build a new plant, we need to determine how to do it the right way for our residents."

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