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May 3, 2021

President-Elect Brian Cecola  
Board of Trustees  
Village of Barrington Hills  
112 Algonquin Road  
Barrington Hills, IL 60010

Dear President-Elect Cecola and Newly-Elected Trustees:

I congratulate you on your election and wish you all the best of luck in your new endeavor. I know that you will perform your duties to the highest standards of public service. I wanted to advise you that with a change in leadership comes the necessity to acknowledge that there is a significant issue related to the employment of the Village President-Elect's wife, Stephanie Cecola. Stephanie Cecola has been employed on a part-time, hourly basis in the Building Department, having reported directly to the Village Administrator, who reports to the Village President. This position was not an issue when Brian was a Trustee but now with Brian signing his wife's paychecks, and with Stephanie directly reporting to her husband through our Village Administrator, this is an issue which needs to be addressed promptly and publicly. Whether or not this line of oversight is determined to be technically illegal, I believe it causes a significant perception of nepotism and self-dealing that can have an impact on how our Village is seen by its residents, and, just as importantly, can cause internal issues between departments. I have the greatest respect for Brian and Stephanie and call them personal friends, however, I believe that not addressing this issue head-on would be problematic.

The perception of any possible impropriety is extremely significant, and in my opinion, may become a problem for this administration. Further, our community does not need this employment matter as a distraction to the important issues the Board will be facing over the next few years regarding legal decisions with commercial horse boarding and group home issues, in addition to other major community questions.

I have personally made my concerns known to our new President, Brian Cecola. In addition, I have made my concerns known to your Village Administrator, Anna Paul. It is up to them, and you, as a body to address this in a direct and timely fashion. In my opinion, not addressing this important issue will not only create distrust, concern and questions, whether they are valid or not, and will potentially taint the great works that many of us have accomplished as a group over the past eight years. Along with this letter to you, I have attached a job posting that I believe should be made, but I will leave this decision to you, President-Elect Cecola and Board members.

I know that you as a group will do great things and continue the stewardship of this Village. I am proud to call each of you friends, and more importantly, Trustees and President.

With sincere appreciation, humility and best regards,

Martin J. McLaughlin  
Village President of Barrington Hills