



Village of River Forest
Village Administrator's Office
400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 12, 2026
To: Village Board of Trustees
From: Matt Walsh, Village Administrator
Subj: Review of Ethics Commission Recommendation and Determination on Paul Harding's Complaint against Development Review Board Members.

Background: Resident Paul Harding filed an ethics complaint on November 9, 2025. The Local Ethics Commission convened on December 2, 2025 to perform an initial review of the complaint. During the initial review, the Commission determined that certain aspects of the complaint had sufficient basis to further investigate. Accordingly, the Commission held a hearing on January 5, 2026, to evaluate the complaint.

Summary of Determination: The Ethics Commission's complete determination and recommendation is attached. The Commission made recommendations on December 2, 2025 to dismiss certain aspects of the complaint and made additional recommendations on January 5, 2026. The Commission voted unanimously to dismiss the complaints against Development Review Board members Maryann Fishman, Jane McCole, Ron Lucchesi and Elias Yanaki.

Motion for Board Consideration: If the Village Board wishes to adopt the recommendation of the Ethics Commission, the following motion would be appropriate:

Motion to accept the Ethics Commission's findings, dismissing the complaint against Fishman, Lucchesi, McCole and Yanaki.

Local Ethics Commission Determination and Recommendation Regarding the Ethics Complaint filed by Paul Harding on November 9, 2025.

On November 9, 2025, resident Paul Harding submitted the attached ethics complaint alleging certain violations of the Ethics Ordinance. The Local Ethics Commission convened on December 2, 2025 to perform an initial review of the complaint. The Local Ethics Commission convened on January 5, 2026 to hold a hearing to further evaluate the complaint.

Initial Review Findings

The Local Ethics Commission performed its initial review of the complaint on December 2, 2025. At that time, the Commission evaluated four (4) aspects of the complaint separately, and recommended the dismissal of two aspects.

1. The Commission voted 3-0 to dismiss allegations in the complaint alleging the planned development application was not truthful. The Commission only has jurisdiction over Village Covered Individuals and entities, and the River Forest Tennis Club is not a Village Covered entity.
2. The Commission voted 3-0 to dismiss allegations in the complaint alleging the River Forest Tennis Club planned development application should not have been presented to the Development Review Board. The Commission determined the issue is determined by the Zoning Code of the Village Ordinance and is not a violation the Ethics Commission can act on.

Commission Hearing Findings

At the January 5, 2026 Special Meeting of the Local Ethics Commission, the Ethics Commission voted 2—0 to approve the following recommendation and determination to the Village Board.

Based on the Village Attorney's interpretation of the Ethics Code and related advice to the Development Review Board members, the Commission dismisses the complaint against Members Fishman, McCole, and Lucchesi.

As to the allegations regarding Mr. Yanaki, the Commission believes presenting to the Development Review Board on November 6, 2025, was inconsistent with Ethics Ordinance 1-23-5 (C)(9), which states,

Representation Of Private Interests: In keeping with their role as stewards of the public interest, Village covered individuals and contractors shall not appear on behalf of the private interests of third parties before any board or commission of the Village on which they serve, and for purposes of this Subsection the Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Development Review Board shall be considered as one

commission. This prohibition shall not prohibit a Village covered individual or contractor from appearing on their own behalf before any board or commission of the Village on which they serve.

However, based on the full record in the case, including Mr. Yanaki's prior appearances before the Development Review Board and his communications with Village staff, the Commission does not believe the complaint has been sustained.

Going forward, the Commission believes the community wants Village Covered Individuals to err on the side of caution and recuse themselves in the future in this type of situation. To the extent the Ethics Code is not clear, the Commission wants to explore whether such changes can be added legally, and if so, amend the Code to provide such clarity.

Submitted by the River Forest Local Ethics Commission



Rebecca DeGross



Ross Lissuzzo



Chair Greg Ignoffo (not present and not voting at January 5, 2026 meeting)