



JASCULCA TERMAN
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

**River Forest Community Dialogues – 11.21.24 – on Franklin, half block north of Madison
Notes from Resident Comments**

Who was in attendance?

- 5 residents
- Matt Walsh (Village Administrator)
- Rick Jasculca & Nell DeCoursey Brennan (Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications)

General River Forest

- Residents love the walkability and community in RF area
 - People care for their spaces, neighbors, etc
 - Love that the neighborhood they are in feels diverse, urban, fun
- Traffic
 - Major concern, lots of speed around Franklin
 - Traffic planning needs to be a major focus, especially with increase in accidents

Development

- Residents' feelings about development and process are that the Village is better about knocking down things than they are at building things – there seems to be no plan afterwards
 - Some residents feel like RF's long-term development plan might be too outdated
- There needs to be more input from the voices of those around the development who might be more impacted
 - One resident mentioned weighing these voices differently
- It would be great for residents to hear from the actual developers
 - Residents also have questions about what developers are interested in, etc – hearing from them directly is a solution to that
- Beyond hearing from developers, one resident mentioned bringing in an unbiased expert who could help evaluate pros and cons
- Many feel that yes it would be great to have new restaurants or shopping, but it isn't their highest priority and fearful of turnover
 - Most overarching opinion is that whatever goes there should be beneficial for the community and can last
- Madison & Ashland
 - Most of the residents do not feel as strongly about what exactly goes there.

- Lots of comments about doing things with no plan after it being torn down –needs to be a clear plan for development BEFORE tearing down
 - Whatever goes in should fit into the character of the community
 - Filling the space
 - Some mention a dog park to fill the space on an interim basis, something that residents can use until a development is approved and ready to proceed. “Why leave it vacant?”
 - Soccer park was another mentioned filler for the interim
 - Condos / Apt
 - When brought up, residents weren’t entirely against condos, but feel it is important that they align with RF community character if needed
 - Concerns about parking issues in that area
 - Potential for a restaurant on the first floor
 - A couple residents were more against smaller apartments, as that option doesn’t feel like it’ll attract residents for the long-term
 - Parking
 - Can’t be too congested – response to the parking issues in the neighborhood
- Lake & Lathrop
 - The residents are still upset by this process
 - Things like Annie’s, that generated revenue, were taken down and now we are stuck with a concrete mess for the immediate future
 - Most people don’t feel strongly about what exactly goes in that place
 - Some feelings the original plans do not seem realistic
- General Development
 - Is there an opportunity for a happy medium between luxury condos and tiny apartments (people who want to stay in the village, but downsize)
 - Idea to create housing that helps with a transition between phases (not senior living or assisted living)

Other

- Communication
 - Resident ideas for communicating proposal ideas included sharing proposals in an email and asking for community feedback
 - These community conversations feel like a great first step – needs to continue
 - Notifications of events, conversations, announcements need to be a combination of everything – advanced notice, newsletter, website, etc.
 - Attendees did mention that there is more information going outbound than there used to be, but a multifaceted approach is the best way to reach everyone who might not be as tuned in

- Residents feel that the Village has very different constituencies. In different parts of the community– and there can be lack of understanding from each area about what happens elsewhere
 - One resident feels like this divide can lead to RF spending more on specific, unnecessary things that feel “fancier”
- Residents in this conversation felt that those who might be making decisions don’t represent the typical resident
 - Residents feel more community should be involved
 - Asked about opportunities to create councils or groups of residents who could provide input on the future of RF – a planning committee of sorts
 - Offer creativity to the residents
- Some residents mentioned that collaborating with Village neighbors to plan and execute things in the future might be more helpful
- Community Center
 - Building is rundown
 - Lots of parking issues around this building
 - Lots of activities are serving the greater community, but not necessarily RF – how can we create something that gives RF residents what they want?