

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
January 22nd, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 22nd, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Vazquez, Brennan, Gillis, Bachner, Johnson and Village Clerk Keller

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Also Present: Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Police Chief James O'Shea, Deputy Chief Greenwood, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Village Attorney Lance Malina, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None

4.ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner began her comments with a Land Acknowledgment and then had no further comments.

Trustee Gillis reported working with the Lincoln Elementary School Echo Kids group on Wednesday, January 10th. Trustee Gillis also congratulated the Sustainability Commission on partnering with the University of Illinois Chicago Department of Urban Planning to develop a Climate Action Plan for the Village.

Trustee Vazquez had nothing to add to the record.

Village Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Brennan reminded everyone about the Holiday Green Pickup Program.

Trustee Johnson asked everyone to be cognizant of maintaining their sidewalks during snow events.

Village President Adduci reported attending a meeting held by the Mayor of Hillside regarding property assessments and what municipalities can do to help the Board of Reviews and the Assessor's office understand Market Value.

Trustee Bachner asked President Adduci if the discussion was related to just residential properties or business properties.

President Adduci stated that the event was on all types of properties.

a. Recognition of Anja Hermann

Anja Hermann attended the meeting virtually and President Adduci read the Proclamation honoring Ms. Hermann into the record.

Members of the Village Board thanked Ms. Hermann for her work.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – January 8th, 2024
- b. Administration Department Report
- c. December 2023 Financial Report
- d. Electronic Equipment Surplus Donation – PCs for People – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to approve Consent Agenda Items A - D. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals – Child Daycare Center Text Amendment – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Bachner to approve an Ordinance Amending the Village Code regarding the regulation of Child Daycare Centers. Seconded by Trustee Brennan.

President Adduci invited Ranier Ramos up to the podium to give public comment.

Mr. Ramos gave public comment in support of the proposed changes.

Sam Chavez, a representative from The Apartment Source, made public comment in support of the proposed Zoning Ordinance. He encouraged the Board to help fill commercial vacancies when an opportunity arises.

President Adduci asked Mr. Chavez if he believes the current real estate market is acting in a cyclical nature.

Mr. Chavez stated he does not believe it is cyclical and that it may be impacted more by lifestyle changes.

President Adduci invited Ms. Laura Maychruk up to the podium to give public comment.

Ms. Maychruk gave public comment in support of the proposed zoning changes. She reported that these childcare services are in high demand in the community.

Joey Zion, a resident, spoke in support of the proposed changes. He noted that his children attend the Mosaic Montessori school currently and he has been happy with their services. He stated that any expansion in services would be beneficial to the community.

Trustee Bachner noted being in support of the proposed changes as a way to help navigate the difficult real estate market.

Trustee Brennan noted being in support of the proposed alterations to the zoning code.

Trustee Vazquez stated that he was weary of the proposed changes due to the issue the Village has had with a similar Montessori school in the north portion of town.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the special use permission would follow the property or the applicant.

Village Attorney Malina stated that unless specified, the special use permission will be tied to the property. Mr. Malina noted that the Village Board could draft the ordinance so the special use is tied to the applicant. If the special use were to be tied to the applicant and that applicant were to sell the business, Mr. Malina stated the special use would have to be reapplied for and reapproved.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the ordinance was approved tonight, would the applicant still have to apply for the special use permit for the Montessori school.

Mr. Malina stated yes.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the special use was granted, could it be reversed in the future.

Mr. Malina stated that it depends and explained the circumstances under which a special use can be revoked.

Trustee Vazquez and Village Attorney Malina had continued discussion surrounding special uses.

Trustee Vazquez noted being in support of the proposed changes but also stated that he is interested in granting individual special use permits carefully and precisely.

Trustee Vazquez asked if this property is on the border of its respective zoning district.

Mr. Walsh stated the property is not on the border.

Trustee Vazquez noted being worried about separating pieces as it can have a negative impact on potential real estate interests.

Trustee Vazquez raised potential issues that could arise if the plot of land was sold to a not-for-profit.

Trustee Brennan noted that this text amendment is for the entirety of the C3 Zoning District.

Clerk Keller asked if the Board was comfortable with the potential tax situation if this ordinance was passed.

President Adduci stated there should be no changes to the property taxes on the property.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

b. Zoning Board of Appeals – Request for Zoning Variation – 214 Gale – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Gillis to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variations to Section 10-9-6 of the Zoning Code at 214 Gale Avenue. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Tom Shaughnessy made public comment against the proposed variations via Zoom. Mr. Shaughnessy reported being worried about the amount of concrete being proposed and possible storm water issues.

President Adduci invited the applicants, Kristin & Shawn Vogen, up to the podium to address the board regarding the proposed changes.

Ms. Vogen gave background on the project and commented that the currently proposed plans would have a smaller footprint and utilize less concrete than is existing.

Trustee Brennan asked if there have been any changes to the plans since the Zoning Board of Appeals(ZBA) meeting.

Ms. Vogen stated that during the recent Zoning Board meeting, the ZBA had taken exception to the proposed bathroom in the upper portion of the garage.

Trustee Brennan asked if the plans currently before the Village Board contain the bathroom.

Ms. Vogen stated yes but that they are not likely going to build that bathroom anymore due to the feedback received at the ZBA.

Trustee Vazquez asked if Ms. Vogen felt neighbors opposed the project due to the bathroom and the possibility using the space as an apartment.

Ms. Vogen stated that using the garage as an apartment was never their intention.

Trustee Brennan asked if the ZBA should re-examine the application now that Ms. Vogen said the bathroom will most likely be removed.

Mr. Walsh stated that the Village Board could revise their motion and send it back to the ZBA if they chose to do so.

Clerk Keller asked Ms. Vogen what the hardship is that they are facing that warrants the proposed garage height.

Ms. Vogen stated the hardship is building a garage that is architecturally consistent with the home.

Trustee Bachner asked the applicant if they had considered any other alternatives regarding the proposed height.

Ms. Vogen stated that what was originally proposed by their architect was a much larger and taller footprint, but that they had tried to minimize the size of the garage to the best of their ability.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the shape of the roof could be shaped proportionally so as to be permissible under the zoning code.

Mr. Vogen stated that their architect stated that would not be possible due to the particular nature of their historic home's gambles.

Trustee Johnson asked if the applicants felt like the ZBA would approve the application if they were to go back and present the application without the bathroom.

Ms. Vogen stated she does not know.

Trustee Bachner asked if there are similar homes in the area the applicants could look to for information.

Trustee Gillis noted that the house is historically significant and there are not many, if any, similar homes in the area.

Mr. Walsh noted that the motion on table would require four trustees votes to pass.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the applicant knew specifically why residents in the area opposed the application.

Ms. Vogen stated their neighbors to the north provided a letter supporting the application while two neighbors to the rear, and one nonadjacent, provided emails not in support of the property.

Village Clerk Keller reminded everyone that there is no alley on the block.

Trustee Bachner asked if there were any privacy concerns concerning the second floor.

Ms. Vogen stated that the design of the windows took those concerns into consideration.

Trustee Bachner asked if there were no windows, would that quell the neighbors' concerns.

Ms. Vogen stated that having spoken to one neighbor already, she does not think removing the windows would sway their opinions. She stated she has not discussed removing the windows with any others.

Trustee Johnson asked what would happen if they were not granted a variance.

Ms. Vogen stated they would go back to square one.

Trustee Johnson asked Ms. Vogen if she thinks another meeting with the ZBA would be beneficial.

Ms. Vogen stated it might be based on the removal of the bathroom. She reiterated that they were unaware that the proposed bathroom was not allowed when they designed the plans.

President Adduci asked Mr. Walsh if the applicants would have to submit new drawings to the ZBA reflecting the removal of the bathroom.

Mr. Walsh stated that is correct.

Trustee Brennan asked if a trial balloon could be used to display the height.

Mr. Malina stated that is a possibility.

Village Clerk Keller stated that he felt the main issue is not the bathroom, but rather the height variation.

Trustee Gillis noted that in 2020, there was a similar variance approved for 210 Gale.

Trustee Bachner stated she would be more comfortable with the proposed changes if there was more neighbor support.

Ms. Vogen stated she does not know if the height is the primary concern of the neighbors.

President Adduci stated that it may be worth the applicants time to go back to the ZBA with the updated plans.

Trustee Brennan noted that the height is an issue in her eyes.

Laura Maychruck made public comment in support of the proposed variations and reminded the Board of the historical significance of the home.

President Adduci noted that the Village has over 300 historically significant properties.

Trustee Gillis reminded the Board that they should be encouraging homeowners to improve their properties, especially ones that are historically significant.

Trustee Johnson suggested the applicants determine what issues the area residents have and then go before the ZBA again. He noted that the decision was close so it might be worth a shot.

Trustee Gillis withdrew her motion to approve the ordinance. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

MOTION by Trustee Bachner to remand this matter to the Zoning Board of Appeals to the February 8th, 2024 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Remanded.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Award of Bond Issuance – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to approve an Ordinance Providing for the Issue of Not-to-Exceed \$600,000 General Obligation Limited Tax Bonds, Series 2024, of the Village of River Forest, Cook County, Illinois, for the Purpose of Paying for Public Infrastructure Projects within the Village, providing for the Levy of a Direct Annual Tax to Pay the Principal of and Interest on said Bonds. Seconded by Trustee Bachner

Finance Director Rosemary McAdams provided background information on the bonds.

Trustee Bachner asked if there is a reason why the Village only received one response to the bid.

Mr. Walsh stated he cannot say for certain, but he does know that one bank is not handling municipal bonds currently and another was not able to file in time. He stated they did not know why the other banks did not respond.

Ms. McAdams stated that reminder emails were sent to all the potential bidders.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Vazquez, Gillis, Bachner, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

10.EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee Vazquez. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

Ayes: President Adduci, Trustees Vazquez, Gillis, Bachner, Johnson, Brennan.

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: 02/12/24