

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, January 25, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, January 25, 2021 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 7:01p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez, Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant to the Village Administrator Jonathan Pape, Management Analyst Sara Phyfer, Police Chief James O’Shea, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann, Public Works Director John Anderson, Village Attorney Greg Smith

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

John Grant, 923 Thatcher. Mr. Grant stated he wanted to address the lack of transparency and flawed guidelines for those who would like to volunteer for Village boards and commissions. He stated the current system places too much power in the president and compared the Village’s process to Oak Park. He also requested that his written comments be included in the minutes.

Katharine Christmas, 601 Bonnie Brae. Ms. Christmas stated she is a Deer Committee member and that she was speaking on behalf of several other members. She commented on Trustee Cargie’s role as the only chairperson and the failure to replace Trustee Henek upon her resignation. She stated that Trustee Cargie was openly pro-cull and requested that his vote be nullified and he be removed from the process. She stated this would allow alternative approaches to be fairly considered. She proposed the submission of a second official recommendation and that neither report be considered from the majority.

President Adduci thanked Ms. Christmas and stated she understood her comments and that at no point was it raised that they needed another co-chair. She stated the Board will discuss these comments and take them under advisement. She also stated that she did not think anyone on the Board was pre-disposed to any point on deer management and that the hope was that the committee would come up with alternatives and solutions.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner read a statement to acknowledge that this land was once inhabited by indigenous people and stated that River Forest continues to be a place that people from diverse backgrounds live and gather. Trustee Bachner commented on the availability of COVID-19 vaccinations and encouraged those who are eligible to get them. She also reminded everyone that it is still important to continue to wear masks and social distance. She reported that she joined Representative Chuy Garcia at an event over the weekend regarding several items, including PPE loans.

Trustee Vazquez echoed Trustee Bachner's encouragement for people to take the vaccine and recommended everyone exercise patience due to shortages. He reported on the Age Friendly Committee's recent meeting and noted the members are working on developing a survey.

Trustee Cargie stated he wanted to address some of the points made about the Deer Committee. He stated he did not believe his opinion impacted any of the meetings. He noted he and Management Analyst Phyfer were writing the report and that he did say at the last Committee meeting that anyone could write a dissenting report. He expressed disappointment that the Committee ended as rancorously as it began but that he does not know how they could have done any better. He stated it is a heated issue in the community.

Trustee Brennan reported she participated in the National Day of Racial Healing event on January 19 and there seemed to be excellent attendance. She stated she is looking forward to progress and working with this group. She reminded everyone that the Village still collects batteries for recycling and both prescription and over-the-counter medications as well. She noted these items should be kept out of landfills and from potentially getting into the water system.

Trustee Henek reported she also attended the National Day of Racial Healing and stated she was impressed they have been doing this work for 5 years. She stated she is hopeful for the future in terms of student engagement and glad that the Village is joining this process. She also stated she looks forward to some action items. She shared a story of neighbors helping during an emergency and how impressed they were with the Fire Department's response. She also thanked Staff for their work during the meeting earlier regarding Capital Improvement spending.

Trustee O'Connell reported that he also attended the National Day of Racial Healing event and that the information was very impressive. He stated he is looking forward to seeing that move forward in the coming months and years. He reported that he had conversations with neighbors on Keystone and shared their excitement about the work happening there next year.

President Adduci reported she also participated in the Dominican event and that she had the

opportunity to say a few words about the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation framework initiative. She stated she's excited about being on this journey and that it is part of the bigger picture of addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. She stated the combination of the Village's relationship with Dominican and the broader community involvement along with the working group will bring wonderful, good changes to the community. President Adduci thanked Staff for the foresight of buying the de-icing machine, and she also echoed the comments regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. She also encouraged residents to read the E-Newsletters, which contain a lot of information.

a. Police Department Presentation of PPE Video and Acceptance of Award from Aftermath

Chief O'Shea introduced Aftermath and recognized Corporal Dan Humphreys for his work helping to create this video.

Tony Cusinato from Aftermath reviewed the contest and stated the River Forest Police Department won a \$5,000 check to be used towards training or safety equipment and 50 individual PPE kits.

b. Recognition of Georgette Carlini – Retiring Utility Billing Clerk

Administrator Palm introduced Ms. Carlini. He noted she has been with the Village since 1999. He recognized her service and dedication to the Village and its residents. He stated she always has a positive, can-do attitude. He stated Staff appreciates everything she has done for the organization and community, and he presented her with an award. He congratulated Ms. Carlini on her retirement and thanked her.

Ms. Carlini thanked everyone for their wonderful support, and she stated she enjoyed her job and especially the Village of River Forest residents. She thanked everyone for her 21 years.

President Adduci stated she thinks Ms. Carlini knows everyone in the Village and that she may have saved everyone money over time. She stated residents are grateful for everything she has done for them and the Village. She thanked Ms. Carlini for being a dedicated employee.

Village Clerk Brand-White shared that years ago she called in after her husband had passed away and Ms. Carlini was so kind and patient and walked her through it all. She stated she figures she is not the only person who has had that experienced and acknowledged Ms. Carlini's help during that difficult time.

c. Recognition of Eric Palm – Outgoing Village Administrator

President Adduci presented an award to Mr. Palm. She stated it is hard to say goodbye. She noted Mr. Palm's steady influence on administration and noted his financial leadership. She recalled his guidance through the Village's largest infrastructure project and the creation of

two TIF districts. President Adduci remarked on his style and sense of humor and stated he is a knowledgeable and trusted advisor. She stated that Ms. Scheiner will do a phenomenal job and expressed confidence that she will fill Mr. Palm's shoes during the transition. She again thanked Mr. Palm for being an exceptional leader. She stated she is grateful for his leadership, commitment, and all that he has done for the Village and its residents.

Former Trustee Mike Gibbs commented on Mr. Palm's dedication and stated he wanted to shake his hand. He thanked Mr. Palm's family for giving him up for the past 10 years and commented on Mr. Palm's sense of humor.

Former Trustee Carmela Corsini stated she wanted to wish Mr. Palm and his family well. She commented on how the time has passed and stated that having him in the Village has been tremendous.

Former Trustee Susan Conti thanked Ms. Carlini and commented that she never ceased to be friendly or kind. Ms. Conti recalled the hiring process for Mr. Palm and stated she is not surprised he was chosen for Hoffman Estates. She commented on his steady hand, leadership, and common sense to guide the Village towards growth. She expressed how fortunate the Village was to have him, noting that he was kind, humble, and had a sense of humor. She thanked Mr. Palm for leaving River Forest in great shape.

Trustee Vazquez commented on Mr. Palm's sense of humor and noted that he is always helpful, efficient, and effective. He recalled Mr. Palm's 360 evaluation and stated it was clear Staff likes working with him. He commented on his good work and having fun doing it, and noted that a good leader surrounds himself with other good people who will replace him. He thanked Mr. Palm for having Village Staff at the point where they can fill his shoes. He thanked Mr. Palm.

Trustee O'Connell stated Mr. Palm has always been a great partner and brought a lot of thoughtful conversation to the Economic Development Commission. He stated that from the work he has done over the past years, his legacy will live beyond going to Hoffman Estates. He congratulated Mr. Palm and wished him and his family the best.

Trustee Cargie stated it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Palm. He stated that his sense of humor is one of his best attributes. He wished Mr. Palm luck and noted that the Village's loss is the new employer's gain. He thanked Mr. Palm and wished him good luck.

Trustee Henek echoed the previous comments. She stated in terms of dynamics with Staff, it is noticeable in the climate and atmosphere, which comes from the top down. She stated she has been impressed that Mr. Palm allows Staff to grow in their positions and take a lead on things. She commented how appreciative Staff is and that she has often been impressed with Mr. Palm's ability to handle intense situations. She wished Mr. Palm well.

Trustee Brennan commented on Mr. Palm's sense of humor and steady hand. She stated she feels fortunate to have been a trustee in his time in River Forest and she expressed

confidence he will provide the same leadership and steady hand in Hoffman Estates. She stated the Village was lucky to have him and that Hoffman is fortunate.

Trustee Bachner commented on how Mr. Palm is able to work with Staff and get the best out of them. She recalled his dedication to the community and seeing him at events on Saturdays or off hours. She expressed appreciation for his commitment and dedication and wished him well.

Former Village President John Rigas wished Mr. Palm well. He stated he was on the Board that hired him and that it was clearly not a mistake. He stated he knows Mr. Palm thought hard about leaving and that he did a phenomenal job for River Forest. He again wished him well.

Village Clerk Brand-White commented on how Mr. Palm does a good job and that the tone is set from the top. She recalled walking in a parade with his family and that you can tell the fun and commitment starts there. She stated that Mr. Palm has an amazing ability to make each person he deals with feel important and that what they say matters. She stated this is a powerful skill. She stated the Village was fortunate to have him and wish him the best of luck.

Mr. Palm thanked the residents, members of the business communities, and elected officials. He thanked President Rigas for recommending him for appointment and President Adduci for her support. He stated he learned a lot from President Adduci and that her guidance and leadership made him a better public servant. He thanked Staff for their commitment to the Village. He thanked Ms. Phyfer, Mr. Pape, and Ms. Scheiner for their professionalism and work ethic. He stated he admired Ms. Scheiner's tenacity for learning new issues and becoming a subject matter expert. He thanked his wife and children for their patience and love throughout the years and their continued support. He stated that relationships matter and that is what is important and what he will take with him. He thanked River Forest for everything and stated he looks forward to the continued progress of the community. He noted River Forest will always have a special place in his heart.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2021
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2021
- c. Revision to the FY2021 Compensation Plan – Ordinance
- d. Village Administrator's Report

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek, to approve the Consent Agenda items A-D.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals: Variation to Enclosed Parking Space Requirements for a Garage at 1134-1136 Harlem Avenue – Ordinance

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bachner to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variation to Section 10-10-8 of the Zoning Ordinance at 1134-1136 Harlem Avenue.

Assistant Administrator Scheiner reviewed this item. She stated the petitioner is asking to restore what was previously there, which was nonconforming. She noted the Zoning Board of Appeals made a unanimous recommendation.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Discussion: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Internal Goals and Objectives

Mr. Palm reviewed the draft initial goals. He advised that the Village engage with a consultant who has professional expertise and skills to help assess where the organization is. He stated the consultant can assist with a work plan that will look at the organization and give a series of recommendations on things to do. He noted these areas can be discussed and prioritized, and that they are looking to assess the organization and build upon that as they move forward. He stated the second takeaway is the discussion about the advisory working group. He stated there is a place for that group to provide feedback to administration and the Village Board as they go out for an RFP for a consultant, and to ensure they are listening to the right voices and doing good community engagement and outreach.

Ms. Scheiner confirmed this is the place where she would ask that the Board start from, which would allow them to identify areas where they have work to do and allocate resources.

Trustee Bachner stated she would caution the thought of having a consultant be a first step to this. She stated it is important to have the advisory group in place so that they have them talk through their starting points, and she agreed about having a consulting group come in to help manage some of this. Trustee Bachner stated she is happy with the initial goals laid

out but that the document needs to be edited in some way to indicate that the advisory group's role is to help with each of these goals and with the entire process as a shared effort.

Trustee Brennan commented on the difficulty and tension of how to populate the advisory group if they do not know yet what they are doing. She stated she and Trustee Bachner worked on goals for this advisory group and asked to discuss the material they circulated, noting that she felt what Mr. Palm and Ms. Scheiner had put together is more the broader initiative for the Village and in particular with directions to Staff.

President Adduci stated she was under the impression that the document in the packet was a combination of the January 4 letter from Trustees Brennan and Bachner and what the Village thought the goals and purpose was supposed to be.

Mr. Palm stated the document was driven by his office but then they heard from Trustees Bachner and Brennan and tried to incorporate that a bit.

Trustee Brennan stated that as residents express interest in being involved in this work, it would be helpful to have more details and a better understanding of the goals and mission for the advisory group.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, Mr. Palm clarified that the items laid out in the packet document were to be done more simultaneously and that the working group would assist with the RFP creation.

In response to a comment from President Adduci about the working group being integrated with what is done, Mr. Palm further clarified that the Village Administrator would provide a series of recommendations and will have this group to help work through some of these questions and answers. He stated the recommendations would come under her signature and be based on the feedback from the advisory group.

Trustee O'Connell stated he is still struggling a bit and recalled the comments about transparency on commissions and boards. He stated there is a purpose and mission which is a starting point, but asked whether they understand what the work is. He commented that this is not a sprint but a marathon, and it is going to take some time to get everything squared away. He stated he wants to give members of the community an opportunity to understand they can be part of this group, and he suggested thinking about an internal and external work plan. He commented on establishing a process and stated that he thinks the purpose and mission in the packet is good.

Trustee Cargie stated that what is in the packet is what he envisioned. He commented that they need something to move forward that provides structure, and that the structure in the memo makes sense.

Trustee Henek commented that the document Trustees Brennan and Bachner put together is more robust and contains more actions. She stated that personally that document reflects more what she envisioned the group to be doing, and having the group in place guides the

work. She commented on the importance of having people with lived experiences to help identify systemic racist policies and hearing their perspectives to help evaluate. She stated that in her mind, it is simple to get a group together to start these conversations, and that they need to be nimble and not lock themselves into something. She stated this topic begs what conversations will bring and to not be so set on what is the end game. Trustee Henek commented that this topic is different from most things they are confronted with and they have to be comfortable experiencing that. She stated she would like to use what Trustees Bachner and Brennan put together with what the group would be working towards.

Trustee Vazquez commented on the similarities between both documents and how the goals of Mr. Palm's document apply to Trustees Bachner and Brennan's document, and that the latter was more detailed in terms of activities. He commented that based on his experience, he believed a consultant would want feedback from the working group. He stated he felt they were pretty close and they are now talking about how the working group is going to address each of the similar goals. Trustee Vazquez stated that Trustee Bachner's document will be useful when the working group gets together and the consultant will ask if this is the best way to handle the goals, then they will come up with a plan. He stated the mission, purpose, and goals are good, but where do they go from there. He commented that the ideas will be modified as the group gets together.

Trustee Bachner stated the initial goals listed in the Staff memo can be found within the document she and Trustee Brennan worked on. She stated one thing she wants to see is the community stamp on the recommendations and that the advisory group is working in coordination with the Village Administrator. She stated this is important and makes for a stronger recommendation. She stated people will feel less inclined to want to back it if it feels like it is coming from the top down.

President Adduci stated there is a lot of commonality between the two documents. She reminded everyone there is a document that is not in the public domain that Trustees Bachner and Brennan have worked on and cautioned discussing it until it is public. She recommended using that document for the application process because it further explains the responsibilities and goals of that group.

Trustee Brennan stated that made sense and echoed Trustee Bachner's comments regarding the structure of recommendations from the advisory group. She stated her understanding was that the advisory group's work would be recommendations to the Village Board and led by a resident, most likely a trustee, rather than led by the Village Administrator.

Trustee O'Connell stated his understanding was that this was always led by the Village Administrator. He stated that whatever recommendations come out of this, it is going to be the Village Administrator to execute whatever the plan is. He stated it would be a big miss if it is not that person.

Trustee Cargie stated it should be the Village Administrator because of the knowledge base and understanding of the various ways the Village operates.

President Adduci recalled the comments earlier in the evening about having a Village trustee lead a committee and stated maybe that is not the right thing to do going forward. She stated they want this to work and suggested the combination of a trustee and Village Administrator leading it. She stated what she heard earlier makes her question how effective a trustee can be on a committee.

Trustee Brennan commented about the structure of other commissions and task force and noted there is always Staff assigned to it. She stated Staff has always been helpful giving the commission the information it needs.

Trustee Henek agreed and stated all the committees and commissions are advisory and would come to the Board to make a final decision. She stated she was not sure about the concern of who is leading what, and commented it is unfortunate to have the example cited earlier during public comments, but that having Trustee Vazquez on the Age Friendly Committee seems to be working well.

Trustee O'Connell commented that this is different and it is diving into the inner workings of the Village. He stated things would need to be held in strict confidentiality if there are employment or HIPPA issues involved. He stated that to not have the Village Administrator leading and directing this, they would possibly get themselves in a rabbit hole. He stated his comfort level went up when they said they would have the Village Administrator leading this.

Trustee Bachner stated she sees this as a trustee and the Village Administrator in the room helping facilitate discussions. She stated the Village Board is ultimately the people who make decisions on what they are recommending. She clarified that she thinks it is the advisory group plus the Village Administrator plus the trustees, then they float into the Village Board.

Trustee Vazquez stated that though he is chairing his committee, he acts as a facilitator and as one of the members. He noted the key is soliciting input from the members, not directing them on what they need to do, which is what he anticipates the Village Administrator would do in that role, as well as giving input. He stated it is not going to work if it is not a collaborative effort. He stated he is ok with the Village Administrator chairing and facilitating but not dictating.

President Adduci stated they need the Village Administrator to work with the group, and that if they chair it, it would be more streamlined. She stated that does not mean a trustee is not part of the group and that she would recommend that too. She stated that she recommends making a decision about the initial goals and at the next meeting, re-visiting the document prepared by Trustees Bachner and Brennan as a document for people joining the group to know their responsibilities and work load. She stated they would work with and not for administration to look at key elements in the document.

Trustee Bachner stated she wanted to make sure there is an understanding that it is a partnership and that the advisory group can make recommendations to the Board. She suggested that if they are moving forward with the Staff memo, "creating the advisory group" be the first bullet point so it is understood that is a priority, as well as incorporating language

that indicates that it is a partnership of the equity group and the Village to enact these initial goals.

President Adduci stated that is very reasonable.

Trustee Vazquez suggested adding language to clarify that the goals are not listed sequentially.

Trustee Henek asked what is envisioned as the next steps, including a possible resolution to create the working group.

President Adduci stated what has been agreed to that the initial goals with some modifications is something review again to ensure it is what they want, and then take the document prepared by Trustees Bachner and Brennan and put it in the public domain and talk about the membership or recruitment process and the group itself. She stated she saw the resolution coming later because they have to work out these point.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Henek, President Adduci stated she sees the resolution coming when the Board is satisfied that they have gotten it right.

Trustee Bachner suggested they could have a resolution for the next meeting if they understand how they will be asking for membership.

In response to a question from Trustee O'Connell, the Board briefly discussed the process for resolutions creating committees. President Adduci stated that once the Board agrees on the goals, purpose, mission, and composition of the group, they create a resolution and vote on it.

Trustee O'Connell asked what is going in the resolution and stated they need to understand what is going in there.

President Adduci stated she recommends they discuss that document at the next meeting, then set out the process by which the group comes together. She stated they would need to talk about composition, how many members, and roles. She stated they need to have a conversation about the document first.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, President Adduci stated she hoped the document would be made public in the packet for the next meeting.

President Adduci recommended taking the comments on the goals and bringing back a final draft, and then settling on the roles, responsibilities, and composition of the working group. She stated that could be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Trustee Bachner stated she is good with that.

President Adduci stated that will be the direction.

b. Dominican University TRHT Work Group Update

Ms. Scheiner announced that Dr. Sheila Radford-Hill has retired and that Ami Omi will work on this with the Village in the interim. She reviewed the 9 working groups Dominican has established under TRHT and noted Dominican meets with their core team on a monthly basis. She shared that anyone is welcome to attend the meetings, and that Dominican feels the first 7 groups are more internal for the university. Ms. Scheiner stated groups 8 (River Forest and Dominican University Partnership) and 9 (Racial Healing Circle Working Group) are where Dominican feels the partnership with the Village would fall. She stated Dominican has individuals trained to hold racial healing circles at any time and that those groups are tailored to the audience and purpose. She reviewed the community partnership working group and noted it would be facilitated by Village and Dominican Staff, but she emphasized that it is the community's group and they want to hear what the community's goals for the group are. Ms. Scheiner stated as a result of her discussion with Ms. Omi, they suggested having a small group comprised of members from the Villages of River Forest and Maywood, and each community having an elected official, member of staff, and resident represented in the group. She noted Dominican's representation in the group would include Ms. Omi, the Chief Diversity Officer, a student leader, an individual from the Center for Cultural Liberation, and a River Forest resident. Ms. Scheiner noted Dr. Radford-Hill is a River Forest resident and she has indicated she would like to stay involved. She also noted that one of the ways to ensure the TRHT working group and the Board's advisory group have shared goals and are coordinated is to include one of the members of one of the Board's advisory group as a member on the TRHT working group.

Trustee Brennan requested to see this in writing.

President Adduci directed Staff to put this in writing and include in the next Board packet.

Trustee Vazquez stated this process makes sense to him and that he is already foreseeing how the working group would be a part of this. He stated that so far it is the right direction to go.

Trustee Brennan and President Adduci concurred.

President Adduci asked that there be particular actions for the Board to consider at the next meeting.

9. NEW BUSINESS

None.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 9:35p.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk

Comments 1/25/21 by resident John Grant regarding management of volunteer advisory bodies in River Forest.

It's election season here in River Forest, and I would like to address an important issue that has come up in my conversations with many elected officials and voters recently: the lack of effective and transparent guidelines for handling our volunteer commissions, boards, and committees which serve our elected officials and our village.

Let's be 100% clear that the issue is not the citizens and leaders who volunteer for these advisory bodies. It's hard to blame most elected officials as well. Further, my comments here are not aimed at any particular appointment or any particular body, and not at the past but the future. The flawed village guidelines here are a case of the process under-serving all of the people involved: the volunteers, the trustees, and the voters.

Let's start with how the lack of guidelines adversely affect the volunteers themselves to the advisory bodies. Those who would like to volunteer can find absolutely no description of how they will be considered by the village because the village has no published description of the process. Volunteers have no idea when their application will be reviewed, who will be looking at their applications, what considerations will be used for decisions, or how or when they will be contacted to learn what determination was made on their application.

Village trustees also receive no information on this process. Because the village has no formal process, and no requirement for transparency about the process, trustees have no idea who has applied and how decisions are made to select a nominee. Then they are asked at the last minute to make an uninformed yes/no vote on a nomination of their neighbor. The lack of transparency completely handicaps the trustees. This process shortchanges the current chairpersons of the advisory bodies as well. There is no prescribed process for candidates to attend a meeting of the advisory bodies for which they are applying and meet the chairpersons, no prescribed process for chairpersons to then give feedback and advice on the application.

Finally, the lack of transparency means the voter has absolutely no understanding of and no voice about this process. How can they hold trustees accountable for their vote if the trustees' votes are completely blind? And the government serving voters is less efficient and effective because of these flaws.

The current system places entirely too much power in one person, the president, who reviews the candidate submittals and has no obligation to disclose any information about who has applied and what process was used to come up with an appointee.

The process with the ad hoc committees suffers as well. Because of a lack of guidelines for the process, you have situations where dueling trustees get into heated battles about how the committees will be formed and who will be on them. Or you have other instances where some trustees are claiming other trustees are working in secret. The system breeds misunderstanding. With all due respect, it's a bit of a mess, and we can do much better for ourselves.

I was bewildered when I realized how our process is working, so I looked for comparison to Oak Park. Oak Park's process is 100% different, aimed completely at transparency and effectiveness. Oak Park has an actual Volunteer Application, the first page of which is a detailed description of the process. Their volunteer web page also includes "Enabling Language" for each advisory body, and a Procedure Manual

for advisory bodies. Applications are routed through the Clerk to the Citizen Involvement Commission for a transparent process of evaluation and matching of volunteer skills to advisory body needs.

I called last week and spoke with very experienced, educated leaders in Oak Park who have studied this process of staffing and guiding advisory bodies, and their work could be of help to us. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Additionally our village is filled with experienced leaders and executives and attorneys, inside and outside government, who could lend a hand to creating a new and much better system. To get that ball rolling, I am volunteering right here to be a part of working on the solution.

In conclusion, the current system in River Forest lacks process and transparency, and under-serves all of us. River Forest must do a better job of tapping the talent of our citizens and treating everybody inside and outside of government with dignity and professionalism in the process. I call on the trustees and president to take up this issue without delay.

Thanks Trustees and President Adduci for the chance to make a public comment under these circumstances. Before going further, I want to say thank you to all for your leadership and consideration, especially in navigating 2020. It's been a blessing to be a River Forester during these times and brighter days are ahead I'm sure.

I last made a public comment about one year ago, the same evening OPRF District 200 administrators were here reporting on planned changes to curriculum and instruction aimed at decreasing the racial predictability of achievement at OPRF. Then, I urged you to ask District 90 to come before this board and give a progress report on the associated K-8 changes already made in River Forest schools. Then, I heard President Adduci underscore the importance of schools to the vitality of River Forest. I'm aware District 90 has made no attempt to communicate changes in student achievement associated with changes in instructional philosophy prior to March and covid19, so I offer this brief update.

We're increasingly becoming one school district, Oak Park District 97, River Forest District 90 and OPRF District 200, and it's especially evident in the coordinated changes to curriculum and instruction. It was about three years ago when the River Forest District 90 Board President Martire described "a fundamental change in instructional philosophy". The initiative was multifaceted and spurred by a common goal among sister districts (90,97,200) of reducing the racial predictability of achievement. The goal included a strategy involving a change in curriculum and instruction for every subject taught in every grade. Implementation was quiet and expedient, and soon the board described being years ahead of our sister districts in Oak Park. Quietly, certain D90 administrators and teachers described it as lowering the academic ceiling and the same concern persists today with changes underway at OPRF. What follows is a performance update for River Forest District 90 since the new philosophy and before schools shuttered in March 2020 due to covid19.

1. River Forest adopted a less rigorous math curriculum. It is one the US Dept Education's What Works group affirms should reduce achievement among all students by 9-11%. It's already working; math achievement has fallen even before covid19.
2. The district eliminated differentiated instruction, for example stand-alone instruction for different reading or math levels, and now the growth of children on either end of the achievement curve is delayed.
3. The district adopted an unproven reading and literacy program from Lucy Calkins that defies what research says is best, like a foundation in phonemic awareness for early readers. Students choose their own books now and achievement in English Language Arts has fallen even before covid.
4. Immediately after implementation, the Illinois 5 Essentials Survey showed River Forest teachers blasting the administration, rating instructional leadership in the bottom eight percent of all Illinois schools. The trend in teacher voice persists today.
5. In this short time two Exemplary schools were downgraded to Commendable; there is no longer an Exemplary school in River Forest.

6. Since the new philosophy, River Forest school ratings on popular home-finding sites like Realtor.com, schooldigger.com and greatschools.org have declined creating a community issue, and not just a curriculum issue.

It is astonishing how quickly a lower academic ceiling translated to lower student achievement; again, this is before covid19. While safety and covid-19 related learning loss may be the important problems at hand, back to school means back to this philosophy that so quickly produced the poor results above. We have a problem beneath a problem, one that savvy residents are already responding to by moving to private schools or moving out of River Forest.

I understand and respect the line between municipal boards, in this case your board and District 90. I'm not suggesting you cross this line, but I'm urging you to call across, demand an update, facilitate discourse in the community and ensure those households without students, over 70% of River Forest, understand the school-related challenges facing River Forest.

Thanks again for the chance to make a public comment.

My name is Katharine Christmas and I live at 601 Bonnie Brae. I am a River Forest resident of 17 years and a member of the Committee on Deer Management.

I am speaking on behalf of a group of Committee members including myself, Ingrid Liu, Annette Madden, Laurie Gillard, Marta Kozbur, and Julie Armstrong. We have respected the Open Meetings Act in writing this.

I had not attended any of the Village meetings on this topic before applying to join this Committee, so I was not aware of the intensity of views within our community. I have never written to the Board, spoken at a meeting, or called the Village regarding deer. I applied for the Committee because I am a gardener and my home faces Forest Preserve land. Deer are often on our property in the spring and summer. I simply wanted to gather data and make an informed recommendation to the Village.

This group is making this statement now because of information that Secretary Phyfer and Trustee Cargie brought to light last week related to this Committee's rules. The rules were approved by you, the Board of Trustees, last January. The rule on Membership say:

Members shall include **two (2)** members of the Board of Trustees. If a Member is unable to remain on the Committee until it is dissolved, the Village President will appoint a replacement with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees.

So, there were supposed to be 2 Committee members from the Board. For the first meeting, there were: Trustees Henek and Cargie. Before our second meeting, however, Trustee Henek had resigned. According to the rule cited above, she should have been replaced with another Trustee member. Trustee Cargie and President Adduci would have known about this rule, yet they didn't follow it. Instead, Trustee Cargie was left to oversee the Committee on his own and run all of its meetings for the next 9 months with virtually no oversight. In the minutes from only our 2nd meeting, Trustee Cargie is suddenly listed as "Chairperson," when he had previously been listed as "Co-Chairperson." In that same meeting Trustee Cargie was asked by a Committee member if he was "the Chair of the whole Committee" and he affirmed he was.

The failure by the President and Board to follow the rules and replace Trustee Henek had a significantly negative impact on the Committee, as Trustee Cargie,

now the sole Chairperson, was openly pro-cull. The following points are taken from minutes of Board meetings leading up to the Committee's formation:

Referring to the Committee concept, Trustee Cargie said "it is a waste of time and he did not believe anyone who volunteered would change their mind."

He asserted "there is no other solution than culling and the other options are not practical."

Also, on at least 3 occasions in separate meetings, he made motions to proceed with an IGA, the first step toward culling, **without** forming a Committee at all.

No one in this group is questioning Trustee Cargie's right to his personal opinion. We do not know him and make no judgement on him as a person. It is very concerning though that the Village chose to make someone so determined to cull a co-Chairperson and then the sole Chairperson of this Committee. His noted bias affected what information was considered, the tone of the Committee's meetings, and its output.

Despite this, our purpose now is actually not to call anyone out but to salvage something from the work that has been done. In our Committee meeting last week, Trustee Cargie included a vote on cull or no-cull. Cull "won" by 8-6 including his pro-cull vote. Given that when this vote was taken, we now know that the Committee had an unapproved number of members, an unapproved number of Board members and a pro-cull Chairperson, we request that this vote result be nullified. Not doing so risks suggesting this rule error was more than an oversight. Note that our purpose is not to silence the pro-cull group but instead to allow alternate approaches to finally be fairly considered, as we feel they were not during this process.

Our proposal is for the 7 non-Trustee Committee members who want to cull to proceed with their own recommendation to the Board. The 6 who believe we should start with alternatives to culling can make a separate official recommendation. We ask that Trustee Cargie be removed from the process. He has already had undue influence over it and it is too late to add another Trustee co-Chairperson and rebalance the Committee. Neither recommendation should be considered by the Board to be from the "majority." Board members can process all the information and make their own conclusions. Neither side is stifled in this plan and it would allow the Committee to finish its work without charges of bias.

After almost a year and with only one meeting left, it is unrealistic to start this process over and do it properly. This proposed final step would acknowledge what occurred here while still moving the community closer to a well-considered deer management plan. The alternative is to have whatever proposal is submitted by the pro-cull group be seen for what it is: the result of a Committee that was predisposed to culling.

Thank you for your consideration.