

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
January 26th, 2026**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on January 26th, 2026 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 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Brennan, Bachner, Gillis, Keskitalo, Vazquez, O'Connell, and Village Clerk Castellano

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Deputy Police Chief Michael Swierczynski, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, HR Manager Trish Ivansek, Assistant to the Director of Public Works Seth Jansen.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Paul Harding provided public comment regarding the Village's Ethics Ordinance. He suggested rewriting the ordinance for clarity so it is easier for residents to read and understand, recommended using outside counsel with ethics expertise, and encouraged additional resident feedback during the revision process.

President Adduci responded to Mr. Harding's comments, stating that improvements to the Ethics Ordinance are needed and emphasizing the importance of due diligence, including obtaining input from the Village Ethics

Commission.

President Adduci noted that the topics raised by the additional three speakers pertain to the Madison Street Development property and that those speakers may provide comments when that agenda item is addressed.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee O'Connell had no comments.

Trustee Keskitalo noted that she was able to attend both previous open houses regarding the Madison Street Development property, thanked those who attended and staff for their work on the open houses, encouraged residents to continue submitting feedback about the property, and emphasized the importance of resident input.

Trustee Brennan began her comments with a land acknowledgment and reported attending one of the Madison Street open houses. She noted that the event was well organized, thanked those who helped put it together, and stated that it appeared to be worthwhile, with robust conversations and suggestions exchanged between residents and other parties.

Village Clerk Castellano had no comments.

Trustee Vazquez thanked Village staff for the notices and media outreach related to the Madison Street development site and, considering the recent weather, expressed appreciation for the additional third open house. He also thanked the developer for participating in the meetings and appearing before the Village Board in the interest of transparency. He emphasized the importance of resident feedback, encouraged residents to continue sharing their input on the property, and stated that he was excited about the process surrounding the development project.

Trustee Gillis reminded everyone that the third Madison Street Development open house will be held on Thursday, February 5, from 6 to 8 pm. She also reminded residents about the Village's senior snow removal program and encouraged eligible residents to sign up. Additionally, she encouraged neighbors to check in on elderly residents to ensure they are doing well.

Trustee Bachner thanked everyone who attended the Madison Street Development open house and encouraged residents to attend the next one on February 5. She inquired about the reason for the third open house.

Administrator Walsh explained that a third open house had been discussed previously, but recent weather made it necessary.

Trustee Bachner also encouraged residents to check on their neighbors during the cold weather and highlighted available warming centers. She asked Administrator Walsh if he was aware of any additional warming centers.

Administrator Walsh responded that he is not aware of any other warming centers in the Village.

President Adduci thanked the Village Board for their attentiveness to the Madison Street Development and also expressed appreciation to residents for their feedback.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – January 12th, 2026
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – January 12th, 2026
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. Financial Report – December 2025
- e. Award of Bond Issuance – Ordinance
- f. Award of Contract – 2026 Street Improvement Program – Schroeder Asphalt Services – \$515,000.00
- g. Approval of Motor Fuel Tax Resolution – 2026 Maintenance of Streets and Highways – Resolution

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to approve consent agenda items A through G. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O'Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo
Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SPEARATE CONSIDERATION

None.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

None.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Introduction to Planned Development – 7620 Madison Street – Five Thirty-One Partners – No Action

Corey Gimbel provided public comment regarding the Madison Street Development property, expressing concerns about the project's density and encouraging the Village to reevaluate proposals in light of this.

Angie Grover provided public comment regarding the proposed development project. She thanked the Village for hosting the open houses and summarized her discussions with the developers and staff at the meeting on topics including building height, traffic, density, and parking.

Susan Altier provided public comment regarding the proposed development. She thanked the Village for hosting the open houses and shared concerns she had previously submitted, including questions about the economic viability of the proposed developer, potential conflicts of interest between the developer and the Village, clarification of the developer's composition and associated businesses, as well as issues related to density, parking, and alley access.

Margie Cekander spoke during public comment on the proposed development, expressing concerns about the project timeline and what she described as limited information from both the developer and the Village. She questioned the building height and density, suggested considering condominiums as an alternative, and asked how zoning variances would be addressed.

Village Administrator Walsh introduced the project and outlined the purpose of tonight's meeting, as well as upcoming meetings related to the project.

Trustee O'Connell requested background information on the Village's communications efforts last year concerning the property and development in general.

Administrator Walsh shared background details and highlighted the outcomes of the Village's Neighborhood Dialogue programs.

The lead member of the development group, Viktor Jakovljevic, took the podium and presented the proposed project and fielded questions from the Village Board.

President Adduci asked why the developer removed the four-bedroom units.

Mr. Jakovljevic explained that market demand and the need for larger living spaces indicated that the large three-bedroom units would perform better.

Trustee O'Connell asked Mr. Jakovljevic to clarify why apartments were chosen over condominiums.

Mr. Jakovljevic stated that current market conditions favored apartments and added that condominiums are also more difficult to finance due to external factors.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification on how the potential parking lifts would be implemented.

Mr. Jakovljevic explained that the building is designed to accommodate the possible use of lifts, noting that nearly all parking spaces could support them and that they could be used to increase interior parking capacity.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on which parking spaces would be designated for residents and which for commercial use.

Mr. Jakovljevic provided a breakdown of how the parking spaces would be allocated.

Trustee Keskitalo asked Mr. Jakovljevic to explain why he believes this project is a good fit for the Village.

Mr. Jakovljevic stated that he believes in the Village and noted that development opportunities in River Forest are limited. He added that the project meets demand from new residents as well as older residents who wish to live in the Village for only a few months.

Trustee Brennan asked how long Mr. Jakovljevic expects the project to take.

Mr. Jakovljevic stated 17 to 20 months, noting that variables such as rental seasons and construction methods could affect the timeline.

President Adduci asked how quickly he expects the rental units to be filled.

Mr. Jakovljevic replied that his current portfolio of rentals is over 90% occupied and highlighted several of his buildings and their rental performance.

Trustee Gillis asked Mr. Jakovljevic to explain some of the design considerations given the project's close proximity to the neighborhood and Madison Street.

Mr. Jakovljevic explained that the building is a full masonry system and highlighted several construction aspects of the materials. He also detailed the lobby and elevator layouts, garbage and move-in systems, balconies, rooftop amenities, potential fitness center, appliances, accent lighting, sprinklers, and interior finishes.

Trustee Vazquez asked Mr. Jakovljevic to elaborate further on the finishes.

Mr. Jakovljevic explained the finishes and highlighted several images from the presentation that reflect what the final materials and design would look like.

Trustee Brennan asked when the Village would begin receiving property taxes

from the development.

Mr. Jakovljevic explained how property taxes work for new developments, noting that taxes would begin once the deed is issued and the certificate of occupancy is received.

President Adduci highlighted some potential traffic measures that would not be permitted under Illinois law but noted that the Village will continue to investigate other traffic control options. She also told Mr. Jakovljevic to take traffic considerations seriously, as it is a major concern for residents.

Mr. Jakovljevic acknowledged this and stated that they will do their best to address the concern and explore potential solutions. He added that they are willing to engage professionals to review key aspects, including schools and traffic, to help ensure the project is as suitable as possible for the area.

President Adduci reiterated that traffic must remain a top priority.

Trustee Keskitalo requested that whoever is conducting the traffic study be informed of the residents worries surrounding traffic and attempt to include that in their study.

Trustee Bachner agreed with Trustee Keskitalo and noted that there are additional traffic concerns that need to be reviewed outside of just those of the direct neighbors as well.

Trustee O'Connell noted that the Village and its consultants can reference the Village's traffic study for some of this information as well.

President Adduci agreed.

Mr. Jakovljevic noted that they will have to review the impact on the alley as well.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the village Police Chief and Fire Chief have to sign off on this project as well.

Administrator Walsh stated yes.

Trustee Bachner stressed that the Village should consider delivery trucks and

their impact as well.

Trustee Brennan asked about a three-way stop sign at Ashland and Madison.

Administrator Walsh noted that the Village would address the possibility but stated that Madison is IDOT property and that there are challenges with the street layout.

Trustee Brennan suggested a crosswalk for that intersection.

Administrator Walsh noted that the Forest Park must be involved in these conversations as well as this project may impact parking considerations and flows on their side.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn by Trustee O'Connell, Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

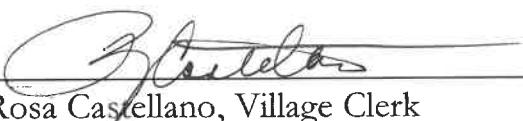
Roll call:

Ayes: Trustee Vazquez, Gillis, O'Connell, Bachner, Brennan, and Keskitalo

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 9:46 p.m.



Rosa Castellano, Village Clerk

Date: 01-09-26.