

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST LOCAL ETHICS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

January 31, 2025

A special meeting of the Local Ethics Commission was held on January 31, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. in the First Floor Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chair Daley(Virtual,) Commissioner Ignoffo, and Commissioner Degroff.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Deputy Clerk/Management Analyst Luke Masella, Village Attorney Kaylee M. Hartman.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ignoffo to allow Chair Daley to participate virtually. Seconded by Commissioner Degroff.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo and Commissioner Degroff.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

II. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Phyllis Rubin made public comment about the complaint filed. She noted that a senior Jones Lang LaSalle executive sat on the Economic Development Commission, creating a conflict of interest. While she suggested his recusal, she questioned its adequacy. She emphasized the need for transparency and data to justify JLL's selection over other companies and worried about possible dual relationships.

Daniel Lauber made public comment about the complaint filed. Mr. Lauber encouraged the Ethics Commission to take the complaint seriously and fully investigate it openly and transparently. If a violation is found, Mr. Lauber encouraged the Village to start the RFP process over and cast a wider net. Mr. Lauber also noted that this proposed contract could contribute to a negative reputation of the Village.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2022

Commissioner Degroff asked if she could vote on this item even though she was not on the Commission at that time.

Administrator Walsh stated she could vote if she would like.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2025

A MOTION was made by Chair Daley and SECONDED by Commissioner Ignoffo to approve the meeting minutes of the March 9, 2022, meeting of the Local Ethics Commission as presented.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Degroff.

Motion Passes.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

a. Consideration and Discussion of the Complaint filed by Margie Cekander on January 26th, 2025.

Chair Daley noted the Commission should enter Executive Session to review the complaint as noted in section 6-C-2-A of the Ethics Ordinance.

The Commission entered a short recess so Village Attorney Hartman could create the properly cited motion necessary to enter Executive Session.

Ms. Hartman recommended the Commission enter into Executive Session pursuant to Section 5 ILCS 120/2/C/4, "Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law, to a quasi-adjudicative body, as defined in this Act, provided that the body prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning."

A MOTION was made by Chair Daley to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Section 5 ILCS 120/2/C/4. SECONDED by Commissioner Ignoffo.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

Prior to leaving the room, members of the audience raised concerns about the Commission entering Executive Session and the formatting of the agenda.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 1:22pm.

Executive Session ended and the meeting entered open session at 2:03pm.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2025

A MOTION was made to add the public comments submitted via email to the Commission into the record. SECONDED by Chair Daley.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

The public comments can be found at the end of this document in the attachments section.

Chair Daley reported that the Commission was made aware during Executive Session of their lack of jurisdiction over the complaints filed about Ethical Standards. She then noted that the Commission is concerned about their lack of jurisdiction over the Ethical Standards section of the Village's Ethics Code.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ignoffo to enter and continue the complaint before the Commission until a later date when it could be re-addressed by the Commission. SECONDED by Chair Daley.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ignoffo that section 1-23-8-B-1 of the Villages Ethics Ordinance be submitted to the Village Board with an amendment to read as follows, "to consider complaints of alleged violations of duties imposed in Sections 1-23-3, 1-23-4, and 1-23-5 of this chapter." SECONDED by Commissioner Degroff.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ignoffo to formally request that the Village Board abstain from executing the contract at the heart of the complaint before the Commission until such time that the Village Board addresses the recommendation made in the immediately prior motion, specifically the inclusion of ethical standards into the purview of the Ethics Commission. SECONDED by Commissioner Degroff.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2025

Motion Passes.

Chair Daley noted that she hopes the Village Board will listen to the recommendations of the Ethics Commission and the statements made by members of the public.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ignoffo and SECONDED by Commissioner Degroff to adjourn the January 31, 2025, meeting of the Local Ethics Commission at 2:12 p.m.

AYES: Commissioner Ignoffo, Commissioner Degroff, and Chair Daley.

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

Approved:



Matt Walsh
Village Administrator

Attachments – Public Comments

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Luke Masella](#)
Subject: [External] Written public comment for Ethics Commission meeting, Jan 31
Date: Thursday, January 30, 2025 11:48:05 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

If I can get to the meeting, I'd like to make a public comment. Regardless, please distribute this written comment to the Ethics Commission.

I am writing in reference to the ethics of awarding to JLL a broker contract to market 3 village-owned properties in the Madison TIF district. This appears to violate the ethics rules of the Village. Awarding this contract to JLL appears to be a highly questionable act. Hiring JLL while its senior employee sits on our Economic Development Commission is the definition of a dual relationship. In this case, Walter Wahlfeldt, on the commission deciding which company will get recommended for this award, is a senior executive of JLL, the company favored by the commission. A clearer dual relationship or conflict-of-interest could not be created. Mr. Wahlfeldt's recusing himself on this issue is the least that can be done, but maybe not enough. The commission has already recommended JLL. This is not a good look. Residents must be given an extremely clear explanation of why this contract will go to a company that employs someone on a commission that has recommended this same company to the Board. River Forest residents must see the data that has to conclusively show that this company, JLL, is the most deserving of this contract over and above other companies in the running. If this data is not forthcoming, I'd say the ethics of this situation is in serious question. The Village should avoid entering into dual relationships that raise questions or the appearance of conflict-of interest. Dual relationships do not serve us well.

Phyllis B Rubin

[REDACTED]

Greetings,

I'm writing regarding the selection of a firm to market 3 village-owned properties in the Madison TIF district, which I understand is coming to you for vote at the 1/27/25 VRF board meeting. I also understand that the Economic Development Commission ("EDC") has recommended the selection of JLL for this engagement.

My concern is that one of the EDC commissioners, Walter Wahlfeldt, is a senior employee at JLL. This is a conflict of interest – even if Mr. Wahlfeldt recused himself from discussions and selection, it is still a conflict of interest and a personal financial gain for him because the firm he works for will benefit financially. The implication is that JLL had an advantage in the RFP process over other candidates, and the commission's decision was compromised and influenced by Mr. Wahlfeldt's employment. We hosted one of the neighborhood dialogues, and, as the JT findings and minutes show, this is exactly the type of vendor 'insider' selection that was stated by participants as an unfair practice. If not a legal conflict per the village, it is an appearance of conflict, an ethical issue and erodes the trust of residents.

I know it isn't always easy to find the best vendors, but Mr. Wahlfeldt himself said in one of the meetings that there were at least 5-6 viable candidates to market the property. I also understand that we want the most qualified people to serve as commissioners – however, we don't want commissioners and trustees who have personal or business interests that could conflict with their decision-making. And if Mr. Wahlfeldt, who would likely have had some valuable contributions to make during the selection, couldn't because he had to recuse himself, then it doesn't help the commission to have him as a member.

There should be no implied or actual benefit to any commissioner – they should all be independent. It's impossible to be independent if our livelihood is dependent on a company under consideration for a project.

I urge you as board members to remove JLL from consideration and make a different selection based on a review of independent candidates by the EDC. Thank you for your consideration.

All best,

Karen Neal

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Bruce Faland](#)
To: [Luke Masella](#)
Subject: [External] River Forest Ethics Commission January 31, 2025
Date: Friday, January 31, 2025 9:52:22 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

TO: River Forest Ethics Commission January 31, 2025

I am unable to attend but will attend via zoom. Can someone please read these words.

I would like everyone sitting on this board to answer personally so the viewing audience and people in the room can hear the answer to this question.

What is the difference between Ethics and Ethically?

Seems clear but somehow we have totally Forgotten those concepts.

Current society and especially political can not seem to answer the questions presented to the person. That makes it seem that by ignoring the question and voicing their opinion or agenda we will be happy with that. Totally disrespectful and causes assumptions that in these days of social media very retaliatory without consequences or direct the proper respect to persons seeking answers for their own education of the issues. We all want to know the issues that affect our lives and investments in our town.

I would also like the people attending this meeting to respect everyone in the 60305 Village we live in. Too many times I have heard those people, you people, us, them because of this imaginary social thought of I am better than you because I live in a certain part of town. I am very happy with my neighbors; they all contribute to life in River Forest. All residents in town have made an investment by living here and deserve the respect that the Village officials serve and decide on issues without hidden self-profit issues and freedom of truthful information both by government and police for the safety of the public.

I hope that all people can be true to themselves, honest actions and make our town desirable for life for all ages of our residents. Please.

Sincerely,

Bruce Faland

[Redacted signature block]

Luke I would appreciate a response that you have received this email. Can it be read into record at the meeting today

Thanks

Bruce Faland