

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, February 8, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, February 8, 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 7:00p.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: Acting Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant to the Village Administrator Jonathan Pape, Management Analyst Sara Phyfer, Police Chief James O’Shea, Police Commander James Greenwood, 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

Laurie Gillard, 227 Forest. Ms. Gillard stated she is on the Deer Management Committee and shared her experience at the meetings. She expressed disappointment in the process and encouraged everyone to listen to the audio of the January 19 meeting, noting she had prepared a draft deer management plan and felt it was dismissed. She expressed concern about the legitimacy of the Committee and stated she was resigning from the Committee.

Ingrid Liu, 931 Thatcher. Ms. Liu shared her experience living across from Thatcher Woods, as well as her experience on the Deer Management Committee. She stated the meetings were dominated by opinion rather than fact and that there is not enough evidence to cull deer. She stated she was resigning from the Committee.

Annette Madden, 14 Ashland. Ms. Madden stated that when she applied to be a member of the Deer Management Committee, she did so with an open heart and no predetermined agenda. She stated the majority of the Committee was on a one track solution to cull the deer and referred to Katharine Christmas’ comments at the January 25 meeting. She stated she was resigning from the Committee.

Marta Kozbur, 1235 Monroe. Ms. Kozbur expressed her disappointment with Village leadership and the deer task force. She stated she believes it was created in order to cull the

herd. She shared her experience on the Committee and stated discussions about the survey results and public education were dismissed. She stated she was resigning from the Committee.

Katharine Christmas, 601 Bonnie Brae. Ms. Christmas referred to her comments at the January 25 meeting. She stated she had requested that Trustee Cargie be removed from the Deer Management Committee and was told that he would not be. She stated she was resigning from the Committee and that she felt disenfranchised from the process. She stated she would be preparing a deer management plan for the Village as a private citizen instead of a Committee member.

President Adduci stated she appreciated that Ms. Christmas will provide a proposal and that the Board's intent is to read all proposals and consider all ideas. She stated this is a value to the community.

Molly Grant, 923 Thatcher. Ms. Grant expressed support for Trustee Bachner to lead the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee and stated she is able to work effectively as a team player and leader.

John Grant, 923 Thatcher. Mr. Grant encouraged the Board to take his concerns about the volunteer process for boards and commissions seriously. He also expressed support for Trustee Bachner to lead the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee. He urged the Board to move forward with a draft resolution and to vote to create the Committee at the March 8 meeting. He stated language was added to the website regarding advisory bodies after his comments at the previous meeting, and he requested that the Board take up transparency about the appointment process in the public view. He stated he would be submitting written suggestions to be added to the record.

Jan Saeger, 435 William. Ms. Saeger stated she is a member of the Historic Preservation Commission and expressed support for resident volunteers, including the Village President and the Board. She reviewed the information available regarding boards and commissions on the Village website and stated the Village President has the power to make appointments. She discouraged Oak Park's model.

Mindy Credi, 1452 Park. Ms. Credi discouraged Oak Park's model for the appointment process to boards and commissions. She stated the process is straightforward and encouraged the Board to continue using the current process, noting there is an appropriate amount of transparency.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee O'Connell thanked residents for their comments. He stated he was looking forward to reading the Deer Committee reports. He stated that regarding boards and commissions, Staff reacted like they do on every opportunity to make a clarification to make things easier for residents. He expressed hope that the Village is closer to fulfilling Mr. Grant's request than farther from it.

Trustee Henek thanked everyone for speaking tonight. She stated there is always room for improvement and that she takes what was said tonight seriously. She also asked for clarification about the Township's role in the negotiations over payments with the Bonnie Brae residents and the Sheridan regarding the landscaping issues, noting that the payments from the Sheridan to the Township were reduced from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

Village Attorney Smith briefly reviewed the history of the negotiations and stated they reached a point where the residents were asking for more than what the developer was will to pay. He stated that the Village approached the Township and asked if they were willing to take a reduction in the amount they were owed over the course of two years to allow the neighbors to receive the funds. He stated the Township Supervisor agreed and that Staff found this to be a fair and equitable way to resolve the matter.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Village Attorney Smith stated the developer paid \$17,784 to each of the six property owners, or about \$120,000, per the settlement agreement.

Trustee Henek stated that back in December, the agreement was for five residents receiving the amount and asked why the Township is foregoing some of their payment.

Village Attorney Smith stated that one resident decided they preferred the payment instead of a planting and the Village approached the Township and they agreed. He noted the Township had a choice and they said ok.

Trustee Brennan thanked the residents for their comments. She stated she is looking forward to everyone's input on the deer situation. She acknowledged Black History Month and stated there are many events and initiatives occurring. She encouraged people to consider how their own behaviors have perpetuated racism by participating in the Race Conscious Dialogues program at www.raceconsciousdialogues.org. Trustee Brennan also clarified that the Village does not accept sharps as part of its medicine recycling. She reported that she attended the Quarterly Community Safety meeting and highlighted Township Senior Services Director Pamela Mahn's presentation, noting that seniors in need of services can call 708-383-8060 and those concerned about older adults outside the immediate area can call 800-677-1116.

Trustee Vazquez also thanked the residents for their public comment. He expressed disappointment to hear that the deer discussions were not amicable and committed to reading all reports. He announced the formation of a smaller age friendly regional collaborative that includes the Austin Council, Forest Park, Oak Park, Maywood, River Forest, and the Oak Park and River Forest Townships. He noted they got together to discuss what shared age-friendly initiatives they had as a region. He also stated he was happy to see that the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on February 11 included discussions of proposed text amendments related to the Affordable Housing Plan.

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. She thanked the residents for their public comments

and stated she looked forward to the deer reports. She also thanked everyone for their time and service. She encouraged people to not go outside if possible due to the cold temperatures and encouraged residents to call the Village's non-emergency number for assistance. Trustee Bachner acknowledged Black History Month and stated she concurred with Trustee Brennan's comments. She stated that there is also a Race Conscious Dialogues cohort for people of color who do not identify as black, noting that she helps facilitate it. She also noted that the NAACP offers different ways to support black communities and participate in Black History Month.

President Adduci acknowledged the members of the Deer Management Committee and echoed the Trustees' comments. She reiterated that the Board appreciates all their efforts and assured that they will read all the reports before any action happens because that is the right thing to do. She stated they appreciate everyone's efforts and for spending time away from family at meetings. President Adduci also echoed support for Trustee Bachner as co-leader of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working group. She reported that she also attended the Quarterly Safety Meeting and reminded everyone that the Senior Task Force is available to help. She also highlighted Trustee Vazquez' comments about the local Age Friendly collaboration, noting that everyone is working well together to move common initiatives forward. President Adduci also shared that she was asked by the OPRF superintendent search committee about what qualities to look for and stated they are trying to make sure the interview process includes many of the issues River Forest is interested in.

- a. Police Department Recognition of Shared Principles between NAACP and Illinois Chiefs Association

Chief O'Shea stated that he wanted to talk about something to reflect on and consider during Black History Month and presented on 5 African American cops to celebrate: Bass Reeves, Georgia Ann Robinson, James Wormley Jones, Lloyd Sealy, and Willie L. Williams.

He next introduced the River Forest Police Department's adoption of the Ten Shared Principles between the NACCP and the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. Commander Greenwood read the [Principles](#) aloud.

President Adduci stated it was an honor to put this document in the Community Room. She thanked Chief O'Shea and Commander Greenwood for working at this for the community and noted this important acknowledgment and recognition.

Trustee Henek asked that the Principles be posted on the Village website.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2021
- b. Village Board of Trustees Session Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2021
- c. Monthly Department Reports
- d. Accounts Payable – January 2021 – \$2,293,729.16
- e. Village Administrator's Report

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek, to approve the Consent Agenda items A-E.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

- a. January Accounts Payable from the General Fund to McDonald's-Karavites for \$84.43
(Trustee O'Connell Common Law Conflict of Interest)

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan, to approve payment from the General Fund to McDonald's-Karavites for \$84.43.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, Vazquez

Abstain: Trustee O'Connell

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

None.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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

President Adduci stated she believed the document captured what the Board discussed at its last meeting.

Trustee O'Connell expressed concern about having the advisory group review hiring and firing policies and practices, and he stated he would like to keep those roles with the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners and Village Administrator.

Trustee Vazquez stated he thought it was more policy related rather than getting into specifics about particular employees.

The Board discussed the composition of the group and came to a consensus to include co-leads of a trustee and the village administrator, and to leave the number of members to be

determined at a later date. The Board agreed to clarify that the bullet points of the group's goals were not sequential and to include language about equity in the mission statement.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, Ms. Scheiner suggested using the purpose and mission in the resolution and then attaching the initial goals and responsibilities to the application.

After discussion about the timeline of the documents, the Board came to a consensus to take up the resolution and application, which would outline the goals and responsibilities of the group, at the next Board meeting.

President Adduci thanked the Board members for participating in this.

Trustees O'Connell and Vazquez welcomed Ms. Scheiner to her new role.

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 8:46p.m.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk

My name is Katharine Christmas. I live at 601 Bonnie Brae Place. At your last meeting, I spoke on behalf of myself and 5 other members of the Deer Committee. I didn't realize I should submit that letter to the Village after speaking in order for it to be included in the public records, so I will do so after this meeting. I'm referring to that letter and the same matter tonight, so it is still relevant. In that letter, we requested that changes be made to our committee's procedures and membership to correct the openly pro-cull stance of its Chairperson, Trustee Cargie, who should not have been left in charge of the committee based on its membership rules.

Since that meeting, I was told that Chairperson Cargie will not be removed. In response, I'd like to announce my resignation. I will follow up with a resignation email to the Board. My reasoning is as follows:

In joining this Committee, I promised to gather data from the community and explore multiple approaches for a Deer Management Plan for River Forest. I put in the time – I attended all but one deer committee meeting, 13 in total, and I've committed many hours to developing the community survey. Despite that, I have felt entirely disenfranchised from the process. The committee meetings, especially of late, overwhelmingly favored the views of the pro-cull majority to the point that others are afraid to speak. I and others have repeatedly been dismissed, criticized and even mocked for suggesting alternatives to culling, or demanding real population data as opposed to eyeballed estimates, or believing we need a long-term plan and to be honest about the price tag of culling. I feel I'm in a Catch-22. Staying on the committee prevents me from fulfilling the purpose of the committee, which is to submit a thoughtful deer management proposal to the Village. But I can't work with others on the committee unless I leave the committee, due to the Open Meetings Act.

I intend to follow through with my commitment to create a proposal for a holistic, data-based, results-oriented deer management plan for our Village. The only difference is that I will do so as a private citizen rather than as a committee member. I will still submit this proposal to the Board and my hope is that the Board will consider all options before proceeding with a plan to cull first.

Thank you for your time.

Hi I'm Mindy Credi and I live at 1452 Park

Thank you for allocating time for me to comment on the Appointment process for Village Boards and Commission.

My message is simple, please don't over-complicate the process.

We're a small Village with nowhere near Oak Park's volume of volunteer openings. Maywood and Forest Park use the same process as River Forest. Oak Park adds the extra step of a paid staff member reviewing applications. However, in all 4 communities, all applicants are presented by the Village President/Mayor for Trustee review and consent.

By my estimate, River Forest has maybe 10-15 positions to fill annually, but only a small number of residents volunteer. We don't need extra steps, term limits, or an elaborate screening process.

I estimate that half of regular openings result in reappointments of highly qualified volunteers. The Village Board should continue to affirm the appointment of experienced residents and reject arbitrary term limits.

When opportunities arise for newcomers, the process is straightforward. Speaking from experience, the process hasn't changed in 15 some odd years. One previously had to navigate multiple village websites to clarify the process, but the information was always available. What wasn't stated explicitly on the Village website was easily obtained from experienced neighbors. For me, my friend and former RF resident, Julie Moller, asked me to volunteer, and answered many of my questions.

I am horrified by the idea of our neighbors and their candidacies being publicly compared - a requirement under the Open Meetings Act if applications for voluntary Board and Commission vacancies are debated in trustee meetings.

I appreciate the time and effort you put into your Trustee Roles. Please continue to leverage processes that are tried and true, and own the decisions that you collectively make. The board and commission appointment process works just fine, and there is an appropriate amount of transparency.

Thank you for listening.

February 8, 2021

Hello my name is Laurie Gillard and I live at 227 Forest Ave. I have been a resident of River Forest for almost 24 years.

This past year I have been a member of the Deer Management Committee. I am happy to say we successfully created a community deer survey and we had over 1400 responses and literally hundreds of comments from our Village residents.

I would like to share my experience with the results of the deer survey. At the Dec 15th meeting, towards the end of the meeting Tom and some of the committee members were pushing for a vote to cull the deer. I was taken aback because we had not even discussed the survey in any detail so several of us spoke up. When I spoke up I said we had an obligation to our community to look at the comments before we voted on any action item. **(If the Village Trustees or anyone else would like to listen to this, it's at 1hour:40 minutes into the audio recording of the Dec 15th meeting)**. Between Dec 15th and Jan. 19th I reviewed the 802 survey comments and researched on the Cornell website (which had been provided to us as a deer management resource) and I created a draft deer management plan which included a more comprehensive view of what our committee might consider and I included comments from the survey for discussion. I submitted it to Sara for the Jan meeting.

The email with the agenda for the Jan meeting was sent out and the first thing on it was to vote for culling.

I emailed Sara and Tom and expressed my concern because we had not discussed anything else related to possible action items and I thought it was premature.

On Jan 19 the committee voted on to allow me to present my Community Deer Management Plan. It was a draft document but a good place to start. I was completely dismissed. In fact, I was accused of filibustering the meeting and completely shut down. **I encourage the Village Trustees to listen to the Jan 19th audio of the meeting, it's in the first half. You need to hear what has been going on.**

What I thought I was volunteering for was a community deer management committee. What I came to realize was the committee was created exclusively to justify culling deer for very specific individuals in River Forest. My input was not respect or valued at any time – I was there (along with the other non-cullers) to provide the appearance of a legitimate deer management committee so the other members who were clearly pro culling from the very first meeting and made up the majority of the committee, could “vote” for this one and only action item – to cull the deer. The whole culling thing was already set up by Tom before the committee was even created. This committee was a sham.

With that, I am resigning from the Deer Management Committee. It was been an eye opener for me to witness the “irregularities” in how this committee was created and how the members were selected. I seriously question the **ethical nature of our Village leadership that they would allow this sort of thing to occur.**

If anyone would like to discuss this in detail, please feel free to contact me.

I request that my comments be included in the minutes of this Board Meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement read by John grant in “Public Comment” section of board meeting 2/8/21

I would like to make public comments tonight on two issues, first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and second regarding advisory bodies.

Regarding the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (aka DEI) issue, my comments are as follows:

Erika Bachner is the Tom Brady of DEI. She embodies DEI. I 100% support Erika to be the trustee working as the co-leader of this committee. I hope that the committee is given more weight than a hired consultant, and that the committee work goes beyond the work of the hired consultant. I hope the reason for creating the committee will be front and center in the founding resolution documents, so that residents and others, including potential committee volunteers, can clearly understand the mission. I urge the board to move forward to review a draft resolution at the next meeting, and to vote at the March 8th meeting.

Regarding the issue of transparency and process in handling the committees, commissions, and boards that report to the village board, my comments are follows:

When I made my public comment at the board meeting on January 25, I concluded my comments by saying that “I call on the trustees and president take up this issue without delay.” Tonight, I would like to add further definition to my request, because, while quick action was taken in response to my comments, it was not the type of action I had hoped would come from raising the issue to the board as a whole. One week after I had made my public comments, I found out in a phone call with John Pape, the Assistant to the Village Administrator, that in the days following my public comments about advisory bodies, there were some communications between President Adduci and village staff about my comments, and subsequently village staff added several paragraphs of language regarding advisory bodies to the village web site.

So tonight I would like to further define my request. My hope is that the village president and trustees will take this issue up as a deliberative body in the public view, just like it is taking up diversity and equity, or deer management. I think the issue is important enough to merit research and consideration by village staff, the village board, and our residents. All parties can add value. As an example, I spoke with one resident in particular who has years of professional experience that would lend valuable insight on this issue. I hope that after researching this, the village board will then deliberate and take action, creating guidelines that prioritize transparency from start to finish, and creating prescribed processes that include robust requirements for reaching out to residents in order to fully utilize all of the talent that exists in the village.

Tonight I would like to submit some actionable suggestions that have come out of my conversations about this issue. I have spoken with clerks, elected officials, and attorneys in municipal law, and have created a list of ideas and suggestions that I hope the board would consider when they take up this issue.

Since my original comments were two weeks ago, tonight I hope to hear if board members have considered this issue and if they think it does deserve careful consideration and reform.

Finally, I would like to ask that the prepared statements that I have just read would be added to the record for this meeting, as well as my written suggestions that I will submit with them. I will email both to Sarah Pfeiffer following this meeting. Thank you very much.

Recommendations for RF VBOT advisory bodies from resident John Grant 2/8/2021

-compiled from conversations with municipal law attorneys, clerks, and elected officials in various Illinois municipalities as well as professionals in not-for-profit administration and oversight

Introduction:

Great things can be accomplished from simple, common sense ideas. I am proposing some common sense solutions which can then be developed by municipal law attorneys and professionals to create a guiding document, A DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION if you will, that will serve the people of River Forest by allowing for village board members to recruit engaged residents to be very productive on advisory bodies in an atmosphere of transparency and accountability and good faith, as well as efficiency and effectiveness.

1. Guiding principles:

My proposal relies on two simple ideas:

- power sharing / checks and balances
- transparency / accountability.

Power sharing: Trustees and the president must share power. This provides for checks and balances. All 7 board members (six trustees and the president) should have the ability to sponsor one candidate for consideration by the board. Whether one or several candidates are sponsored and brought forth, each board member may only vote for one. The candidate with the most votes is placed on the advisory body. If there is a tie, a run-off vote is immediately taken, and board members vote for their top choice of those who tied in the first vote.

Transparency with accountability: Open voting and full transparency is critical to voters having a voice, because voters can hold board members accountable for their actions in the sponsoring or voting processes. "Transparency" does not mean that voters need to see the personal data of volunteer candidates. Personal data on applications can be redacted/kept private. Applications can be kept confidential so that only board members see them. The public would see only a one-paragraph description written by candidates describing the professional or personal life experience or qualities that would be useful for a particular advisory body. The important part is not that voters know EVERYTHING about these volunteer candidates, but that voters know some relevant facts as described in the summary paragraph, and that voters can clearly and transparently see how board members handled the process. Volunteer candidates are not living in fear that they will not be selected, they only want the system to be fair and transparent. They want their village to be succeed. Residents can handle respectful open communication. What residents do not want, and what poisons the process, is a culture of unproductive chatter and suspicion that arises from a lack of transparency.

2. Sample schedule of the process for filling advisory body vacancies:

1. Robust outreach: ongoing vacancy reports are attached to the agenda/packet for all meetings, ongoing outreach to residents is made through the web site / village communications, and residents are always encouraged to apply, even when no vacancies exist, and all board members and all current advisory body members are encouraged to reach out to colleagues, friends, neighbors, or others to bring in new volunteer candidates
2. Notice of recruitment goes out when vacancies are upcoming, or terms are expiring
3. Applications come in to the village clerk for each specific vacancy. The clerk also reactivates applications which were received by the village at a time of no vacancies, as well as applications of existing members who wish to serve another term. The clerk opens a file and gives notice to board members regarding applicants in the file
4. Within a review period of at least 15 business days, board members may choose to sponsor a candidate from the file for a vacancy and notify the clerk of such sponsorship
5. Vacancy openings and sponsored candidates are placed on the board meeting agenda and board members vote at the meeting. There is no debate of the candidates, however sponsors may read the short description from the application of the candidate they are supporting. The focus is on the voting, not debating. The descriptions that

candidates initially provided as part of their application will speak (or not speak) for themselves. Board members have had access to information through the clerk for a sufficient prescribed time period, during which they have had time to ask questions of candidates or the clerk. As mentioned above, transparency is achieved not by the public seeing details about candidates, but by board members knowing of the pool of candidates and by the public seeing board members sponsoring and voting for candidates.

3. Volunteer application processing notes

- The application process should have a mechanism for determining if any conflicts of interest exist between the candidate and the business of the advisory body
- In an effort to verify that the candidate has interests that actually line up with the work of the advisory body (vs what candidates may imagine or assume is the work of the advisory body), applicants to committees should attend a meeting of the advisory body and speak with the chairperson of the body. Board members reviewing applications would have the ability to speak with the candidate or the chairperson about this meeting in order to gather information about whether the candidate is a good fit for the committee.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion principles should inform the process of crafting the ideal composition of the advisory body
- Any barriers to participation should be identified and mitigated. For example, Zoom or other remote cyber meetings, where possible, may allow residents, who cannot leave the house because there is a child at home and no child care substitute, to participate in a meeting.

4. Defining the mission and the makeup of the advisory bodies

- Clear charter/mission language for each advisory body will create an environment where members are enabled and supported to succeed, and where their work is appreciated because it is targeted and relevant
- A clear mission will also provide a clear mandate for the mix of individuals ideally sought for the body, considering professional or personal experience. Creativity should be used in developing this recommended composition: for example, a Development Review Board may be served well by a resident volunteer member who has lived through a development being built very near their home, etc.
- The missions/goals/action plans of each advisory body should be reviewed on an annual basis in order to keep work relevant and provide an environment where members feel their work is meaningful

5. Outreach

- Outreach to possible candidates should be continuous and multi-faceted, and specific requirements should be created for types and amounts of outreach, such as postings on the village web site, postings at village hall, village newsletters, emails, social media posts, etc.
- Communication/collaboration with other not-for-profit or volunteer groups in the community should be implemented and may create avenues for recruiting residents for advisory bodies

6. Trustee Liaison

- Each body could have a trustee liaison, but advisory body independence should be considered as well.

7. Drafting the ordinance/guidelines

- Bring together a small group of people who have intimate knowledge of how advisory bodies function and of municipal law to draft the rules for the system described in this document.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [VBOT](#)
Subject: VBOT Public Comment
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 5:41:12 PM

Hi,

I hope it's not too late to submit a letter. If not, here is my letter below. Thank you!

I am Jenny Kelly, a River Forest resident, who has seen firsthand how Erika Bachner has provided true leadership on the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, I would like her to be the designated leader for this work in our community.

I also want the Committee to consider recommendations from an outside consultant as I feel that is an important component. However, I think the perspective should encompass more than just the consultant, and should include Trustees' and residents' recommendations as well.

This is incredibly important and we need to do it right as a village. So without hesitation, I am confident that Erica would be the perfect individual to lead this work.

Thank you,
Jenny Kelly

River Forest Village President and Board of Trustees
400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL 60305

February 8, 2021

Good Evening, my name is Marta Kozbur, I reside at 1235 Monroe. I have been a resident of River Forest for almost 50 years.

I would like to voice my disappointment with our village leadership in their handling of the deer issue and the task force that was formed to make recommendations on how to move forward and help our community resolve their concerns regarding deer. As a member of this task force, I was chosen as an alternate for my husband because, somehow, he was deemed as an inappropriate choice. I serve on numerous boards and committees but I have never experienced the kind of rudeness and disrespect that the minority of us experienced during our meetings.

Any possibility of a conversation that represented all points of view was not to be had. I believe this task force was chosen with one goal in mind...a recommendation to cull the herd. It is my understanding that members of this task force were chosen solely by our village president. Certain members were encouraged to apply for this task force and it would appear that the majority of the members were chosen because they were pro-cull, making the end result a foregone conclusion. Members of the task force that wanted to engage in productive conversation, trying to discuss actual data, or lack of it, were shut down. Expressing opinions that might include alternate interventions to culling were not welcome. Members with dissenting opinions were yelled at, spoken to in a condescending manner and, in essence bullied by those who felt their opinion was the only one that needed to be considered. Discussions of obtaining data and using results of the survey, which by the way did not support culling the herd, were dismissed. Discussions on educating the community about deer were kept to a minimum.

It was my hope that when this task force was formed, it would be a true representation of our community. Sadly it was not. As leaders of our village it is up to you, the president and the trustees, to hear all voices, not just the ones that you want to hear, while suppressing others. As responsible members of the deer task force who felt they were accountable to the residents of this village, it was our hope to bring forth a recommendation based on real data with suggestions on how to educate our community. We believed this should have been a first step before deciding to cull the herd and spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on something that ultimately may not be necessary.

With this letter, based on the above, I am submitting my resignation from this task force effective immediately. I welcome any questions you might have. I will email my letter to the board of trustees to be included in the record and the minutes of this meeting.

Sincerely,

Marta Kozbur
1235 Monroe Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305

My name is Ingrid Liu. I live at 931 Thatcher which is directly across from Thatcher Woods. I have lived at this address since 2001. My 2 now teenage daughters have never had another address. When they were young and curious, my biggest concern was that one of them would run into the busy street. As years went by, the mosquitos became the biggest nuisance and health concern. Living across from the woods has been a wonderful influence on them, even though they now prefer to sit on computers and play video games. I have never once felt the deer to be a danger or even considered that the population needed controlling. However, I acknowledged that my opinion and experience alone is not the same as my neighbors. I volunteered to serve on the deer committee to work constructively with fellow community members, to create a plan that may or may not include culling the deer. Instead, I have found meetings to be dominated with opinion rather than fact. As a physician, I have to base advice on evidence and not opinion. It became apparent that the committee was formed with only one goal in mind, and that was to recommend to cull. I have yet to hear any objective evidence to support culling. Just having people say their property is being damaged or that they see more deer than before is not enough evidence. In the survey of the community, more than half that responded indicated they are not in favor of culling. The committee spent many hours developing the survey, and to simply discount the results is insulting.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate, but because I do not feel that the committee will be submitting an appropriate recommendation to the Board of Trustees, I respectfully resign my position as a member of the deer committee. I welcome any questions or dialogue with any of the trustees. I will communicate my intentions in an email as well.

Thank you,

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Sara Phyfer](#)
Subject: public comment
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 10:59:44 PM

Hello Sara, I would like to submit my comment to be added to the meeting minutes.
Thank you

Hello, my name is Annette Madden, I have lived at [14 Ashland Ave.](#) for the past 25 years.

I applied to be a member of the deer committee after attending the January 2020 village board meeting. I had no prior knowledge of the deer issues in our village before this meeting. When I applied to become a member of the deer committee I did so with an open heart and no predetermined agenda. My only desire was to be an asset to the committee and to our community. Unfortunately, the majority of the committee and Trustee Cargie joined with a one track solution. It was to cull the deer and nothing else. Much of this has been said by Katharine Christmas at the last Village Board meeting. I would refer you to her comments and I am declaring that I am in full agreement with her statements. Because of these issues I am resigning from the Committee on Deer Management. I am doing this to free myself from a burdensome, negative experience and a broken process. I have found some wonderful, thoughtful, intelligent committee members that I will work with as a resident and I plan to prepare a recommendation for you that will move our village one step closer to a well-considered deer management plan.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

How many times have we heard the phrase It Takes A Village? In the case of River Forest, it's true. River Forest is a well-run village and our success is due to the great people who serve and support here. We're small at roughly 2.5 sq miles and a population of about 11,000 or 1/5 the number in Oak Park! We don't have the large pool of residents interested in serving in governmental roles as other communities may have.

We're fortunate to have President Cathy Adduci, a smart, astute and caring leader who serves without pay, and our dedicated Board of 6 Trustees that also serve without pay. In advisory roles, we have several Boards and Commissions, with residents who Volunteer their time, that means without pay. The members do a great job, and their positive contributions shouldn't be overlooked. With our small population, we're very lucky to have the level of interest and talent in those who wish to serve.

I'm currently a member of our Historic Preservation Commission, after attending several regular meetings and hearings. The commissioners have served anywhere from many years to just a few. All are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and dependable. Over the years I've attended many other governmental meetings and hearings to understand how our village functions and at times to make my voice heard. Those members approach their responsibilities the same way.

It helps to first go to the website tab: Boards and Commissions to see what River Forest has. The main page features an address by President Adduci, twice providing the link to a Volunteer Application to serve on a Board or Commission. Click a Board or Commission on the Menu to the right for description, members and meetings and again – a link to the Volunteer Application. Interested parties submit an application to the President's office checking off commissions of interest. Application review is done by the President. By Ordinance, the President is given the power to make the Board/Commission appointments. At the Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees approve or reject the President's appointments.

I didn't have to search far to discover our process to approve Volunteer Board or Commission members is general standard practice, in Maywood, Forest Park, Elmwood Park, Elmhurst to name a few. It works in our communities. Switching to Oak Park's model would merely add more process steps, costing us more time and money without reward. Let's not try to fix what's not broken.

I believe the Board of Trustees will continue to focus on policies and practices; our Volunteer Boards and Commissions will continue to advise our Board of Trustees effectively. With the strong leadership of President Cathy Adduci making sure everything stays on track, River Forest will continue to be a well-run village. It always takes a village

From: [REDACTED]
To: [VBOT](#)
Subject: VBOT Public Comment - in support of Erika Bachner
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 2:10:53 PM

Hello, I am River Forest resident, Anna Sterk, and have witnessed how Erika Bachner has provided strong leadership on the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Given her deep understanding, hard work, and dedication to these issues, I would like her to be the designated leader for village efforts on these matters. I also hope that the village will facilitate involvement from residents and trustees rather than hire an outside consultant. Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [VBOI](#)
Subject: support for Erika Bachner
Date: Monday, February 8, 2021 3:50:23 PM

Good evening! I am Beth Vlerick, resident of River Forest, and I have another meeting to attend tonight so can't make the Trustee Zoom but want to say that I think Erika Bachner has provided strong leadership on the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion during her time so far as a Village Trustee. I would like to see her designated as the leader for the work on this issue rather than the Village hiring a consultant. I think having a resident of the village facilitating participation from residents and trustees on this topic is the most fruitful way to spread information and promote change.

Sincerely,
Beth Vlerick