



RIVER FOREST DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING AGENDA

A meeting of the River Forest Development Review Board will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 7:30 P.M. in First Floor Community Room of the Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

Physical attendance may be limited with Development Review Board officials, staff and consultants having priority over members of the public. Public comments and any responses will be read into the public meeting record. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Matt Walsh at mwalsh@vrf.us. You may view or listen to the meeting by participating online or via telephone. Join the meeting at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88284719344> or call (312) 626-6799 and use meeting ID 882 8471 9344

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call
- II. Minutes of the April 3, 2025 Development Review Board Meeting
- III. Approval of the Findings of Fact for Application #25-0009, Constitution Park
- IV. Public Comment
- V. Adjournment

ADA Compliance: Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the Village at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting in person at Village Hall by telephone at 708.366.8500 or by email: mwalsh@vrf.us. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation.

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2025**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Development Review Board was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2025, in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. Call to order

Chairman Crosby called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Crosby, Members Fishman, Martin, McCole, Shoemaker, Yanaki, and Davis
Absent: None
Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Administrator Jessica Spencer, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

II. Minutes of the November 7, 2024, Development Review Board Meeting

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Chairman Shoemaker to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2024, DRB Meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed. Member Davis abstained since she didn't attend the meeting.

III. Application #25-009: Application to make improvements to Constitution Park including reconfiguring the playground, sand volleyball court/ice rink, and ballfield; and adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms, and a sitting plaza.

Chairman Crosby opened the public hearing. Assistant Administrator Spencer swore in those who wished to testify.

Mike Sletten, Park District Executive Director and Dennis Healy, Park District Treasurer, presented the application.

Member Fishman asked why the playground equipment was proposed to be moved if it required the removal of trees.

Member McCole asked about the nature of the accessibility of the playground. Director Sletten said that the standard set by the Park Board was 70% and this equipment is over 90% accessible.

Member McCole asked about the completion date of December 31, 2025. Director Sletten said that substantial completion would be during the warmer months and there might be some final pieces that need to be done later.

Member Davis asked about the shade that is anticipated on the playground equipment. Director Sletten responded that there will be shade structures installed.

Member Davis asked if there could be a sandpit included in this design, and if the climbing structure might be reconsidered as something that currently exists at Willard Elementary School. Director Sletten said that the equipment has been discussed by the public already and selected.

Member Davis asked if there would be swings for older children at the park. Director Sletten said that there was another apparatus proposed, such as a tube swing.

Member Davis asked what was going to happen to the existing equipment. Director Sletten said it will be donated to another park district.

Member Yanaki asked about the alignment of the baseball and soccer fields in the new layout. Director Sletten described the layouts.

Member Yanaki asked about the alternative play space for baseball and soccer players. Director Sletten said that baseball teams have made other arrangements for the season and the soccer field has not been scheduled for this season.

Member Yanaki asked about storage space in the shelter. Director Sletten responded that it will be storage for the Park District's operations, not for the storage of sports equipment.

Member McCole asked about the dates of accessibility of the bathrooms. Director Sletten responded the bathrooms would be open during regular hours of operation: April 1 – October 1, 7am through sunset.

Member Martin asked about the schedule lights on the volleyball court. Director Sletten responded that the schedule is primary for the ice rink, so they typically turn on at 4pm and turn off at 9pm in the cold months. If the volleyball court was using it, the lights would be used only for specific games that run past sunset; a site supervisor would activate them.

Member Martin asked where the light poles would be located. Director Sletten indicated their location on the maps provided in the packet.

Member Martin asked whether the shelter was intended to allow parents to supervise children on the playground, noting that this would be difficult because of the limited line of sight. Director Sletten noted that there will be benches around the playground.

Member McCole noted that it might make more sense for the bathrooms to be on the south end of the structure, so the parents could sit in the shelter and observe the playing children. Director Sletten responded that the idea was to place the bathrooms on the north end of the shelter to allow visibility of the restroom doors from the playground.

Member Martin asked about the funding of this project. Director Sletten said that the Park District had budgeted for the project and that money was on hand.

Member Shoemaker asked about the lights around the baseball field. Director Sletten confirmed that there are no lights proposed to go around the baseball field at this time.

Chairman Crosby said that the signage on the northwest corner of the park and that this material is not the same as proposed for the shelter. Director Sletten confirmed that it will be a different material.

Chairman Crosby asked if the canopies on the playground will be permanent. Director Sletten said they would be removed for the winter months.

Chairman Crosby asked if there would be a temporary fence structure for the baseball field outfield. Director Sletten said that wasn't his plan, however if the baseball teams did it would be their decision.

Member McCole suggested that the bathroom doors should be located on the south side. Director Sletten said that most parents and children would be on the playground, not under the shelter. He pointed out the locations for the benches on the drawings.

Chairman Crosby opened the hearing to allow for public comment.

Member Davis believes that District 90 plans to construct fencing on the south border of the Park property; Director Sletten confirmed that he was aware of those plans.

Member Yanaki asked if District 90 was responsible for any costs. Director Sletten said no.

Chairman Crosby shared that he is concerned about the appearance and materials of the shelter. He hoped that it would match the stone in other objects like the monument sign. He noted that he also liked the idea of flipping the bathroom location.

Chairman Crosby invited Administrator Walsh to discuss the Village's review.

Administrator Walsh discussed the memos that were provided in the packet. He mentioned that the Police Department had expressed a concern regarding cameras on the site, and the security of the bathrooms for visitors. Public Works, he stated, had no concerns regarding the drainage or utilities on the site at this time, as those points are usually addressed during the plan reviews. The Fire Department requested an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in the event of emergencies. Administrator Walsh reviewed the land use of the site, including the 5 site development allowances that are being requested.

Chairman Crosby asked about the security camera as noted by the Police Department. Director Sletten confirmed that they are shopping for camera systems in consultation with the Police Department.

Chairman Crosby asked about the AED. Director Sletten said they typically don't put them in the parks, but they are looking into it.

Member Shoemaker asked if there were any cameras at Keystone Park. Director Sletten responded yes.

Member Fishman asked about the location of the AED now. Director Sletten confirmed that it is not accessible to the public unless there is staff on site at that time.

Member Martin asked when staff would be at this site. Director Sletten said only when there is programming taking place, which varies.

Member McCole noted that there is a clear line of sight for the bathrooms should they be moved to the south end of the structure. She asked if there would be consideration to move them. Director Sletten said that the plans are set at this time.

Member Davis asked if feedback was provided from residents who live immediately adjacent to the property. Director Sletten said there were 4 public meetings conducted on this topic.

Hearing no additional questions, Chairman Crosby closed the public hearing.

Chairman Crosby asked for feedback from the Members.

Member McCole said that overall, she liked the design of the proposal. She asked how many people play volleyball. Member Davis said she believed there might be organized teams or a league in the summer. Director Sletten responded that there are 2 seasons of volleyball league that operate, in the spring and summer.

Member McCole asked the purpose of the fence around the ice rink. Director Sletten said it was to keep visitors off the liner while the ice is hardening. Discussion ensued regarding the frequency of users on the sand volleyball courts.

Member Martin stated that he would make the motion to allow all the 5 site development allowances that have been explained by Administrator Walsh and should also recognize the recommendations by the Village bodies, specifically conditioned on the installation of security cameras and rule signage. Member Martin also proposed including the condition of the installation of the AED, installed on the exterior of the structure. He also suggested to include the Park reconsider the orientation of the structure and the materials of the structure.

Member Davis asked about the cost for the AED and do other parks have it accessible. Director Sletten said he believed this device might be cost prohibitive. Discussion ensued regarding the AED costs and security of this type of device.

Member Martin asked about landscaping plans; Assistant Administrator Spencer noted that it is a condition of the building permit process already.

Chairman Crosby asked about the location of the bathrooms.

Member McCole said she liked the point made by the Chairman about the building materials. Chairman Crosby proposed the Park reconsider the position of the structure for consideration of the Board. Administrator Walsh noted that input had already been considered by the public by the Park District Board and cautioned the DRB from suggesting substantive changes to the design.

Attorney Skrodzki affirmed Administrator Walsh, noting the authority of this Board in relation to the applicants.

Chairman Crosby asked the applicant to reconsider the use of materials for the structure.

Member Martin asked Attorney Skrodzki to clarify if this Board is able to question the architectural design. Attorney Skrodzki said that aesthetic aspects are different than architectural features and in terms of 'design', there is deference to the other taxing body. Discussion ensued regarding the Village's authority over developers verses other taxing bodies.

Member Martin made a motion, seconded by Member Davis, to recommend that the Village Board approve the application, granting all five (5) site development allowances, conditioned upon the installation of security cameras, proper signage, and an AED on the exterior of the structure. The motion also requests that the applicant reconsider the orientation and materials of the structure.

Member Yanaki asked if there should be a recommendation to reconsider instead of a condition for the AED. Attorney Skrodzki confirmed the terms of the motion.

Member Fishman asked if the Fire Department was aware of the access to the AED as presented this evening. Chairman Crosby read the recommendation by the Fire Department noted in the memo. Member Fishman responded that she was concerned about the location and access to the public as currently described.

Member Martin confirmed his motion is to make the AED accessible to the public. Discussion ensued regarding the access and intended use of an AED. Member Martin reminded the group that this is a recommendation to the Village Board.

Ayes: Chairman Crosby, Members Fishman, Martin, McCole, Shoemaker, Yanaki, and Davis

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

IV. Public Comment

There was none.

V. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Member Davis and SECONDED by Member McCole to adjourn the April 3, 2025, meeting of the Development Review Board at 8:43 p.m.

By a voice vote, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Spencer, Secretary

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST**

April 17, 2025

RE: **Application # 25-0009, Application for improvements – Constitution Park – 7715 Greenfield Street, River Forest, Illinois**

PETITIONER: **River Forest Park District**

APPLICATION: **Application to make improvements to Constitution Park including reconfiguring the playground, sand volleyball courts/ice rink, and ballfield; and adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms and a sitting plaza. (“Property”)**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: On April 29, 2024, the Petitioner submitted an application to the Village of River Forest for improvements to the for the Property, (the “Application”). The Application requests permission to reconfigure the playground, sand volleyball courts/ice rink, and ballfield, as well as adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms and a sitting plaza on the Property. The Application was received and processed by Village staff in accordance with the Village of River Forest Village Code.

BACKGROUND: Petitioner is an Illinois park district. The Property is Petitioner’s Constitution Park. Petitioner has operated a park on the Property for many years.

The Property is located within the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning District. The Property is surrounded by residential uses on the north, west, and east sides, and Willard Elementary School (District 90) to the south.

APPLICATION: The Applicant seeks the following five (5) site development allowances under the Village of River Forest Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”):

	Zoning Ordinance	Proposed	SDA Requested
Franklin Ave (West) - Dugout Fencing	50 feet	15.1 feet	34.9 feet
Greenfield Ave (North) – Playground Equipment	50 feet	17 feet	33 feet
Ashland Ave (East) – Garbage Can & Bike Rack	50 feet	15.8 feet	34.2 feet
Willard Elem (South) – Dugout Fencing	25 feet	15.1 feet	9.9 feet
Off Street Parking	49 spaces	0 spaces	49 spaces

PUBLIC HEARING: At the public hearing before the Development Review Board (“DRB”) held on April 3, 2025 (“Hearing”), representatives of Petitioner presented the Application. At the duly and properly noticed Hearing, testimony was taken and heard by the DRB on the Application. All persons testifying during the Hearing were sworn prior to giving testimony. All persons wishing to be heard were allowed to engage in cross-examination of the witnesses and provide testimony on their own behalf.

Following a presentation by Petitioner, reports by various Village staff, and public comment from all who wished to speak, if any, the Development Review Board (“DRB”) voted, 7 to 0, to

recommend approval of the Application to the Village President and Board of Trustees, with the conditions set forth below (together the “Conditions”).

FINDINGS: The DRB, based upon the evidence presented at the Hearing, and pursuant to Section 10-19-3 of the Village Code, makes the following Findings regarding the Application:

A. The proposed use or combination of uses is consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

The Property is located in the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning District. Overall, the Project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the DRB finds that the construction of the Project will meet the Comprehensive Plan’s desire that the Petitioner provide high quality recreational opportunities for the community and maintain high quality recreational facilities in the Village. The Project is also appropriate under the Comprehensive Plan because it is anticipated that it will not have a negative impact on the residential neighborhood in which the Property is located. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

B. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use or combination of uses will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of the residents of the Village.

Testimony at the Hearing from the Petitioner and Village staff demonstrated that the Project would not result in any condition that would be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of residents in the Village, so long as the Conditions are met. The DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

C. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses which are permitted by this zoning title.

The testimony showed that the Project will not diminish the use or enjoyment of properties in its vicinity, as the Project is set back from adjacent properties. No evidence was presented to the contrary. For these reasons, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

D. The establishment of the proposed use or combination of uses will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses or combination of uses otherwise permitted in the zoning district.

The proposed improvements in the Application are consistent with other improvements and uses in the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning, including other parks operated by the Petitioner. The Project would not impede the adjacent residential uses and would enhance recreational opportunities for Village residents. The surrounding neighborhood has been fully developed for a number of years. Based on this evidence, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

E. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish property values in the vicinity.

Evidence presented by the Petitioner suggested that there would be no diminishment of property values in the vicinity of the Project, and no testimony or evidence to the contrary was presented

to the DRB. For this reason, and for the additional reasons stated above in Standard C., the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

F. Adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire service and other necessary facilities already exist or will be provided to serve the proposed use or combination of uses.

There are adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire services, and other Village services, to serve the improvements set forth in the Application. No evidence was presented suggesting or establishing that the Project would be hampered by a lack of utilities, road access, drainage, police or fire services. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

G. Adequate measures already exist or will be taken to provide ingress and egress to the proposed use or combination of uses in a manner that minimizes traffic congestion in the public streets.

Given the nature of the proposed use, no material traffic impacts are expected due to the Project. The Application does not propose any changes to ingress or egress to and from, or parking on, the Property. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

H. The proposed use or combination of uses will be consistent with the character of the Village.

The Project is consistent with the character of the Village, the Petitioner's long term use of the Property and the Village's desire for improvements and investment in community institutions. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

I. Development of the proposed use or combination of uses will not materially affect a known historical or cultural resource.

There are no historic or cultural resources affected by the Project. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

J. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses considers the relationship of the proposed use or combination of uses to the surrounding area and minimizes adverse effects, including visual impacts of the proposed use or combination of uses on adjacent property.

The Project is a use that is compatible with the existing recreational uses of the Property. The use will allow for enhanced recreational activities, including volleyball and baseball. The design of the Project is complimentary to the other uses on the Property and to the surrounding area as a whole, so long as the Conditions are met. There was no evidence or testimony presented suggesting that adverse effects would result if the Project was built and put into use. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

K. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses promotes a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment and individuals with disabilities.

The pedestrian environment would be enhanced by the addition of the Project. No testimony was presented at the Hearing demonstrating that there was any risk to pedestrians based upon the

improvements requested for approval in the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

- L. The applicant has the financial and technical capacity to complete the proposed use or combination of uses and has made adequate provisions to guarantee the development of any buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the proposed use or combination of uses.**

Evidence presented in the Application demonstrates Petitioner's financial and technical ability to complete the Project. There are no apparent adverse impacts on buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

- M. The proposed use or combination of uses is economically viable and does not pose a current or potential burden upon the services, tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village, except to the extent that such burden is balanced by the benefit derived by the Village from the proposed use.**

Petitioner has produced evidence that the construction and operation of the Project are economically viable. The DRB finds that there is no evidence the proposed use would increase the burden on Village services, the Village's tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

- N. The application meets the additional standards for multi-family housing in Section 10-19-3(O) of the Zoning Ordinance, except to the extent site development allowances have been granted.**

Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds this standard to be inapplicable to the Application.

CONDITIONS: The DRB's recommendation that the Application be approved is subject to the following Conditions:

1. The Project shall be built in substantial conformity with the Application and approved plans.
2. The Property shall contain the security cameras and rule signage to be posted, as recommended by the Police Department.
3. The Property shall provide an AED installed in a space that is accessible on the exterior of the shelter.
4. The Project shall comply with the landscaping requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The Applicant shall consider the possibility of reconfiguring the bathroom plaza and/or upgrading the building materials

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the foregoing Findings, the DRB, by a vote of 7 to 0, recommends to the President and Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Application, including the SDAs, so long as the Conditions are met.

Signed: _____

David Crosby, Chairman
Development Review Board
Village of River Forest

Dated: _____