

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

April 2, 2025

A special meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Meeting started by calling roll. Upon roll call, the following people were:

Present: Commissioners Carr Preston, Tim Brangle, Laura Maychruk, Dorota Szerszenowicz, and Raj Chiplunkar

Via Zoom: Chairman Cuyler Brown

Absent: None

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer and Executive Director Marion-Burton of the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chiplunkar and seconded by Commissioner Maychruk to allow Chairman Brown to attend via Zoom.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 5, 2025

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chiplunkar and seconded by Commissioner Preston to approve the minutes from March 5, 2025. By a voice vote, the motion passed.

**4. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY
RETENTION/SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION**

Executive Director Marion-Burton provided an update on the planning for the Memorial Day Business Fair following the Parade on May 26. Business registrations should be open in the next few days.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked how many businesses are expected to participate, and how many sponsors. Director Marion-Burton responded that he hoped for 20 businesses to register for the parade and the business fair, and the goal is \$2,500 in sponsorship.

Commissioner Maychruk asked if details were public yet. He responded that the registrations will be public soon.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked if there was intention to focus on River Forest and Oak Park businesses? Director Marion-Burton responded that preference for placement in the business bash is for veteran businesses, then River Forest, then Oak Park, then other entities.

Commissioner Maychruk asked about methods of direct contact to businesses. Director Marion-Burton said that someone in his office will be contacting businesses in the Chamber. Commissioner Maychruk offered to make calls, if needed. Director Marion-Burton appreciated the offer and stated that he has enough capacity to handle it now.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked why there was a limit to 20 participating businesses. Assistant Administrator Spencer responded that 20-30 was initially the goal, however space for the businesses remains a concern.

Chairman Brown agreed this sounds awesome and he is excited to see how this comes together.

Director Marion-Burton said he is thrilled to do something in River Forest.

5. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Assistant Administrator Spencer announced that First Watch has successfully applied for a business license and demolition will begin soon. Discussion ensued regarding the type of business First Watch is, and how many locations are currently open. Commissioner Szerszenowicz confirmed there are currently 6 locations in the Chicagoland area.

Assistant Administrator Spencer reminded the Commission that the Active Business list is available on the website for public consumption.

Chairman Brown noted that Chairman Pro-Tem Preston had an interesting point how First Watch found the Village. He inquired how the business came to choose River Forest, and if the Village could learn more about that process. Assistant Administrator Spencer said she would try to learn more.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked if the business registration is inclusive of all businesses in the Village. Assistant Administrator Spencer said that the belief is that this list is exhaustive of those in the Village, based on self-reporting. She further explained how staff becomes aware of the businesses as they move or open in the Village.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked if there had been campaigns to advertise directly to businesses; Chairman Brown responded that the barriers in the past had been difficulty in assembling the

contacts in order to email them; Assistant Administrator Spencer responded that our system now allows those emails to be compiled easily.

Assistant Administrator Spencer talked about the vacant properties and the Village's role in with filling them.

Commissioner Chiplunkar suggested allowing the property owners to provide the address to the Village and publish the list in the newsletter, or something. He imagines a secure self-reporting list that can be updated by the owner but would be accessible for viewing by the public. Assistant Administrator Spencer said that she can talk to a software company that the Village currently works with to see if this is reasonable.

Discussion ensued regarding the best methods for marketing the properties that are vacant.

Chairman Brown expressed his appreciation for this discussion and how it remains on the forefront of the Commissions' mind.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Assistant Administrator Spencer announced the May 10th Casual Conversation about Economic Development.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked about next steps with JLL. Assistant Administrator Spencer explained that JLL is developing the offering memorandum which will be published in the coming weeks. Shortly thereafter, the window to bid will be made known, and JLL will report to the Village how many viable projects are available.

Chairman Pro-Tem Preston asked about an update on the Lake & Lathrop property. Assistant Administrator Spencer explained that the Village had previously filed a motion to demolish the structures on the existing site. The owner filed a motion to dismiss the Village's motion. In the past week, the Village filed another motion, insisting on the demolition. There are a few upcoming court dates, so the Village hopes to have another update in May.

Commissioner Maychruk talked to Rita at Elon and asked about the landscaping along Lake Street. Assistant Administrator Spencer said she would follow up with Public Works and reach out to Rita.


Commissioner Szerszenowicz suggested working with local OPRF students who might be interested in starting a landscaping company and seeing if the Village can hire them instead. Chairman Brown agreed.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Chiplunkar and seconded by Chairman Pro-Tem Preston to adjourn the meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 7:10 p.m.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jessica Assistant Administrator Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator

Date: 5/7/25

Cuyler Brown, Chairman Economic Development Commission