

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, May 24, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, May 24, 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 7:05p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O’Connell, Vazquez, Village Clerk Jonathan Keller

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, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann, Public Works Director John Anderson, Village Engineer Jeff Loster, Village Attorney Greg Smith

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Megan Keskitalo, 8125 Lake St. Ms. Keskitalo wanted to comment on Item 5D, the proposed railway merger between Canadian National & Kansas City Southern Railway. She appreciated the Board for being proactive about the resolution and its timeliness. She urged community outreach and a communication campaign, and she expressed that the community has been startled by a potential change by railroad. She expressed concern about increased train usage as the Canadian National tracks are presently used for recreation. She expressed concern about safety as there are awkward intersections with no warnings and stated the increase in noise will startle residents near the tracks. She stated a key is communication early on and having time to organize and address the potential issues. Ms. Keskitalo stated that if the merger does come to pass, she would encourage the Village to seek grants for funding signals, and to engage with schools regarding National Rail Safety Week and Operation Life Saver. She encouraged communication with residents and thanked the board for being proactive on this issue and allowing residents close to the tracks to organize.

President Adduci stated she agreed that the Village needed to stay in front of this. She asked Ms. Scheiner and Mr. Smith to stay on top of this and get the residents involved.

John Grant, 923 Thatcher. Mr. Grant voiced his support the the LGBTQ+ Pride Month Resolution. He also commented about the advisory body appointment process. He stressed that his comments about the Village Board's handling of advisory bodies are about flaws with the system, not with the people. He noted there is support from the community for reform and stated it was unclear to him what the June 2 meeting will result in. He urged the board to be very clear about its intentions with this topic. He urged the Board to create an ordinance that sets out clear and detailed policies and procedures. He noted he would submit his suggested plan of action to the Board.

President Adduci stated the intent is to come up with a policy and document to put on website and share with residents.

Phyllis Rubin, 411 Ashland. Ms. Rubin thanked the Village for emails regarding Board meetings. She spoke about the Lake and Lathrop project and stated she was looking forward to the vertical construction in August. She commented about the lack of an update on the Village website and asked whether there was a change to the number of units sold, and whether any distant family are part of the sales totals. She also expressed concern about the gases emitting from the ground and the barrier and venting. She asked whether the zoning permits are complete or in process. She asked how many extensions to complete the project have been or will be granted. She also asked if the current inflated prices of building materials will affect past and future sales. She also expressed concern about noise and construction start times.

President Adduci commented that the website would be updated.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner started with a Land Acknowledgment statement 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 stated that it felt like the first day of school and that it is wonderful to be in person. She congratulated Roosevelt band and orchestra for their first place rating at the Trails & Thrills Music Festival and thanked the teachers for their commitment. She stated she was able to volunteer at Roosevelt School for COVID vaccinations for kids 12+, and noted that over 160 kids were vaccinated that day. She noted the second shot is planned for early June.

Trustee Gillis stated she has been getting ready to transition the Sustainability Chair role to Eric Simon. She wished everyone a happy Memorial Day weekend. She shared that the holiday is in recognition of veterans who died during war and was originally known as Decoration Day, becoming an official federal holiday in 1971. She asked that residents keep the intent of the holiday in mind.

Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a safe and healthy Memorial Day weekend and wanted to thank those who served and are currently serving the Country. He recognized Pride Month and the LGBTQ+ community and stated he will support the resolution.

Village Clerk Keller stated he is grateful to be at the meeting and looking forward to serving the community.

Trustee Brennan stated that earlier this month she attended the Diversity Task Force with Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. She noted that this meeting identified 175 municipalities that have set groups working on DEI issues, but that only communities that have something on their website were counted. She stated six of those municipalities spoke and gave information on their work, noting she felt that this resource will help the Village's group. She stated MMC is going to continue research and discussion on this topic, and that they now have a tab on their website with information about structures. She also mentioned that a friend in a multi-unit building informed her that the residents there are sharing curbside composting and really enjoying it. She informed residents on how to go to the Village website and figure out how to do the same for other multi-unit buildings by putting in a service request.

Trustee Johnson welcomed everyone. He wished everyone a happy upcoming holiday, and he encouraged everyone to read about block parties on the Village website. He stated he is looking forward to serving on the DEI Committee.

Trustee O'Connell announced that there won't be a Memorial Day Parade this year, but that the Park District will be hosting a Memorial Day ceremony at 10am at Memorial Parkway. He reported that he toured the Sheridan with President Adduci, EDC Chairperson Lee Neubecker, and EDC Commissioner Bob Graham. He stated it is a first class operation and that ten residents are in place and most have children in River Forest, which coincides with the Village's Aging-in-Place initiative. He wished them great success.

President Adduci also reminded everyone about the Memorial Day ceremony dedicated to those who have served the Country, noting the are names listed on the Village's website. She echoed Trustee O'Connell's statements that the Sheridan is first class and are here to help the community in any way. She stated that many residents are from the Village, and that it reinforces the need to find suitable housing for those aging-in-place in River Forest to stay in the community. She also announced the proposed summer schedule for Board meetings will be June 28, July 12, August 9. She stated that for those who cannot make those meetings in person, Zoom and the call-in option will be in place.

a. A Resolution Designating the Month of June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month – Resolution

Trustee Bachner made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve a Resolution Designating the Month of June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month.

Trustee Bachner read the resolution aloud.

Trustee Brennan stated Pride Month is in part to commemorate the Stonewall Uprising and reviewed the history of this event. She stated that on the 50th anniversary, the NYPD Police Commissioner apologized for the events. She stated raising the flag at Village Hall is about respect and inclusiveness and acknowledging our society has not always acted in a respectful

or inclusive way. She stated she received a resident letter expressing negativity for raising the flag for religious reasons, which also asked the Trustees to vote the resolution down. She stated that raising the rainbow flag is not a religious statement, noting it is about hope and represents a commitment to all people. She stated that is why she supports the resolution.

Trustee Bachner thanked Trustee Brennan for bringing up the Stonewall Uprising and stated that we forget that those people at Stonewall were black, brown, and trans. She stated visibility and representation matter, and being able to show support to the LGBTQ+ community is so important. She shared that as someone who identifies as bisexual, for decades she was not comfortable saying it in public. She stated her child identifies as non-binary, and stated it was their courage in speaking out for the rights of the LGBTQ+ community that gave her courage. She stated she hoped that those in our community will be loved and accepted.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Special Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2021
- b. Village Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2021
- c. Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System Located at 1436 Bonnie Brae
- d. Surface Transportation Board Review of Proposed Merger of Canadian National Railway and Kansas City Southern Railway – Resolution
- e. Monthly Department Reports
- f. Performance Measurement Report
- g. Village Administrator's Report

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan, to approve the Consent Agenda items A, C-G.

President Adduci stated she knows Clerk Keller is taking over the minutes and expressed appreciation, noting she had no changes.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Trustee Johnson made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve the Consent Agenda item B.

Trustee O'Connell stated that at meeting he said he convinced Kathleen Brand-White to run for clerk but that it was actually President Adduci.

President Adduci stated her speech was mostly about the future and felt it could have been captured more in the minutes.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals – Setback Variations for a Second Story Addition and Attached Garage at 1018 Park Avenue – Ordinance

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to approve an Ordinance Granting the Requested Variations at 1018 Park Avenue.

Ms. Scheiner reviewed this item. She stated when a zoning variation is before the Board, every case is unique and should be considered on its own merits. She stated the ZBA voted 3-2 in favor, but that four yes votes are required for passing. She stated that in order to approve the variance request, four Trustee votes are required and the Village President cannot vote. She noted that application materials and the ZBA meeting minutes are in the Board packet and nothing new is being presented now. She asked the Board to keep in mind how the Zoning Ordinance lays out standards and how "Hardship" is defined.

She reviewed the request, stating that the homeowner is asking for a variance on a side yard setback and to build a two car garage that encroaches on their neighbor's property. The variation is 1'3" from the side yard setback requirement and 5'10" from the combined side yard set back. She also stated it was difficult for homeowner to construct in the rear of the property due to flooding.

Petitioner Greg Palivos, 1018 Park. Mr. Palivos stated he is making this appearance on behalf of his wife and family. He noted his wife's long ties to the community, and he stated they are making this request to build a garage and more living space to make this their forever home.

The property owner's architect Jon Hague introduced the application. Mr. Hague stated they are proposing a two-story addition with an attached garage, in the south side of the property. He stated the rear yard retains water and reviewed the applicant's responses to the variation

standards. He noted the real living conditions of the property as it exists. He discussed the increase in impervious surface based on the placement of the garage. He also noted they have support from the neighbors to the south and north.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Mr. Hague stated what is proposed is a standard garage in regards to size.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Mr. Hague responded to why building in the backyard would disperse flooding to neighbors, and that a one car garage could be constructed but not adequate for this family's needs.

Trustee Vazquez also thanked the staff for putting together a document that outlined how the ZBA evaluated the variance request. He asked how the ZBA meeting went in regards to individual votes on each of the variance issues. He did comment that based on what he had seen in the document, he would be voting yes on the variance.

Trustee Brennan stated the neighbor to the south would be the one impacted. She asked if that neighbor is the relative.

Mr. Hague stated yes, that the neighbor to the south is the homeowner's grandmother.

Trustee O'Connell asked about building in the backyard and how the present flooding situation may be impacted. Mr. Hague noted that proper grading would be needed and that a civil engineer will be working with them to mitigate this.

President Adduci asked Mr. Hague if they would be coming back to the Village in the future with concerns about the flooding. Mr. Hague replied "no".

Trustee Brennan stated she is struggling between hardship and inconvenience. She stated when she looks at all eight of the standards that must be met to show that a hardship exists, that number five seems unreasonable. She asked that given that the property owner to the south is already close to the property line, how the new construction would not impact light and air of that property?

Mr. Hague stated the light would be more impacted to the north. He noted the high windows of the neighboring house and noted no shadows cast that way.

Trustee Brennan asked if it would be a detriment to another owner. Mr. Hague noted the windows do not look to the property.

Trustee Vazquez stated he thought the same thing, but that if they were to build in the backyard, that would be more impactful. He stated that in the future if the neighbors sell, they can make that decision.

In response to a question from Clerk Keller, Mr. Hague stated they considered a tandem garage but that it was an impractical solution. He stated they were trying to maintain the backyard and that a tandem garage would push back into the backyard.

In response to Trustee Brennan's concern, Mr. Palivos stated the grandmother's house to the south will remain in the family for a long time.

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan, Mr. Hague stated the existing driveway to the north would go away and remove that impervious surface.

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner, Mr. Hague stated that if requested, they would provide a one-hour rated fire barrier along the south wall of the addition that impacts the setback.

Ms. Scheiner then explained what a one-hour rating means. Chief Bohlmann added a comment further explaining that a one-hour fire rating would be sufficient.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: Trustee Brennan

Motion Passes.

- b. Board and Commission Appointment: Sustainability Commission – Appoint Eric Simon – Chair (Gillis vacancy) – 4 Year Term Expiring 4/30/25

Trustee Gillis made a motion, seconded by Trustee Brennan, to concur with the recommendation of the Village President to appoint Eric Simon to the Sustainability Commission to serve as Chairperson for a 4-year term ending April 30, 2025.

President Adduci stated Mr. Simon has been instrumental regarding the Village's solar energy discussion and that he has been on the Commission since it began. She stated that in June, the Trustees would be discussing their work as elected officials.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Update: Lake & Lathrop

Mark McKinney stated there was a positive momentum on unit sales, and he noted they have completed the transaction for seventh residential unit. He stated there is an uptick in traffic,

with four good leads. He stated the biggest momentum is on the retail side; with 10,000 sq ft of the 14,000 for retail leases, there is interest for three hospitality/restaurant uses and four medical uses. Mr. McKinney stated they are hoping to get the green light next week regarding the MWRD permit. He stated the site utilities work was completed today, including Comcast. He stated one last open permit review comment has been addressed, and they are still in the process with fire suppression plans, noting they are targeting the end of next week. He stated they are still on for mobilizing for excavation in early June.

In response to community comments, Mr. McKinney stated there was interest from a member of the developer's family, but that they are no longer interested. He stated the site has been remediated by a State Engineer and they have treated the soil to meet acceptable levels with the State. He stated to complete the process and receive a "No Further Remediation" letter, there will be a concrete barrier and PVC venting pipe system to vent gases away from the structure.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Mr. McKinney stated that this system is common for sites like this and the Developer is not creating anything new to address it.

In response to the community question regarding construction hours, Ms. Scheiner stated anyone who gets a permit is subject to construction hours. She stated for any contractor working outside the hours, residents can call the police or building departments. She noted the 7am start time, and that contact information for any contractors on the project is required for every permit.

Trustee Brennan inquired about how many resident units are needed to secure financing, if it would be 9 units or 40%. Mr. McKinney stated that financing is based on both residential and commercial spaces sold. Mr. McKinney also stated now that there has been more momentum on commercial, this may relieve pressure on the residential side.

Trustee Brennan asked about the utilities being taken care of and the MWRD permit. Mr. McKinney explained that the utilities are done and that the MWRD permit is pending and may be held up due to holidays.

Trustee Brennan also asked about the Village permits. Mr. McKinney explained that the vertical permit would follow the excavation permit and that they are asking for an extension on that. He explained that he hoped to have that next week.

Trustee Brennan asked about the EPA permit, noting the signs that have been put up on the site about the clean up being completed. Mr. McKinney stated he hoped to have it in the next week or so. President Adduci clarified that a lot of iterations with EPA are numerous.

Trustee Brennan asked if they would be available for the Board's summer schedule. Mr. McKinney said certainly by Zoom or in person.

Regarding the retail letter of intent, Trustee Bachner asked if each potential tenant would be competing against one another for space. Mr. McKinney said they are working with them

concurrently, and that there is some competition but they are working with all of the prospects to accommodate them.

In response to a question from Clerk Keller, Mr. McKinney stated they originally planned for 30 residential units, and it is now 22. He stated that the plan for commercial space has not changed.

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of Lead Service Line Replacement Program

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve the creation of a Lead Service Line Replacement Program.

Director Anderson introduced this item. He stated it is similar to the basement protection program, noting that residents can use their preferred contractor and would need a building permit. He reviewed the ownership of the pipes. He highlighted the importance of line service line replacement and noted that there is pending legislation regarding lead lines. He stated that the State's bill would require a plan for replacing all lead water lines by April 2027, and that the Village will have fourteen years after that to ensure all lines are replaced. He explained that the current plan is that when a resident chooses to replace their lead service, then the Village would replace its section. He stated this program will provide an incentive to prompt homeowners to replace their section of a 50% match for residents up to \$2,500.

In response to a question from Clerk Keller, Director Anderson stated \$10,000 is the average cost for replacement, so \$5,000 for the homeowner's portion and \$5,000 for the Village's portion.

In response to Trustee Vazquez, Director Anderson stated the estimated cost can vary because every line size is different.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Vazquez, Director Anderson stated property owners can pick their own contractor as long as they are licensed and bonded with the Village.

Trustee O'Connell stated he felt this is a nice program and stated other similar programs existed. He encouraged that it be advertised in the Village's newsletter.

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner, Director Anderson stated they will find out how many lead service lines exist during the complete inventory. He stated the Village knows the lines are old, but not if they are lead. He noted they could be lead or could be a plastic material.

Trustee O'Connell commented that the Village must be at a good starting point.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Scheiner announced that because the Board would be going into Executive Session, there would be no further discussion or action after Executive Session and that the Board would adjourn immediately after.

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Johnson, to go into executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Village Board returned to regular session at 9:41 p.m. with the following members present: President Adduci, Trustees Brennan, Bachner, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez, Village Clerk Keller.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Bachner made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 9:41p.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Gillis, Johnson, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

From: [REDACTED]
To: [VBOT](#)
Subject: VBOT Public Comment
Date: Sunday, May 23, 2021 8:17:31 PM

Greetings,

I am unable to attend the meeting. I thank the RF Board for the resolution requesting the STB review the impacts of the proposal for the merger of the Canadian and Kansas City Southern railways. I live at about 1/2 block from the proposed Canadian railway's north/south track overpass that has used for years. I also live just south from the east/west Union Pacific and Metra railway where just north there is Keystone Park with its playing fields and tennis courts. Our house had cracks in our foundation that has been an expensive fix from the train vibrations. Our RF children and citizens do not need more trains careening through our village bringing more noise, vibrations and soot and other adverse health effects. I concur with the RF Board that a careful review of the impacts of the proposed merger is needed. Thanks for the opportunity to voice my concerns.

Agatha Gallo
348 Forest Avenue
[REDACTED]

PUBLIC COMMENT 5/24/2021 - JOHN GRANT

Good evening, my name is John Grant, and I am a River Forest resident.

First, I just want to say congratulations to all elected officials who just won elections. Congratulations! And thanks to all of you for dedicating your time and energy to serve the village.

I also want to voice support for LGBTQ+ Pride Month in River Forest and thank Erica Bachner and others who worked on that.

My main piece of business is about the review of the handling of the advisory bodies that report to the Village Board. But before I make my comments, I want to say that my comments tonight have nothing at all to do with the appointment on the agenda tonight of Eric Simon as Sustainability Chair. Although I can't pass on the opportunity to say that Eric is a neighbor and a friend of mine, and I think he is a great guy, and has worked for issues of sustainability for many years, here and in Colorado, and I am happy to see him appointed to that role.

Although I have said this before, I want to stress that my comments about the Village Board's handling of advisory bodies are about flaws with the system, not with the people. And I also want to thank the Board for putting this on the agenda for the meeting for February 22nd and for scheduling the public meeting June 2nd.

I want to make two quick comments about this issue.

First, I just want to note, especially to the two new board members, that when this issue was placed on that February agenda, the call for reform received a huge show of support from the community. 20 residents wrote in to voice support for reform, and others made public comments at the board meeting.

Second, very simply, I hope the board will be formal and deliberate about how it goes about reviewing and improving the way it manages the advisory bodies. I am pleased that a public meeting has been set for June 2nd. What is not clear to me is if this is the only plan of action for this topic, or if this is part of a much larger plan to research the topic and create new policies and procedures. It's not clear if this will be the only meeting. It's also not clear what will be done with any information gathered from this meeting. I ask the Board to be very clear about what its intentions are with this topic. And I would love to see the Board memorialize its clear intentions by coming up with a written plan of action, and for the end result of that action plan to be a new ordinance which sets out clear and detailed policies and procedures for this. I have created my own version of an action plan and humbly submit it to the board. I will submit a PDF of my prepared comments tonight as well as this action plan to Sara Phyfer, and I ask that these be attached to the written record. Thank you.

Requests by resident John Grant at the 5/24/2021 VBOT meeting: Regarding review of advisory bodies:

I request that the Village Board create a written action plan for this subject, and that the action plan results in an ordinance which sets forth new policies and procedures for advisory bodies to the VBOT. Below is a sample action plan:

Background

Residents (20+ residents emailed the Village Board at the 2/22/21 alone) and trustees have expressed concern that the current system for creating, filling, and managing the advisory bodies is not serving the board and the community as it could. The current system does an inadequate job of: 1) monitoring vacant or renewing advisory body seats and proactively reaching out to tap the talent in the community, 2) filling seats in a way that respects the volunteers and maintains transparency and government accountability, and 3) clearly defining actionable goals for the bodies.

Statement of purpose

This review of the current system seeks to improve operations and increase transparency of the volunteer boards, commissions, and committees which report to the Village Board. Improvements would include the following:

- improved outreach to bring volunteers into the system
- a more effective intake and appointment process with clear guidelines for the composition of the various bodies, checks and balances of power among trustees and president for this appointment process, requirements that create transparency, checks on conflicts of interest, and other best practices
- improved mandates and actionable goals for these advisory bodies for efficient functioning and results

Prescribed actions for the review process

- Village staff and the village board research the topic, including:
- consulting with attorneys, with an “outside-the-box” perspective
- reaching out to other municipalities; again, looking for innovation, not confirmation of old modalities
- receiving input from the DEI Commission
- considering resident input (Village staff member (and maybe one trustee) facilitates resident input, through meetings, or other means, in order to gain an understanding of how residents interact with the current system and what improvements they would like to see)

Policy goals of the review process

The goal of this undertaking is to draft and enact an ordinance to put in place new policies and procedures, in order to achieve the stated purpose.