

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, June 8, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, June 8, 2020 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 8:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White, Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant 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 Attorney Greg Smith, Village Planner John Houseal, Plan Commission Chair David Crosby

2. APPROVAL OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek, to allow the meeting to occur by remote audio and video conference.

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS

David Flint. Mr. Flint expressed his appreciation for the work going into the Affordable Housing Plan process. He stated he wants what is best for the community and to feel protected and considered valuable as a citizen. He referred to studies about zoning changes and their effect on the housing market.

Deb Wolkstein, 1138 Franklin. Ms. Wolkstein stated her not being in favor of the proposed plan was not a personal attack on Mr. Houseal. She stated she was hoping to see creative solutions in the plan and expressed her dissatisfaction with the plan as proposed.

Heidi Kieselstein, Community of Congregation - 1001 Jackson. Ms. Kieselstein expressed a desire for a plan that is strong and effective, and stated there was not enough time to learn and discuss the plan. She requested that the Board delayed its vote in order to create policy that expresses the Village's values.

Dan Lauber, 7215 Oak. Mr. Lauber expressed his appreciation for the time and energy of the Plan Commission. He stated he did not understand the reluctance to incorporate his recommendations. He stated the model used is 16 years old and that his plan would include more data. He urged the Board to vote no and do more than just meet the requirements.

Megan Keskitalo, 8125 Lake. Ms. Keskitalo stated she has seen plans written in partnerships and suggested working with other organizations on the plan. She commented that losing affordable housing units have real human faces and costs.

Josh Ehart, 522 Park. Mr. Ehart urged the Board to postpone the vote to allow time to address the challenges. He stated the proposed plan was not detailed enough to address the complexities.

Megan Hodge, 1338 Park. Ms. Hodge spoke for the need of a comprehensive, equitable plan. She suggested it include broader River Forest values and objectives and integrate inclusivity with intention. She stated there is more work to be done.

Trustee Henek requested that Keary Cragan's (914 Bonnie Brae) written comments be read into the record. Ms. Scheiner read Ms. Cragan's comments. Ms. Cragan stated that she is a member of the Plan Commission and that she was unaware that the plan was based on Wilmette's Affordable Housing Plan and expressed disappointment at learning this. She stated the community should strive to have more than the mandated 10%. She expressed favoring allowing Accessory Dwelling Units and requiring new developments to include a certain percentage of affordable and/or integrated housing.

Phyllis Ruben, 411 Ashland. Ms. Rubin stated she appreciated the discussion and expressed concern about the phrasing regarding diminishing property values.

Mr. Houseal assured that the sentence in question relates to density, noting that the plan only refers to diminishing property values or neighboring properties as it relates to building heights, not the affordable housing units themselves.

5.ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner explained the purpose of the land acknowledgment she reads each meeting, stating that the decisions made by the Board impact so many people. She 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. Trustee Bachner acknowledged the recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade, black individuals who were killed by police in their communities. She stated that the systems in place do not work for everybody and that we must do better. She thanked the

Village for everything done for the woman who was victimized last week by a resident and expressed a need to stand up for minorities and those who are marginalized. Trustee Bachner reported that over the weekend she held an event to distribute masks and Census materials to people in multi-family housing.

Trustee Cargie reported on the progress of the Deer Management Committee. He stated the Committee has held weekly meetings to finalize the survey and requested approval from the Board to spend \$3,000 for postcards that would be mailed to every household. He thanked Committee members and Management Analyst Phyfer for their work. He noted that Tim Preuss from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources would be attending the next meeting.

Trustee Vazquez thanked Staff for its response to the Jewel incident, noting the communication was terrific. He reported that the Age-Friendly Community Collaboration through the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus met on June 4. He stated he presented on the Village's COVID-19 Senior Task Force and heard a report on mobility and transit. He noted that he is scheduling a meeting for the Village's Age-Friendly Committee and announced the Wabi-Sabi Film Festival screening on June 19.

Village Clerk Brand-White echoed the congratulations and appreciation to President Adduci and Staff regarding the incident this past week. She wished everyone a happy Pride month.

Trustee Brennan congratulated Sustainability Commissioner Shannon Roberts on the birth of a baby boy. She stated the past two weeks have been heartbreaking. She remarked that the statements from President Adduci and Chief O'Shea were spot on and thanked Staff for working tirelessly during this time. She commented that racial inequality permeates everything in society and that we must take proactive steps to live without bias. With Trustee Bachner, she recommended creating a forum of stakeholders to discuss these issues and work to improve the community.

Trustee Henek echoed the comments related to COVID and the Jewel incident. She expressed support of the forum and thanked Trustee Bachner for her event over the weekend. She reviewed the timeline for the affordable housing discussion, noting that the task began in September and continued with four meetings over eight months. She requested more time to discuss and digest the issue and expressed frustration that public comment is taken but there is not time to incorporate the comments into the plan. In comparison, Trustee Henek also reviewed the number of meetings for the deer discussion over the same period, stating it was discussed at four village board meetings and at least 4-5 deer task force committee meetings, noting more meetings will continue until a recommendation is due in September. She stated there have been more conversations about deer than about humans, residents, and taking a stand on being a leader in breaking down systemic racism. She expressed frustration about the timeframe of the affordable housing discussion, stating that the process being followed is not enough and remarked that it is disrespectful and unfair to residents.

President Adduci stated the date was agreed to at the last meeting, and Trustee Henek stated she wants to go on record stating prior to the May 26 meeting, the June 8 Committee of the

Whole meeting date was set, as well as direction given to vote on the plan at the June 8 regular Village Board meeting, she does not support the process and apologized to residents.

Trustee O'Connell expressed his sincere sadness about the Jewel incident and that that happened in River Forest. He congratulated Chief O'Shea and the Police Department. He recalled the riots in 1968 and urged parents to talk to their kids why this is happening. Trustee O'Connell addressed Trustee Henek's comments and stated he did not think it was fair to the Plan Commission, noting the Board is here to give direction to Staff.

President Adduci wished everyone a happy Pride Month and read a Proclamation Designating June as LGBTQ+ Pride Month in River Forest. She reflected on being proud and grateful for Staff's work, and expressed appreciation for the swift investigation and handling of the Jewel incident. She spoke about doing more and bending the curve of equality, affirming her support for the policing forum. She stated that we will not tolerate hate in this community.

Trustee Bachner requested the Proclamation be read again at the next meeting.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – May 26, 2020
- b. Amend Title 5 of the Village Code Regarding Water Rate Increase – Ordinance
- c. Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System Located at 1140 Jackson
- d. Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System Located at 1339 Lathrop
- e. Monthly Department Reports
- f. Performance Measurement Report
- g. Accounts Payable – May 2020 – \$1,664,001.23
- h. Village Administrator's Report

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

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

a. Plan Commission – Approval of the Affordable Housing Plan

Trustee O’Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Cargie:

to adopt the Affordable Housing Plan as unanimously recommended by the River Forest Plan Commission and to direct Village staff to prepare an “Action Plan” to immediately begin exploring implementation of the plan’s recommendations, including the designated involvement of appropriate staff, boards, commissions, and committees as deemed necessary. The “action plan” developed by staff should designate the roles and responsibilities for actions including but not limited to the following:

1. Amending the River Forest Zoning ordinance to allow for taller and more dense development in designated commercial/mixed-use areas, consistent with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan, in order to better accommodate possible inclusion of affordable housing as part of new development.
2. Identifying strategies and the means with which to preserve and enhance existing affordable housing in the Village, such as possible funding or programs aimed at assisting with upkeep, maintenance, and improvements to identify existing affordable housing properties.
3. Amending the River Forest Zoning Ordinance to accommodate Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) as a conditional use in the R1 and R2 zoning districts.
4. Amending the River Forest Zoning Ordinance, and possibly other Village regulations, to specifically accommodate “integrated supportive housing.”
5. Amending the River Forest Zoning Ordinance, specifically the Planned Development standards (section 10-19-3) to identify consistency with the goals and policies of the Affordable Housing Plan as a standard of review.
6. Establishing possible TIF fund allocation guidelines for the Village to assist in the provision of affordable housing development and initiatives in River Forest, including development of new affordable housing and the improvement and enhancement of existing affordable housing.

This Affordable Housing Plan, and our follow through on the plan’s actionable recommendations, will allow our community to better accommodate and support the provision of affordable housing in River Forest to get to at least 10% affordable housing overall.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, Village Attorney Smith stated there are no procedural hurdles for considering the motion on the table.

Trustee Cargie stated that it is unfortunate that contentious issues lead to challenging people’s integrity. He commended Mr. Houseal and the Plan Commission for their work and stated there is nothing wrong with using a template.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Mr. Houseal stated that the plan being adopted to meet State requirements does not prevent the Village from doing something else going forward.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Ms. Scheiner cautioned that if a new project being considered is mandated to have a certain portion of units set aside for affordable housing, it could tie the Board's hands to approve something, otherwise the developer may have the ability to seek recourse in court. She stated that the Plan Commission provided flexibility in the plan to encourage developments instead of mandating them so they can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Scheiner also discussed the hesitancy in making zoning bonuses automatic, noting the concerns about bulk and allowing taller buildings.

In response to a question from Trustee O'Connell about residents' concerns with projects, Ms. Scheiner stated the legitimate issues of residents must be set aside if the development complied with the mandate.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Administrator Palm stated Staff would put together the action plan and would be thoughtful looking at the 6 steps.

President Adduci commented that the process of amending the Zoning Code is long and arduous. She noted that if this is not done now, it could take another year to study the issue.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Plan Commission Chair Crosby stated that if the plan is denied, the Commission would need specific direction on how to proceed.

President Adduci suggested the Age-Friendly Committee could take over the Accessory Dwelling Unit issues.

Trustee Brennan commented that the way to create affordable housing in mixed-use/multi-family dwellings is to offer incentives. She stated that amending zoning laws is another step that has to be taken first and spoke in favor of Accessory Dwelling Units. She remarked that the plan does not focus on these things but instead on mixed use. She stated that she cannot support the current proposal and motions and asked that this item be returned to the Plan Commission.

In response to a question from Trustee O'Connell, Trustee Brennan stated this fulfills the letter of the law but not the spirit.

Trustee Cargie stated he disagreed and felt it was unrealistic and unfair to expect the plan to cover every eventuality. He asked to consider a family that wants to maximize the value of their property. He stated the proposed plan is a basis to move forward.

President Adduci asked what needs to get done to begin implementing the plan.

Ms. Scheiner stated that the Village is required to have a plan and the proposed document meets the State's requirements and the Plan Commission discussed additional tools in the toolbox to make these ideas a reality.

President Adduci stated the proposed plan is not where it stops but where it starts, and she suggested addressing each one of the actionable items in more detail and inviting the right people into the conversation. She stated they can sit with the Plan Commission to get these

items in the plan together in the next few years or they can make it actionable and engage the right organizations and residents to help the Village think this through.

Trustee Bachner commented that the plan right now is not actionable.

President Adduci stated the motion includes actions. She stated the Board can take a leadership role and assign actions to other groups such as the Age-Friendly Committee taking on Accessory Dwelling Units.

Trustee Henek expressed concern about the current form of the plan not providing a narrative. She stated the plan is meant to help inform and guide decision making. She stated that the type of information Commissioner Cragan requested was in the Wilmette template and that she was dismayed the Commission was not provided the full template to work from. Trustee Henek also commented that plan does not have any teeth. She stated it should speak to diversity and include a value statement, and that the final document should provide more narrative and expand on why the Village wants these things.

Trustee Cargie commented that the end product is from members of the Village and that the Wilmette plan was a template. He stated that the product is not wrong just because it does not reflect everything people want.

Trustee Henek stated the Plan Commission should have been given the full template to review and that her opposition is not related to accusations of plagiarism.

President Adduci asked specifically what the opposing trustees are looking for.

Trustee Brennan suggested the Village pause and send the plan back to the Plan Commission to spend more time on it and consider the new input. She asked for a real roadmap to affordable housing.

President Adduci stated the Plan Commission gave six recommendations, and that these need to be fleshed out with other groups to take affordable housing to the next level. She stated she is trying to find a way to ensure momentum is not lost.

Trustee Brennan suggested taking 6 months to get it right so that all trustees can feel proud about signing it.

Trustee O'Connell stated it is an unfair statement that the Plan Commission checked a box. He further stated that if people want to take responsibility for this, they should do it at the beginning, not the end.

Trustee Bachner stated she felt that was not a fair sentiment because many people see information for the first time at the Village Board level. She stated experts and other groups could be part of this process.

President Adduci stated the Board would need to give explicit direction if it goes back to the Plan Commission.

Mr. Houseal stated the plan is very actionable. He noted it identifies specific things the Village ought to be doing and begin to implement to move the needle on affordable housing.

Trustee Vazquez stated he is not representing that the plan is comprehensive and that it was only supposed to address the State requirement. He stated he is not saying that is right but that was the direction and what was developed. He stated that filing the plan does not prohibit the Village from working on and perfecting it.

Trustee Brennan stated she would rather get the plan right and delay filing.

Trustee Henek stated she wanted to see the Village get this right and that she has been trying to extend the meetings. She asked for more time to think about what has been shared and to show residents that the Board is listening and wants to take time on this issue.

Trustee Bachner stated she did not think the items in the plan would help the Village get to 10% and that it needs to include inclusionary zoning at a bare minimum. She stated she does not see how the proposed plan gets the Village to affordable housing.

President Adduci stated she respects everyone's opinions and comments, including calls to fix inequity and to be inclusive. She reflected on comments made during the meeting and stated we need to value people and accommodate those with modest incomes, support integrated supportive housing, care for seniors who want to age in place, and to value the community. She stated this is not the end of the journey but the beginning. She remarked that if the Village can implement some of the recommendations within the next year, they will move the needle significantly. She stated she believes it addresses all the things residents brought up tonight.

Roll call:

Ayes: President Adduci, Trustees Cargie, O'Connell, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Henek

Motion Passes.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Update and Direction: 1100/1000 Block of Keystone Avenue Flooding

Administrator Palm provided an update and stated that the system set up today is deliberate and intentional to prevent basement backups, but that the issue is street flooding. He stated

root infiltrations have been cleared out and that adding sewer lining to the area on Keystone that is a combined system will help prevent infiltrations and reduce flooding because it will allow water to flow out faster. He stated Staff is looking for direction on this because the Village would be looking at a bond issue to pay for this.

Trustee O'Connell thanked Staff for having a Zoom meeting with residents. He stated the biggest concern is if the Village does this whether residents would then have water in their basements.

Village Engineer Loster stated that a backflow prevention valve allows water to flow only in the direction of the municipal sewer. He stated these are \$10-15,000 and not 100% foolproof.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Trustee O'Connell stated that even with a moderate rain the area fills up.

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan, Mr. Loster stated an underground cistern would help but that the Village's engineering consultant researched a commercial version and it would not be feasible.

The Board briefly discussed other types of flooding issues.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, Mr. Loster stated that there are no other sections of town that have this degree of street flooding and that this is a lower lying area that collects water.

In response to a follow up question from Trustee Henek about the likelihood of success for the options, Mr. Loster stated they each have their pros and cons and the Board would need to consider the costs of each option. However, he noted that if there were concerns about the options, they would not discuss them with the engineering consultant.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Trustee O'Connell stated part of the issue is railway runoff and that the recent flooding required hoses to pump water out of people's backyards. He also noted that David Zimmeroff (1110 Keystone) expressed support for options one and two.

Administrator Palm stated that Staff has already been in contact with the engineering consultant to update the 2016 study with updated financial figures, which could be completed in 30-60 days.

The Village Board reached a consensus to formally engage the engineering consultant to evaluate and recommend options.

b. Update: RFCCA Building Study

Administrator Palm reported on the progress of the Study, stating three options were presented to stakeholders: renovation/addition, new construction/phase-in new project on

existing site, and new project at an alternative site. He stated that the stakeholders like options two and three the most, noting that the cost is estimated around \$40-45 million. He stated the facility would last 50+ years. He stated the next steps are considering the feasibility of building gyms over a parking deck and further evaluation of the pros and cons of each option.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Mr. Palm stated the next steps would be more Staff led rather but may have some additional soft costs.

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner, Mr. Palm stated he was fairly confident the Menards site is no longer an option.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek, Mr. Palm stated there would be financial costs of building upgrades such as preventative maintenance. He also noted that while not monetary, another consideration is the community's value in having this space.

In response to follow up questions from Trustee Henek, Mr. Palm stated the expense could potentially go to referendum though could also have outside and multiple funding sources.

The Board members briefly discussed the threshold of the discussion being money and feasibility, and the economic uncertainty of the pandemic.

c. Update: Lake and Lathrop Redevelopment Project

Mr. Palm provided a brief update on the project, noting that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency approved the remediation plan with one condition. He stated removal of debris has started back up.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Mr. Palm stated the developer has 30 days from the IEPA's approval to start construction.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 11:48 p.m.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk