

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
SPECIAL VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 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 7:02 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Vazquez, Gillis (7:12pm), Brennan, O'Connell, Bachner, Johnson

Absent: Village Clerk Keller

Also Present: Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek, Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood, Police Commander Michael Swierczynski, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Village Attorney Lance Malina, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

President Adduci asked that public comments regarding the proposed zoning changes be saved until that item is addressed.

There were no other public comments.

**4.ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustee O'Connell gave thanks to those who helped host the Memorial Day parade. He also reminded residents to purchase their vehicle stickers.

Trustee Johnson thanked and congratulated those who hosted the Pride event in front of Village Hall. He also thanked those who participated and organized in the Juneteenth event that occurred that morning.

Trustee Brennan also thanked those who attended and participated in the Juneteenth event. She also noted that the Traveling Juneteenth Museum will be at other events in the Western Suburbs and encouraged people to visit the museum.

Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a belated Father's Day and reminded everyone to fill out the Lead Service survey. Trustee Vazquez gave an update on the proposed elimination of the Grocery Tax.

Trustee Bachner began her comments with a land acknowledgment. She then gave thanks to those who attended and organized the recent Pride event and noted the event made it onto the news. Trustee Bachner also thanked those who organized the Juneteenth event. Finally, Trustee Bachner reminded everyone to check in each other during the upcoming heat wave and be aware of local cooling center options.

President Adduci thanked those who organized the Juneteenth event and commented on her experiences at the event. She also gave thanks to the Village's State Representatives for the passing of the State Budget.

Deputy Clerk Masella noted that Trustee Gillis arrived at 7:12pm.

Trustee Gillis noted attending and enjoying the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Roosevelt Middle School.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- c. May 2024 Accounts Payable and Payroll – \$2,183,542.78
- d. Administration Department Report
- e. Monthly Department Reports
- f. Financial Report – May 2024
- g. Purchase Approval – CDS Office Technologies – Mobile Dispatch Terminals – \$71,788.65
- h. Award of Contract – FY 2025 Tree and Stump Removal Program – Homer Tree Care, Inc \$41,650.00

**MOTION** by Trustee O'Connell to approve Consent Agenda Items A-H. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Assistant Village Administrator Spencer noted that the dollar amount read for Agenda Item 5.c was incorrect. Village Attorney Malina read into the record that the correct amount was \$2,539,919.71

Trustees O'Connell and Bachner amended their motion and second to reflect the new dollar amount.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION**

None.

**7. RECCOMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals – Acceptance of ZBA Recommendation Regarding Text Amendment Request – Commercial District Zoning Regulations

President Adduci invited Dan Lauber to make public comment via Zoom.

Dan Lauber made public comment surrounding the proposed text amendments. He strongly encouraged the Board to reject the proposed reduction in parking requirements. Mr. Lauber encouraged the Village Board to eliminate the required dwelling unit footage requirements and encouraged the Village to adopt stepdown height requirements. Finally, Mr. Lauber suggested the Village consider establishing an independent committee made up of residents neighboring the commercial districts to review any future changes to the districts.

President Adduci invited Mary Anne Zeh up to the podium to make public comment.

Mary Anne Zeh made public comment regarding the proposed text amendments. She stated she was generally not in favor of the proposed zoning amendments as proposed. She raised issues concerning the lack of buffer between the commercial zones and residential zones in the south portion of town. Ms. Zeh suggested that the North portion of town may be better suited for larger buildings. She then noted that she did not have issues with the reduced parking requirements but did have issues with the possibility of studio apartments in the Village. Finally, Ms. Zeh raised concerns about what guidelines are in place for developers to stay within the proposed text amendments when going through the Planned Development Process and not continue to ask for more.

President Adduci invited Kelly Abcarian to make public comment.

Kelly Abcarian raised concerns regarding the potential impacts the proposed zoning changes would have on the local school district. Ms. Abcarian noted that school funding is crucial to the quality of schools and stated that she has not seen any data that supports how the proposed zoning changes would benefit the school district. Ms. Abcarian cited a local demographic report regarding the school district that she stated

offers no data in support of the proposed text amendments and recommends against them. Ms. Abcarian encouraged the Village to involve the demographer in any future zoning discussions to help make data-based decisions.

Greg Abcarian made public comment regarding the proposed zoning changes. Mr. Abcarian noted being against the proposed changes and raised concerns regarding the validity of the Village's meeting minutes at the April 11<sup>th</sup> Zoning Board of Appeals meeting and other meetings where the proposed zoning changes were discussed. Mr. Abcarian reminded members of the Board that they were elected by the residents of the Village and that many residents are not in favor of the proposed changes.

Margie Cekander made a public comment regarding the proposed zoning changes and asked the Village Board to vote in line with the recommendation from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to Accept the Recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals Regarding the Proposed Text Amendments to C1, C2, C3 and ORIC Districts. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

President Adduci stated she agrees with Zoning Board of Appeals recommendations. She gave thanks to all the various commissions involved with the creation of the proposed text amendments. She also highlighted the Findings of Fact created by the Zoning Board of Appeals regarding the proposed text amendments and encouraged others to read them.

Trustee Vazquez agreed with President Adducci's viewpoint and stated that he listened to the April 11<sup>th</sup> Zoning Board meeting in its entirety. He reminded everyone that the Village began this process to find ways to garner more tax revenue from sources outside of the residents themselves. Trustee Vazquez stated that he interpreted the Zoning Boards response as direction to continue using the current development review processes.

Trustee O'Connell stated he agreed with the comments made by Trustee Vazquez and President Adduci. He reminded everyone that large portions of the land in the Village cannot be taxed, thus the Village needs to find alternative sources of revenue outside of property taxes.

Trustee Johnson stated that the Board of Trustees is here to serve the community and reminded everyone that vigorous discussions are sometimes part of the process. He noted being excited about the conversations surrounding the proposed text amendments and thanked the residents for their feedback.

Trustee Brennan reported that she attended many of the meetings surrounding the proposed text amendments to get the in-person feel for the meetings. Trustee Brennan noted that it appeared as if much of the opposition to the event was from residents from the south portion of town and noted the length and intensity of

commitment residents from that area had regarding their stances. She then noted being pleasantly surprised about the comments from her fellow Board members. Trustee Brennan then echoed some of the concerns residents have raised regarding the lack of trust between the Village and residents. She also raised concerns about the residents' comments surrounding the Village's planning consultant and suggested the Village consider a new consultant.

Trustee Bachner echoed Trustee Brennan's comments and noted that many of the considerations raised by residents were never addressed. Trustee Bachner encouraged the Village to expand its zoning code to reflect the intricacies of River Forest neighborhoods. She then addressed some of the public comments made by residents earlier and noted that she does believe in modifying the density. She then gave rebuttals to some of the public comments made about the possibility of smaller apartments and studios in the Village. Trustee Bachner also raised concerns about the quality of the work provided by the Village's planning consultant.

Trustee Gillis stated that there is no reason for the Village Board to go against the recommendation from the Zoning Board of Appeals. She then encouraged residents to try to move on from the "not in my backyard" mentality otherwise nothing will ever be built in the Village.

Trustee O'Connell echoed some of the points raised by Trustee Bachner and then highlighted how the raised train crossings in the Village impact its neighborhoods compared to other municipalities along the line.

Trustee Brennan asked if the Board would like to discuss the next steps to be taken surrounding zoning changes.

Village Attorney Malina reported that there are legal limitations on what the Village can discuss under new business due to the "Special" nature of the meeting. Thus, the Board can only discuss the items on the agenda and cannot add new items to discuss under New Business.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **8.UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## 10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**MOTION** by Trustee Gillis to enter Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(6) to discuss: The setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body and the Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes at 8:03 pm.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** to adjourn by Trustee Vazquez. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

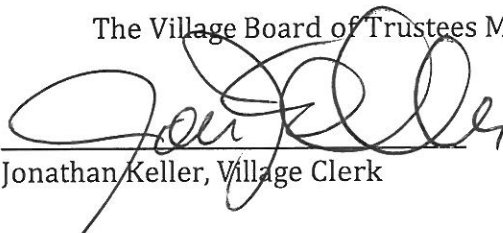
**Roll call:**

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m.



Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: 07/08/24