



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Friday, July 9, 2021 – 7:30 AM

Village Hall – Community Room, 400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL

AGENDA

Physical attendance at this public meeting may be limited to up to 36 individuals, with Commission officials, staff and consultants having priority over members of the public. Public comments and any responses will be shared with the Committee. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Lisa Scheiner at lscheiner@vrf.us. You may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows, dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 869 8341 5529 or by clicking here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86983415529>. If you would like to speak during public comment, please email lscheiner@vrf.us by 5:00 PM on Thursday, July 8, 2021.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. June 11, 2021
4. Update on Various Projects
5. Continued Discussion re: Business Retention/Attraction Strategies
6. Other Business
7. Executive Session
8. Next Meeting
 - a. August 13, 2021 – Cancelled
 - b. September 10, 2021 - Confirmation
9. Adjournment

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
June 11, 2021**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Friday, June 11, 2021, at 7:30 a.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 a.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Lee Neubecker, Robert Graham, Timothy Brangle, Carr Preston, Liz Holt

Absent: Donna Slepicka, Cuyler Brown

Also Present: Village Trustees Robert O'Connell, Acting Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Katie Lowes, Susan Altier

All members participated electronically.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES –

- a. A MOTION was made by Mr. Preston and SECONDED by Mr. Brangle to approve the May 14, 2021 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.
- b. A MOTION was made by Mr. Graham and SECONDED by Mr. Brangle to approve the May 21, 2021 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

4. UPDATE ON VARIOUS PROJECTS

Acting Village Administrator Scheiner stated that the Expression of Interest had been released for a potential development opportunity at Village-owned and potentially neighboring properties in the Madison Street corridor. In addition to sending the Expression of Interest to potential developers and posting a sign on the property, a copy has been placed online at www.vrf.us/madison. She continued that the Village has been working with Speaker Welch's office to obtain funds that were set aside for demolition under HB64 and is now working to get the Governor's Office to release the funding.

Chairman Neubecker stated that he and other members of the Economic Development Commission and Village Board of Trustees toured The Sheridan at 800 Harlem Avenue in May. They complimented the quality of the development and said the operators are working to be good neighbors.

Chairman Neubecker provided a brief update on the efforts that had been underway to identify a potential restaurant tenant for the potential Lake and Park redevelopment project. Acting Village Administrator stated that the developer is in the process of trying to acquire the Strand property. In response to a question from Member Graham, Chairman Neubecker and Acting Village Administrator Scheiner stated that a liquor license may be permissible at the site within state regulations.

Acting Village Administrator recapped the information that was presented to the Village Board of Trustees by Sedgwick properties at the April and May Village Board meetings. She said the developer anticipates that excavation work will resume in the coming weeks.

5. DISCUSSION RE: BUSINESS RETENTION/ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

Acting Village Administrator Scheiner recapped that the Village expects to receive \$1.34 million under the American Rescue Plan and would like to use a portion of the funds to support the business community. To help identify need, a series of Business Forums have been conducted with the business community. Acting Village Administrator Scheiner said that Liz Holt from the Chamber of Commerce have been an excellent partner in coordinating the forums and helped identify a facilitator, Ramiro Artista from the Dominican University Brennan School of Business. She said they are in week two of three and have conducted five of the six forums thus far. She said the forums are recorded and a report will be made available to the Economic Development Commission in July.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion regarding the potential sale of the Dominican Priory property. Trustee O'Connell stated that he informed the Village Board of Trustees that the property was for sale but the Board had not discussed the matter. The property is zoned PRI (public, recreational, institutional) and the Village President stated in an article in the Wednesday Journal that the Village would like to preserve green space, has no plans to rezone the property, and would like the use to remain aligned with current zoning.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economic Development Commission is scheduled on July 9, 2021. There will be no August meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT – A MOTION was made by Mr. Graham and SECONDED by Mr. Brangle to adjourn the June 10, 2021 meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 7:59 a.m. On voice vote, motion passed.



Village of River Forest

Village Administrator's Office

400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 1, 2021

To: Chairman Neubecker
Economic Development Commission

From: Lisa Scheiner, Acting Village Administrator

Subj: Business Forum

The Village anticipates receiving \$1.34 million under the American Rescue Plan. Funds will be disbursed in two installments, with the second installment distributed within one year of the first installment. The Village awaits an exact disbursement date and additional guidance regarding the use of these funds. However, to-date the guidance issued states that these funds can be used for assistance to small businesses and aid to impacted industries and that they must be obligated by December, 2024.

The Economic Development Commission was asked to identify potential uses of these funds to support the local business community. The Commission began discussions at its April 9, 2021 meeting regarding potential uses of these funds. As noted in the meeting minutes, ideas include:

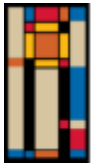
- A desire to engage with the business community in a facilitated group discussion by sector (for example retail, restaurant, service businesses, real estate, fitness facilities, home based businesses) to understand their needs when determining how best to utilize this financial resource;
- A desire to identify immediate, near term, and long term strategies to support the business community;
- The need to address consumer confidence and encourage people to leave their homes to patronize River Forest businesses;
- A desire to supplement the Village's existing efforts to raise awareness of, and encourage consumers to support, local businesses including home-based businesses through, for example, a branding campaign;
- Assisting with efforts to stabilize businesses that are still struggling with near term infusions of cash from consumers who may then return to patronize those businesses in the future (e.g. "cash mob" shopping events, "take-out 25", etc.) in lieu of one-time direct contributions from the Village;

- Giving consideration to possible grant programs (e.g. façade improvement), understanding, however, that administering these programs can be resource and process-intensive;
- A desire to identify near term recovery and longer term future growth within the business community can be supported;
- Engaging in conversations with companies, such as Mid America, that are working to lease commercial space in River Forest to understand their marketing efforts;
- Giving consideration to utilizing the funds over a longer period of a few years as opposed to a large one-time push;

In addition, the Village and Chamber of Commerce partnered to host a facilitated discussion with the local business community. Six sessions were held between June 2 and June 16, 2021. A summary of the forums is attached and was prepared by facilitator Mr. Atristain-Carrion, Executive in Residence and Adjunct Instructor of Finance at Dominican University's Brennan School of Business. Special thanks go to Liz Holt and the OPRF Chamber of Commerce for her partnership in this initiative.

Attachments:

- Business Forum Invitation
- Business Forum Agenda
- Forum Summary



RIVER FOREST

Proud Heritage • Bright Future

Village President
Catherine Adduci

Village Clerk
Jonathan Keller

Village Trustees
Kathleen Brennan
Erika Bachner
Lisa Gillis
Kenneth Johnson
Robert O'Connell
Respicio F. Vazquez

May 18, 2021

SENT VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

NAME
BUSINESSNAME
ADDRESS
CSZ

Re: River Forest Business Forum

Dear __,

We know that now, more than ever, the needs and concerns in the business community are unique. The Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission wants to hear from you about how we can help your business now and in the future. You are invited to participate in a River Forest Business forum. Join us for an informal chat over Zoom with Village and Oak Park River Forest Chamber staff so we can learn about your business, your challenges over the last year and your vision for the future. Come and share your ideas! We want to hear from you.

The Village is hosting business forums in June and invites you to register by visiting the OPRF Chamber Calendar of Events at <https://www.oprfchamber.org/events/calendar/2021-06-01>. Forums will be held by business sector on the dates and times listed below. We hope that you will join us.

<u>Business Sector</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Restaurants & Retail	June 2, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Medical & Health	June 3, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Realtors & Commercial Property	June 8, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Remote & Home-based Businesses	June 9, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Fitness & Gyms	June 10, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.
Professional Service Providers	June 16, 2021	8:30-9:30 a.m.

Zoom log-in information will be sent to you in your registration confirmation.

We also invite you to learn more about the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission, what they do, and how they work for the betterment of the Village, by visiting www.vrf.us/EDC, or by contacting me at (708) 714-3520 or via email at lscheiner@vrf.us.

Sincerely,

Lisa Scheiner
Acting Village Administrator

cc: Economic Development Commission



RIVER FOREST BUSINESS FORUM AGENDA

Hosted by:

**Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission
and Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Facilitated discussion:
 - a. What successes has your business experienced or is expected to experience in the past year and in the near and long term?
 - b. What challenges has your business faced or is expected to face in the near and long term?
 - c. Where do you see your business heading in the near and long term?
 - d. Are there any hurdles you have face or expect to face in dealing with the Village as it relates to your business?
 - e. How can the Village help?
3. Conclusion & Next Steps

River Forest Business Forum Summary						
	Restaurants & Retailers	Medical & Health	Realtors & Commercial Property Owners	Remote & Home-based Businesses	Fitness & Gyms	Professional Service Providers
Date	June 2, 2021	June 3, 2021	June 8, 2021	June 9, 2021	June 10, 2021	June 16, 2021
Participants	Two restaurant owners, one NFP with retail.	Manager of senior housing, two health professionals.	Commercial realtor	Home bakery, language academy, technology consultant		IP Attorney
1) What successes has your business experienced in the past year and is yet expected to experience in the near and long term?	Restaurants started using delivery Apps. NFP pivoted to engage participants online with programs/content and offered pop-up 'sandwich kits'.	Adapted to telehealth.	Was able to help buyers with capital reserves, bank loans, or grants	Techynical consultant: adapted to offering virtual support and troubleshooting solutions.	Adapted to online offerings	Moved Teleconferences to Zoom
2) What challenges has your business faced in the past year and is yet expected to face in the near and long term?	Restaurants forced to have pick-up/deliveries after huge reduction in customer traffic. Had issues with customers refusing to wear masks. Staffing challenges are unprecedented. NFP social enterprise sales stopped.	Hit hard by the effects of the pandemic. Hard to get in front of community and hard to get new clinicians and staff.	Revenue streams had to be re-evaluated for buyers of property.	For home bakery: Cottage Food Law limit of \$1K/monthly gross sales. Language academy sees lack of support and connection to communtiy.	Were not able to offer services for months and retention was impacted.	Cannot serve clients in international cases (international courts closed).
3) Where do you see your business heading in the near and long term?	Restaurant to look into offering eco-friendly items, do more carry-out and promote other business by puttign flyers in delivery bags. NFP to offer teaching life-skills and support local agriculture.	Look into expanding referrals, be known as resource to help aliviate health issues (e.g. pain).	Expect to continue to grow business.	Getting back to F2F meetings with clients.	Fitness businesses accomodating to	Plan to continue moving forward as courts open up.
4) Are there any hurdles you have faced or expect to face in dealing with the Village as it relates to your business?	Strictness with outside banners.	Responsiveness of Village	Zoning expectations of retail spaces, e. g. medical providers are not granted 'zoning variance' in these	No hurdels, but would like the Village to support a "job board" or local froum for projects.	None mentioned.	None mentioned.
5) How can the Village help?	NFP would like for Village to support social enterprises more. Restaurants woul dlike Village to disseminate promo videos and support the purchase of eco-firendly product procurement (with volume).	Village should support signage, onnings, boards, parking, permitting. Village could be a connector, e.g. offer a resource list.	Meet with building owners regarding their zoning issues. Evaluate signage grants. Do a 'needs assessment' to loan from Recovery funds.	Continue support/adopt ordinance authorizing direct sales ("Home Kitchen Operation Law, or the “cupcake bill”, of Cottage Food Law).	None mentioned.	The Village, in conjunction with the OPRF Chamber, could host get togethers for attorneys.
Sector trends given challenges	Availability of labor at pre-pandemic hourly rates is not currently tenable. People have a newfound appreciation for cooking at home.	Big data advances. Protection of patient data. Effective payment implementtaion. Grow in patient consumerism, given continued risng costs.	The impacts of 2020 have and will continue to have a huge effect on the upcoming years in real estate. Digitalization is here to stay.	Social isolation, productivity levels, issues with teamwork and collaboration, not having access to software and security issues related to remote work.	Misinformation (lack of sufficient professional regulation). Members join attracted to an idea and leave when unfulfilled.	Acquiring new clients. Cash flow issues due to slowness of client payments.
Sector opportunities	Ordering food is up, since there is so much more family time, time to be at home for lunch and dinner.	Insurance coverage expansions and a new focus on creating value in health care.	Element of 'emotion' in real estate. Leveraging the digital presence. Use data analytics. Marketing shouldn't take away from the human side.	Bakers may be able to engage locals who had previously opted for other more specialty items, as these consumers seek out foods that are familiar and provide comfort. Proliferation of software (Apps) for remote and home-based work. Work/life balance solutions.	Promote helpful advice. Build loyal member base by offering tailored strategies to suit clinets' needs. Build a community. Nurture staff and create exceptional member experience.	Improve sales funnel--increase engagement at early stage.