

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
Monday, July 13, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, July 13, 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 7:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Cargie, Henek, O’Connell, Vazquez  
Absent: Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White  
Also Present: Village Administrator Eric Palm, 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

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustee Bachner 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. She provided an update on the Census, stating the Complete Count Committee will be launching ad buys on social media to target River Forest residents and refreshing the Census banners with updated information. She stated the Committee is welcoming suggestions for reaching people who are harder to access. She reported that she joined Representative Chuy Garcia in an event regarding priorities in the Latino community. She reviewed the event’s discussion topics, and noted the challenges related to the pandemic of kids returning to school and living in multi-generational housing.

Trustee Cargie reported that the Deer Management Committee finished the questionnaire at its last meeting and that 821 responses have been received. He stated the post card has been mailed, and he requested that the Board consider a resolution to amend the Committee’s report deadline at a later meeting. He stated the Committee will work as diligently as possible to get it done.

Trustee Vazquez reported that the Age-Friendly Committee met on July 8 and will be meeting the second Wednesday of each month. He stated the Committee discussed conducting a baseline assessment of age friendliness in the Village in each of the AARP's eight domains for livability, and that they would work with the Township, Library, D90, and Dementia Friendly River Forest group. He noted that Age Options has mid-year updates and welcomed anyone to find out about pending legislation that affects seniors. He also thanked the Police Department for the two public forums they held.

Trustee Brennan reported that she attended an It's Our Future meeting, which is a group sponsored by Seven Generations Ahead. She stated the group discussed how to improve community composting programs in River Forest and Oak Park and shared her takeaways. She stated the group will follow up with the Sustainability Commission on this topic.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Trustee Brennan stated that charging an additional cost to compost is a barrier to entry. She stated that though the Village was a leader in curbside composting, other contracts have since included this cost as opposed to charging an additional fee to users.

Administrator Palm stated the Strom contract is up in April 2022 and this is something they could look into if the Village goes out to bid or renegotiates.

Trustee Brennan also reported on the formulation of an inclusionary working group, noting that the goal is for it to consist of members who are majority minority. She stated she was contacted by Kyle Smith from the Metropolitan Mayor Caucus who was interested to hear about the Village's initiative with Maywood.

In response to questions from Trustee Henek about the equity group, Trustee Bachner stated they are still gathering names and looking to understand what kind of experience and expertise people have. She stated no decisions have been made in terms of the group size, and stated the idea is to ensure representation and have people who are willing to dig into various areas of racial equity and marginalized communities. Trustee Brennan noted the goal of making River Forest better by building partnerships where needed, and she stated they are still in an information gathering stage.

Trustee Henek stated that on June 30, she listened to the Trinity Talks Transformation panel, wherein the panel affirmed that they need to start looking at diversity and inclusion through student experiences. She stated they are looking to continue these types of discussions. She also complimented their meeting format, highlighting its seamlessness and real-time participation in surveys. She suggested it would be helpful to explore how they did this and to have a better platform for the Village to use, noting that she heard from residents that the accessibility of the police forum was not ideal. She also stated she would like to pull out Consent Agenda item A.

Trustee O'Connell reviewed the Keystone flooding matter and reported that last week the sewer lining was put in. He thanked Staff for their quick action and cooperation. He stated he participated in the policing forums and reported that many comments were made. He

congratulated Chief O'Shea and his team for their professionalism and willingness to come forward with answers.

President Adduci stated she was in Bloomington on June 23 to interview to be nominated for second Vice President of the Illinois Municipal League. She reported that she has been selected but will not be approved officially until their September meeting. She stated earlier in the day she was interviewed for a film IML is putting together regarding the benefits of being a member. She noted that the Village will step up communication regarding COVID-19 as families adjust for school. President Adduci congratulated Chief O'Shea and Administrator Palm for their work and leadership on the policing forums. She stated she received many compliments and that the forums showed accountability, transparency, and openness. She also announced the Quarterly Community Crime Prevention meeting is July 22 at 6pm and encouraged all residents to attend via Zoom. She stated these forums and meetings could dovetail nicely into the working group Trustees Bachner and Brennan are establishing.

Administrator Palm provided an update regarding the Union Pacific work, noting that the soundproofing material for the West Lake area has begun to be installed. He reported that the Village will be the recipient of a grant that will help pay for the demolition of some buildings acquired by the Village on Madison Street. He alerted the Board that the former Lutheran Children and Family Services building is a significant property and will have to go through the Historic Preservation Commission's process regarding demolition.

President Adduci also shared the compliments received in the editorial section of the Wednesday Journal for the two policing forums that were held.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes (Amendment to Approved Minutes) – May 26, 2020
- b. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – June 22, 2020
- c. Amend Title 9-3 of the Village Code – Ordinance (Modifications Associated with 2020 Commuter Parking Study)
- d. Award of Bid and Contract to Swallow Construction Corp. in the amount of \$603,992.50 for Water Main Improvement Projects
- e. Award of Bid and Contract to A Lamp Concrete Contractors Inc. in the amount of \$189,362.00 for the Thatcher Avenue Alley Improvements Project
- f. Waiver of Formal Bidding (Sole Source) and Award of Contract to Griffon Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$47,000 for Street Camera System Storage Servers
- g. Intergovernmental and Sub-Recipient Agreement for Coronavirus (COVID-19) Relief Funds with Cook County
- h. Monthly Department Reports
- i. Accounts Payable – June 2020 – \$1,477,375.13
- j. Financial Report – June 2020
- k. Village Administrator's Report

Trustee Cargie, made a motion, seconded by Trustee Henek, to approve the Consent Agenda items B, D - K.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Trustee Henek, made a motion, seconded by Trustee Cargie, to approve the Consent Agenda item A.

Trustee Henek stated these minutes are from May 26 and stated she recognizes that her public comments are not reflected exactly in the minutes. She stated she felt it is a bad precedent for trustees to have their printed record updated after already being approved, noting the opportunity to amend minutes is at the next meeting.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Village Attorney Smith stated there is no rule within Roberts Rules prohibiting the Board from amending minutes at any point.

President Adduci stated it is important for dates to be in the minutes.

Trustee Henek stated she felt this was in response to her going on the record, and that her concern is setting a precedent for returning to minutes that have already been approved.

Trustee Cargie expressed doubt that this would happen often and stated it is important that minutes reflect what actually happened.

President Adduci stated she is trying to ensure that the date is correct in the minutes and that the minutes should reflect the audio. She stated she did not think this is a major change.

In response to a question from Trustee O'Connell, President Adduci stated the motion is just to approve the minutes.

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan, Trustee Henek stated that by approving the minutes, the Board is setting the precedent that approved minutes can be amended multiple meetings later.

Village Attorney Smith stated that Trustee Cargie's statement regarding precedent is correct and that this Board cannot bind a future Board from revisiting what has been previously approved.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: Trustee Henek

Motion Passes.

Trustee O'Connell, made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bachner, to approve the Consent Agenda item C.

Trustee Cargie stated he pulled this item to vote no on it to be consistent with his no vote on the study, noting that he felt it is unfair to charge residents for parking when the Village is letting non-residents park for free in order to avoid paying for parking at the universities.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Henek, Vazquez

Absent: None

Nays: Trustee Cargie, O'Connell

Motion Passes.

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

None.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES**

- a. Development Review Board – Appoint Jane McCole – (O'Brien vacancy) – Member, 2 Year Term Expiring 4/30/22

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to concur with the recommendation of the Village President and appoint Jane McCole to the Development Review Board effective once the Bonnie Brae and Thomas Planned Development Permit Findings of Facts have been approved or if the application is no longer on file.

President Adduci stated that DRB appointments are members of the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. She stated that Commissioner McCole would be a great asset to the DRB and has a long history with the Village.

Trustee Henek stated that she has no concern with Ms. McCole but that she was concerned that Tagger O'Brien was not notified of going off the DRB. She stated she was surprised by this appointment and that she called Ms. O'Brien who did not know about this. She stated Ms. McCole also did not know about the timing for her joining the DRB.

President Adduci noted that appointees can work beyond their term's expiration as they work at the pleasure of the Village Board and Village President. She stated she has spoken with Ms. O'Brien and that Ms. McCole knows the Bonnie Brae Townhomes project will be Ms. O'Brien's responsibility.

Trustee Henek reiterated that Ms. O'Brien is unclear whether she is continuing to work on the DRB. President Adduci stated that she is clear.

Trustee Bachner suggested ensuring the agenda follows the motions because there is more information in the motion than what is listed on the agenda.

Trustee O'Connell agreed, stating the clarity is with the end date.

Trustee Henek stated that she is voting no, not as a reflection on Ms. McCole but on the process.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: Trustee Henek

Motion Passes.

## **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. Policy Regarding Public Comments at Public Meetings**

Trustee Cargie made a motion to approve and adopt a policy regarding public comments at Village Board meetings.

Trustee Henek recommended the Board discuss this item and approve it at a later meeting.

Village Attorney Smith stated that once a motion has been made, a body must determine if there is a second or it dies for lack of a second. He stated that before the Board can continue, it must determine if there is a second for the motion.

Trustee O'Connell seconded the motion.

Administrator Palm explained that Trustee Henek had requested a policy for public comment. He noted that this is something that was borne out by COVID-19 and the need to conduct meetings electronically. He reviewed the points within the proposed policy.

President Adduci stated the idea is that when they receive large amounts of emails saying similar things, they would be attached to the minutes and not read into the record.

Administrator Palm explained the rationale behind including written comments on the agenda, stating that when the Village was adopting emergency rules for public participation, they were not confident about the technology. The written public comments would be a failsafe in the event that someone would not be able to connect electronically. He stated there is nothing prohibiting people from participating electronically and that most people have phone access so they still have the ability to connect to the meeting.

Trustee Henek stated she wanted to clarify her intention since she was the one to recommend this discussion. She stated her reason for wanting clarification is not solely in regard to the current situation around COVID-19 and Zoom. She stated that there was discussion about continuing to allow people to participate remotely via Zoom, even if the emergency declaration is not extended, since there are limitations for people coming into Village Hall. She stated public comments are beneficial to everyone listening and expressed concern about not being consistent. Trustee Henek acknowledged Administrator Palm's comments regarding the pandemic. She stated she was also concerned that they are receiving comments through the Village and they are not distributed with enough time for the Board to reflect on them. She asked how does it help her as a trustee to have the comments after the fact rather than incorporating what is said.

The Board discussed the utilization of Dropbox for sharing the written public comments received regarding the Affordable Housing discussion. Trustee Henek stated her concern with not knowing additional emails continued to be added up until the meeting, and Trustee O'Connell stated it was used due to the volume received and that the comments were the same. Trustee Henek disagreed and stated residents like to know and be aware of what other people are thinking and where they fall on different topics. She stated they invite people to make public comments for a reason, which is because they want to hear what people want to say.

Administrator Palm stated there are various ways to communicate with elected officials, noting that interactions such as seeing them in town, calling, or emailing directly are not included as part of the record. He stated that not everyone wants to comment publicly, but that submitting written comments is an option to have their comments be on the record.

President Adduci stated she thinks the proposed policy address everything Trustee Henek has said. She stated the Board is receiving everything written to the Village and that people have the opportunity to dial in. She suggested that if people want the Board to hear it that evening, those individuals attend the meeting and speak to the Board.

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan about including comments in the Board packet, President Adduci noted that the packet goes out Thursday. Administrator Palm suggested changing the public comments email to vbot@vrf.us so that it goes to all Board members immediately.

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner about written public comments that specifically request to be read into the public record, President Adduci cautioned that the Board could end up reading a lot of letters depending on the issue. She stated that if someone wants something read into the record, they can participate.

Trustee Henek expressed concern that the Board is telling residents that they want them to engage and make public comments but are limiting that to people who have the ability to attend. She commented that the Board would be penalizing someone who cannot come to the meeting.

President Adduci stated they are trying to streamline policy and acknowledged that the Affordable Housing discussion comes to mind. She stated she is not suggesting that no letters get read by trustees but rather that they continue to allow people to attend meetings and have citizens share their comments in the time established.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie about including comments to the packet online, Administrator Palm suggesting Staff could update it at 5:00pm the Monday before the meeting.

Trustee Cargie remarked that the Board has never read emails into the record and that he is not sure what has changed about residents' lack of ability to speak to the Board.

Trustee Henek emphasized the importance of trying to make meetings an opportunity for residents to be heard and making it easier for people to participate.

President Adduci stated she did not think there was any barrier preventing residents from talking to the Board.

Trustee Henek stated this is not what she means and that what she is looking for is a way to be as clear as possible and consistent with residents' expectations on how public comments are handled. She noted President Adduci read a letter aloud at the previous meeting.

President Adduci noted that she read this letter during elected official announcements and that trustees are welcome to do the same.

In response to a question from President Adduci, Administrator Palm noted the email address could be set up so that the Village Board receives public comment directly, but he expressed concern about the time it could take to redact private information from the emails in order to post these comments on the Village website prior to the meeting. He stated Staff would have time to do this if the Board chooses to append the written comments to the minutes.

Trustees Brennan and Henek suggested making a cut-off of 9am Monday.

Administrator Palm stated Board meetings are opportunities to conduct business and for the public to observe that. He noted that historically, public comment has been speaking in front of the Board, and he expressed concern about being set up for failure by making written public comments "interactive."

President Adduci stated she would like to use the proposed policy.

Trustee Cargie stated he had not considered redactions and expressed concern about the burden on Staff.



Trustee O'Connell stated that the agenda gives people the information to dial in, and that they are not trying to stifle participating but rather to make it manageable to accomplish the business at hand.

Trustee Henek acknowledged that there is a concern with volume for big topics, however she expressed that she wants residents to feel that the Board has given residents the opportunity to speak and reflect on their comments.

Trustee Cargie commented that if someone has an email, they probably have a phone. He stated anyone who wishes to address the Board can talk to them at the meeting.

Trustee Henek stated that since the trustees are voices for the residents, she reiterated her recommendation that this be a discussion and have the residents let them know why they may not be able to call in to participate.

Trustee O'Connell expressed concern about getting business done if discussions continue to get pushed back. He stated he did not understand the percentage of people who would not be able to participate given the opportunities provided.

Trustee Cargie stated that the Board can always revisit the policy.

Trustee Henek stated this is about how the Village is encouraging and inviting community participation so that they feel they are heard. She asked why there was opposition to voting on this in August.

President Adduci asked what Trustee Henek thought takes away from residents' ability to talk to the Board, and she reviewed the ways residents can contact the Board. She concurred with Trustee O'Connell and stated nothing has changed except that the meetings are over Zoom instead of in person. She stated they are memorializing what they have been doing and that if there is something that was missed, the Board always has the capability to amend things.

In response to a question from Trustee Vazquez, Village Attorney Smith explained that certain committees such as the DRB and ZBA have outlined their public comment policies due to public hearings. He stated that this policy is addressing only Village Board of Trustees meetings and not commissions. In response to a follow up question, Village Attorney Smith stated it is up to each Committee to determine how they accept public comments.

Trustee Henek stated the document does not reflect her intent.

Trustee Bachner stated she would still like to have consideration of public comments when they have asked to be read.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: Trustee Henek

Motion Passes.

- b. Amend Title 4 of the Village Code Regarding the Creation of Sign Regulations in the PRI Zoning District and a Variation Process – Ordinance

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee Cargie, to approve an amendment to Title 4 of the Village Code regarding the Village’s sign regulations.

Administrator Palm introduced Jackie Wells, who is a planner with Houseal Lavigne and assisted with the proposed ordinance. Administrator Palm explained the impetus for this ordinance, stating that Temple Har Zion submitted a request for signage. He noted that currently there are no sign regulations in the PRI zoning district, and that these have typically been handled through the planned development process. He stated that Staff consulted with Ms. Wells and determined the regulations could mirror those of the C2 district. He noted that a relief mechanism is also recommended, so what is proposed mirrors the fence process in that a minor variation would go through Staff and a major variation would require ZBA and ultimately Village Board of Trustees approval. He also emphasized that the signage through a planned development permit would take precedent over these regulations. Ms. Wells walked through the proposed variation process.

In response to a question from Trustee Cargie, Village Attorney Smith stated that the Code says that for any new sign or any sign that is being expanded or altered, Staff looks at the regulations to determine if they meet requirements and that if it does not meet requirements this ordinance would allow an applicant to seek a minor or major variation.

In response to a question from Trustees Bachner and Henek, Village Attorney Smith clarified that the Village Code states the gross surface area of a wall sign in the C2 district is “not to exceed 60sqft. per sign or not to exceed covering more than 5% of the wall to which it is affixed, whichever is less.”

In response to a question from Trustee Bachner, Village Attorney Smith affirmed that the increases allowed are to the objective measurements in the Code rather than the existing sign size.

In response to a question from Trustee Henek about sign materials, Administrator Palm stated that when an applicant submits a sign permit, Staff reviews them to determine if they meet regulations and can include conditions on the permits.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## 10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Cargie made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bachner, to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 9:00p.m.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk