

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, August 9, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, August 9, 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 7:00p.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, Village Engineer Jeff Loster, Village Attorney Greg Smith

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

Trustee O’Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bachner to allow Trustees Vazquez and Gillis to participate telephonically due to work responsibilities.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Johnson, O’Connell

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Phyllis Rubin, 411 Ashland. Ms. Rubin said she is speaking for other homeowners in her condo complex who have questions. She spoke for Judith McDevitt, saying weeds are still there, blooming and possibly causing an allergy problem and maybe a fire hazard. She stated materials or draperies are hanging from the fence are falling down again. She commented that the developers need to be good stewards of the land. She referred to letters that were sent to the Board about how the developer responded to attending meetings “when they can” – and that is an unacceptable response. She also asked why the Board did not question why the lending situation is preventing the developer from doing below ground work, originally scheduled in June. She urged the Board to ask for a fuller explanation and that the residents deserve better answers to these questions.

President Adduci said they will address the weed issue. She commented that the developer did attend every meeting but one in June.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Recognition of One Earth Film Festival Young Filmmakers Contest Winner *Sondaica* by Marin Chalmer

Sue Crothers introduced herself as founder of the One Earth Film Festival Young Filmmakers Contest and a former River Forest resident. She announced that this year the contest had entries from all around the country. There were 149 winners; 35 were animation films; 22 came from middle school students. There were 22 judges from several film schools. She presented Marin's Honorable Mention film *Sondaica* regarding Sumatran tigers. She stated this is her 2nd award winning film. Ms. Crothers spoke that what was special about the film was her use of animation to stir emotion and it was extremely thoughtful creativity. She also asked to take a moment to recognize a special award. She stated River Forest has consistently participated and continued to rise in level each year, in no small part due to science teacher Mr. Cory Kadlec. She stated all but two of the years of the contest a River Forest student has won an award. Ms. Crothers noted that Mr. Kadlec is lifting voices of the youth who inspire us to look for solutions.

President Adduci presented the award to Mr. Kadlec in recognition of his work with River Forest students.

President Adduci presented an award to Marin Chalmers, student winner.

Trustee Bachner started with a Land Acknowledgment statement that this land was once and still inhabited by indigenous people and stated that River Forest continues to be a place that people from diverse backgrounds live and gather. She said she hopes everyone is having a good summer. She reported a conversation with Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi. Trustee Bachner commented that there is a new tool on the Cook County website showing assessed value on properties, stating that you can now see the different assessed value for your property year to year, and how properties being evaluated. She then referenced Trustee Brennan in regards to a group called ABLE, which is a group centered on police training. She stated the sessions are on Wednesday and Thursday for people interested in that free workshop on policing.

Trustee Gillis commented that she has been focused on working with Eric Simon, the new chairperson for the Sustainability Commission. She said they are working to ensure a smooth transition and that he is supported on all the programs that are available.

Trustee Vazquez had one item on the Age Friendly Commission and reported that they have completed a first draft of the survey. He stated they have been testing the survey with a small sample to help make any changes. He stated they are looking forward to having a meeting on Wednesday to complete the final draft.

Trustee Brennan had two items. First, she asked to follow up on the conversation from the last two months about having the EDC offer an opinion regarding the highest and best use of the Priory property. She cautioned the Board that since the Chair of that committee is being voted on tonight, that they will not have the time to act. She stated she has seen in the press that there is interest from OPRF and Fenwick High Schools. She said that the Village should express interest as well.

President Adduci said if the majority of Board wants to bring it to EDC, we can. She stated that however, the Plan Commission will make any determination to rezone the property as the they are responsible for land use. President Adduci commented that the Village's Comprehensive Plan was worked on for years and that Plan should stand. She said if the majority of the Board wants to send this to EDC, she was not sure what they would talk about. She also stated the EDC is working on several projects right now at Lake & Park and on Madison Street.

Trustee O'Connell stated that we should go back to Comprehensive Plan. He stated there was a lot of time spent on interviewing residents and key stakeholders to build that Plan and it is our guiding light. He stated that for the Village to get in the middle of letters of intent between buyers and sellers is a bad place for us to be. He noted the goal for the EDC is to grow economic development and not to be doing land planning. Trustee O'Connell felt that interfering in the business between a seller and a buyer would be an injustice to a relationship between a buyer and a seller.

Trustee Brennan stated that the Comprehensive Plan does inform our decision making, but that the facts have changed here. She stated now there's an opportunity to look at the property in new ways. She stated that based on the guidelines of the EDC, this opportunity falls squarely within the EDC's responsibilities. Trustee Brennan then read the EDC's duties about determining the highest and best use of property.

Trustee O'Connell stated that no one has impacted anyone's ability to submit a letter of intent for the property and the EDC does not have a development in front of them to evaluate. He stated that what we have is a piece of property that has zoning on it. He further stated nobody has requested a change to the zoning of it. He commented they are putting the cart before the horse.

Trustee Bachner stated that there is an opportunity to develop this as residential/commercial rather than saying we're not interested in changing the zoning. She stressed that we should look into that.

Trustee O'Connell stated that it's not anybody's responsibility to do anything until something is brought to the Board or the EDC.

President Adduci stated that based on the Comprehensive Plan, the land as its presently zoned is correctly zoned at this time.

Trustee O'Connell remarked that he's on Board to provide incentives to developments, but has no idea what they are asking at this time. He stated he does not want to be the one

pushing an answer on someone. He stated that what we have is a blank piece of paper and two parties showing interest.

Trustee Bachner commented that those parties would not be providing taxes to the Village.

President Adduci stated that we have to decide. She stated that to put a residential/commercial property on that site will create a lot of density and traffic. She stated the Village has other areas that could be developed, such as Lake & Park and Madison Street, noting the Village is searching for developers there. She stated that it is not true that we are preventing developers from looking at the Priory.

Trustee Bachner indicated that the Priory area could sustain more density versus the other areas of development.

Trustee Vazquez stated that he's not sure if we're ever going to find a piece of property everyone is going to be totally happy about. He stated if we had a developer saying they want to rezone the Priory, the Board could consider it. He stated the Village has plenty of other property designated for commercial purposes and he's not sure we want to take away park property.

Trustee Bachner commented that the Village doesn't have any affordable housing in that area and it could be developed for apartment buildings.

Trustee Vazquez remarked that we could have apartments along Madison Ave.

Trustee O'Connell stated that we've got lots of opportunities for economic development and he would like to see our best efforts on those.

Trustee Bachner stated that we might be missing an opportunity.

Trustee Johnson stated as long as we have the opportunity in the future, that's one thing. He stated referencing other properties under development was not relevant right now. He stated the real issue is transparency and asked are we addressing it? He suggested explaining here's the procedure, here's what we can do. He stated we don't have the ability to respond.

President Adduci stated that we've been very clear on this subject. She stated this property is owned by Dominican and they have the right to sell it. She stated the Plan Commission looks at land use in a very exhaustive way and the process is very transparent and open. She stated that right now, that's what that land is zoned for. President Adduci stated that if a majority of the Board says perhaps we should change the zoning to commercial/residential, we as a Board can allow that and ask the Plan Commission to look at it. She stated that we have the Plan and to let the private entities, Dominican University, seek what possibilities are out for Priory.

Trustee Johnson stated that he doesn't think residents know the process.

President Adduci said she is not getting any calls to change the zoning at Priory and that the

Village is not interested in buying land for development.

Trustee Brennan stated that no one is going to bring forth an offer requiring rezoning because we've made it crystal clear that we won't rezone property. She remarked that in the press, the public is seeing that no one is going to come forward since we've said it is zoned for educational/recreational and we're not looking at changing it.

President Adduci stated what she said is that the area is zoned PRI and zoned appropriately. She stated that what she said was "I hope village is interested in greenspace and saving that property."

Trustee Brennan stated that we need to be clear about the area. She stated this parcel is not greenspace, but a building in the middle of it.

President Adduci stated that the newspaper article was very clear in showing what the parcel is and that the greenspace around it remains.

Trustee Brennan stated she doesn't think it's fair to compare to this opportunity to Lake & Lathrop. She followed up regarding ABLE, clarifying it stands for Active Bystander Training for Law Enforcement. She stated it's a train the trainer model, housed at Georgetown Law Center. She stated she felt it is a wonderful opportunity for the village.

Trustee Johnson stated he hopes that everyone is having a great summer. He noted that the DEI Advisory Group is moving forward and coming up with definitions. He stated we are going to work and that the group is strong and large and moving forward, and that the group was moving forward in a great direction. Trustee Johnson reported he also had the opportunity to tour the Sheridan, and that he found it to be a fantastic facility and would encourage residents to look at it and take a tour.

Trustee O'Connell stated he is very excited to be talking about and hopefully approving the appointment of Cuyler Brown as Chairman of the EDC. He stated he is also excited to see Walter Wahlfeldt on the list. Trustee O'Connell stated he knows Wally personally and professionally and that his experiences will add a lot and help guide Cuyler. He asked do we have scheduled updates regarding the DEI Advisory Group?

President Adduci stated she is making part of the Board agenda that we have a formal update on all committees. She stated they should also ensure to get it into the monthly newsletter as well. She reported she was unable to go to the Trinity groundbreaking event and understood that it was great, and she stated she is so pleased Trinity is growing. She congratulated our friends at Trinity and the winners of One Earth Film Festival.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2021
- b. Executive Session Meeting Minutes – July 12, 2021
- c. Ratification of Expenditures for Sewer Lateral Line Repair Work on 1400 Block of

- Monroe in the amount of \$17,035.00 – Ordinance
- d. Amendment to FY22 Compensation Plan – Ordinance
- e. Ratification of Submission of Grant Agreements for the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – Ordinance
- f. Waiver of Formal Bid (Due to Sole Source Provider) and Award of Contract Municipal Services Associates, Inc. for Telecommunications Related Consulting Services – Resolution
- g. Monthly Department Reports
- h. Monthly Financial Report – July
- i. Performance Measurement Report
- j. Accounts Payable – July 2021 – \$1,653,346.56
- k. Village Administrator’s Report

Trustee Gillis requested to pull Item C.

Trustee Brennan made a motion, seconded by Trustee O’Connell, to approve the Consent Agenda Items A – B, D – K.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Trustee O’Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to approve the Consent Agenda Item C.

Trustee Gillis stated that her understanding from the previous meeting was to one, fix the problem; and two, understand how it happened. She stated that now it is her understanding that we’re just paying for it in full and there is no expectation residents will pay anything. She stated that was not her understanding previously. She explained she thought that they would gather all the information knowing that there was some sort of cost, like \$5,000.

President Adduci stated that we walked away from that meeting to direct the administration to fix the problem, and then we would determine how to handle this moving forward.

Trustee O’Connell stated that we’re going to do the second part in September. He asked if in the past, we have charged residents for a portion of this work.

Ms. Scheiner stated that previously residents have been responsible for all repairs, and that the direction from the Board in the last meeting was to make the repair and not to charge the residents for any portion. She stated staff will return to the Board in September with any policy changes needed moving forward. She stated the purpose of the action tonight is to ratify the action given from last meeting.

Trustee Vazquez stated that his understanding was to make the repair and then deal with the research and future changes to the policy in future.

Ms. Scheiner stated that there is a fair amount of research required on this issue, including how it impacts their homeowner insurance policies. Ms. Scheiner asked that staff be given more time regarding the policy recommendation due to staffing and time required.

Trustee Gillis stated we have people in the past that have paid in full, people in future that will pay something different, and in the middle we have residents not paying anything. She has stated she has concerns on the equity of that. She asked what is our liability if people had paid in the past and want it reimbursed?

Village Attorney Smith stated that the Board controls its own policies and can change them at any time. He stated there is little to no exposure on this issue just because someone paid for it in the past and now it's not required. He emphasized this is part of the flexibility of governing.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

a. Board and Commission Appointments/Reappointments:

i. Economic Development Commission Appoint Cuyler Brown – Chair (Neubecker vacancy) – 4 Year Term expiring 4/30/25

ii. Economic Development Commission – Appoint Walter Wahlfeldt – Member (Neubecker vacancy) – Remaining Term expiring 4/30/24

President Adduci stated she is very pleased to announce these appointments.

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bachner, to give advice and consent to the Village President's Board and Commission Appointments for items #6A.1-6A.2 effective May 1, 2021.

President Adduci said Cuyler Brown is a current commissioner and that Wally has good experience.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Update: Lake & Lathrop

Mark McKinney from Sedgewick spoke. He said the weeds are being taken care of and the focus this evening was on the Ashland side. He stated they walked the Lake and Lathrop sides and didn't see anything on the primary streets regarding mesh signage on the fencing. He stated they will be more diligent on weeds. He reported there is one more residential sale since our last meeting. Regarding the commercial space, Mr. McKinney stated they are anticipating this week the same square footage in LOI. He stated all interested parties are still at play and there is the same interest in retail. He stated he believes they have everything they need in regards to the permit.

Trustee Bachner asked about total sales.

Mr. McKinney stated they're at 11 sales now and getting to 50% of units sold. Regarding the obstacles about financing, he stated they're seeing activities with lenders and the dialogue is increasing. He stated the expectation by lenders is a minimum of 50% sold. He further stated there is a changing landscape in regards to lenders.

Trustee Brennan asked about a sense of timing regarding lending.

Mr. McKinney stated along with landscape regarding timing, there is a process that takes time. He noted that every layer is proving to take more time and that he didn't have a hard timeline of when to get through that.

Trustee Brennan noted the issues with weeds, ice/snow, and debris at the site. She stated she heard about AT&T workers spilling over into neighboring sites. She stated we don't have a reliable timeline on financing, and we would ask that you take care of your property. She stated we do appreciate you being here tonight, and hope you continue to attend. Trustee Brennan stated they're now at 11 residential sales and the commercial space was at 2,500 sq. ft. at previous meeting.

Mr. McKinney stated they're anticipating they will have a second 2,500 sq. ft. LOI by the end of the week. He stated they are progressing toward the second one for a total 5,000.

President Adduci stated 17,000 sq. ft. of interest is in play.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Update: Village Code Amendments regarding Sewer Repair Services

Ms. Scheiner stated staff will be returning to the Board in September with some recommendations on policy. She stated research is underway, and they are asking for more time to bring to the Board. She stated no action is required right now.

b. Discussion and Direction: Request for Proposals for Lobbying Services

Ms. Scheiner stated Staff is seeking discussion and direction on whether or not to solicit proposals for lobbyists and consulting services. She stated that as we look at the changing landscape and the sheer number of grant opportunities and short timelines, as well as the challenging landscape of where the Village could qualify for funding, residents would benefit from consultants forging ahead in this area. She stated that although the Village is part of the West Central Municipal Conference and the Illinois Municipal League, they have a very broad brush approach towards this area and particularly so regarding legislature, noting unfunded mandates. She stated that having someone who can advocate specifically for River Forest's interests and forge relationships would be good for residents.

President Adduci stated WCMC and IML are focused on the legislature and not funding areas.

Trustee O'Connell stated that one of the residents in the last meeting on the Monroe Street issue mentioned FEMA funds. He stated that if you have the right person with access to different information, it would be helpful. He stated it would be a wise thing to have on a consulting basis and limited in scope, and that it should pay dividends down the road.

Trustee Vazquez stated that is a great idea. He stated that with all the public bodies out there, you need someone out in that world who can pitch to legislators and tell them what the Village needs. He noted this has a lot to do on how they listen and that it helps having someone advocate. He asked if it would be at both the state and federal levels?

Ms. Scheiner stated that the Board is not awarding a contract to anyone right now. She stated staff can explore opportunities, and that staff is looking for direction this evening but no action. She emphasized wanting to make sure there is buy-in from Board before spending time releasing this type of proposal, and that they are looking at all the options.

Trustee Johnson stated he also is very much in favor to receive funding that was not considered would pay for itself.

Trustee O'Connell asked would GovHR do this work?

Trustee Vazquez stated he would think the RFP would consider the consultant's history.

Trustee O'Connell asked is this their lane?

Ms. Scheiner stated no it is not.

Trustee Bachner stated it is a good idea and that she does think that there are different people for federal vs state funding sources. She stated she wondered about reporting on their efforts. She asked whether, to the extent there are issues that may help the residents, would the consultant go full charge towards an issue? Or, she asked, would the Board have an opinion on which issue to pursue?

President Adduci stated that for some of the bigger issues, something very specific to River Forest, that would be direction from all of us.

Trustee Bachner stated if they are talking about legislature, that the Board has a chance to discuss it first.

Ms. Scheiner stated the Board sets policy direction, then the staff executes. She noted that to the extent staff identifies issues, they will bring it to the Board's attention.

Trustee Bachner stated she does want to commend staff regarding grant funding and the work has been incredible.

Trustee Vazquez stated if we do set priorities, this person would be the one following up to the Board.

Trustee Brennan stated that we are such a small community. She said she is on the fence about justifying the cost because they do not know what the cost is. She stated there is consensus and she is willing to see what proposals look like.

Trustee Vazquez stated that this consensus is just to look into the options. He noted the Board will still have the opportunity to evaluate whether to hire someone.

Trustee Bachner stated we would want to look at the success rate and maybe the consultant could offer suggestions of what could be of value to the Village.

President Adduci stated it is just an RFP and it is not an option anymore. She emphasized the competitive nature of capital budgets that comes out of federal and state funds is incredible. She stated the Village is missing opportunities, so the cost benefit is huge.

c. Update: Building Code Updates

Ms. Scheiner stated there is no action required tonight. She stated the Village operates under a series of building codes, and that these are codes the Village uses when plans are in for consideration and building permits. She noted the Village currently operates under 2003 Code and Staff is proposing adoption of the 2018 Code. Ms. Scheiner stated the Village has already undergone analysis through B&F Technical and Mike D'Onofrio. She stated they are proposing that the Village let the building community know this is what we would be doing and that nothing would take effect until next year. She stated the new editions of code are updated every 3 years. She highlighted the proposed code is already pretty robust and they do take into account the sign ordinance amendments and new sprinkler policy. She stated they would not be undoing anything the Board already did.

President Adduci stated that to make sure they are careful and that they do not add things that will add to undue costs of homeowners.

Ms. Scheiner stated in terms of local amendments, Staff is not introducing a more robust regulatory environment than is necessary.

Trustee Vazquez asked if there is a highlighted version of the new code?

Ms. Scheiner stated that the code books are available for public inspection at any time. She noted they would point out anything substantial. She stated the audience most interested is the building community, and they are going to be most interested in local amendments. She stated the Village will be very transparent about what those changes are.

Trustee Vazquez stated he was most interested in what costs the residents may be incurring.

Ms. Scheiner stated the new code does not modify any fees, but that is something needing study relative to the budget. She also emphasized a more up to date code ensures that people are living in a safe building, noting insurance companies recognize that and offer a reduced rate.

Trustee Bachner asked should we be looking at this more frequently given that there is a 15-year gap from the existing code?

Ms. Scheiner stated yes, but that she does not think every 3 years is necessary. She stated somewhere around 6 is the sweet spot.

- d. Appointment/Reappointment of Village Officials All Terms Ending 5/12/2025
 - 1. Finance Director – Rosemary McAdams
 - 2. Police Chief – James O’Shea
 - 3. Director of Public Works and Development Services – Jeff Loster

Trustee O’Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to give advice and consent to the Village President’s Department Head Appointments for items #8D.1-8D.3, all with Terms Ending 5/12/2025.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee O'Connell made a motion, seconded by Trustee Vazquez, to adjourn the regular Village Board of Trustees Meeting at 8:29 p.m.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk