

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, August 28th, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, August 28th, 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 7:03 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees O'Connell, Vazquez, Johnson, Brennan, Bachner, Gillis (7:07pm), Village Clerk Keller

Absent:

Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Deputy Fire Chief Dave Bochenek, Police Chief James O'Shea, Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood, Police Commander Michael Swierczynski, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Village Attorney Lance Malina, HR Manager Trish Ivansek, Public Works Director Jeff Loster, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS

President Adduci stated that any Public Comment regarding Agenda Items 7a and 9a will be made during the discussion of those agenda items. She asked that any residents with Public Comment regarding topics outside of those agenda items speak now.

President Adduci invited John Dzuryak up to the podium for Public Comment. Mr. Dzuryak stated he had concerns regarding the quantity of litter between Park Avenue and Keystone on Hawthorne Avenue. He asked if the Village could erect signs around the Village reminding people to not litter and place a trash can in the area to help reduce the amount of litter.

Mr. Dzuryak also asked questions and made remarks concerning designated bike routes in the Village. Additionally, he asked if the Village could investigate altering the design of storm drains in the Village to make them safer for bicyclists. Additionally, he made remarks on construction workers in the Village not following Village Code and Village Staff not following proper parade safety practices during the Village Memorial Day Parade.

Finally, he suggested the Police Department Attempt to save money when purchasing new Police Vehicles by reusing parts from older vehicles.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee O'Connell noted that the new improvements at Keystone Park look great.

Trustee Johnson reported having no comments.

Trustee Brennan commented that it is nice to see a room full of residents engaged. She reminded everyone that it is time to sign up for E-Waste Pickup. She raised some concerns about parties other than Lake Shore Recycling picking up E-Waste items off the curb. She asked Public Works Director Loster if there was any way to better coordinate with LRS for E-Waste Pickup.

Village Clerk Keller had nothing new to add to the record.

Trustee Vazquez gave a shoutout to Finance Director Rosemary Mcadams and staff for awards they received regarding the budget document. He also reported attending the Mayors Caucus on Age Friendly Communities meeting on July 20th. Trustee Vazquez also congratulated the Village and President Adduci for receiving a grant for ADA sidewalk improvements. Finally, he wished everyone a happy and safe Labor Day Weekend.

Trustee Gillis had no comments.

Trustee Bachner gave a land acknowledgement.

President Adduci reported meeting with the with Congressmen Danny K. Davis and President of the Illinois Senate Don Harmon. She also noted the Village received a grant for sustainability work completed by the Cross Community Climate Collaborative C4. She then welcomed Jessica Spencer, the new Assistant Village Administrator. Then, she reported that Village hosted the Illinois Municipal League summer meeting. Finally, she wished everyone a happy Labor Day and reminded everyone to attend the September 11th LemonAid Stand.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - July 10th, 2023
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Minutes - July 10th, 2023
- c. Accounts Payable - July 2023 - \$ 1,865,644.97
- d. Financial Report - June 2023
- e. Financial Report - July 2023
- f. Administration Department Report
- g. Monthly Department Reports
- h. National Rail Safety Week Proclamation
- i. Award of Contract - 2023 Permeable Paver Maintenance Project - \$79,339.01
- j. Award of Contract - 2023 Salt Shed Construction Project - \$48,750.00
- k. Authorization to Sell Surplus Village Property - Squad #14 Ford Explorer 2016 Police Pursuit - Ordinance
- l. Award of Contract - 2023 Dodge Charger - \$35,744.00
- m. Award of Contract - 2023 Dodge Durango - \$68,790.00
- n. Award of Contract - 20023 Ford F-150 Responders. - \$137,580.00
- o. Change Order - 2023 Curb and Sidewalk Project - \$5,466.00 - Resolution

- p. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 1500 William
- q. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 706 Monroe
- r. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 911 Lathrop
- s. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 558 Lathrop
- t. A Right-of-Way Encroachment Waiver and Agreement for an Irrigation System in the Public Right-of-Way with the Property Owners at 318 Gale

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to approve items a through t. Seconded by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

- a. Traffic and Safety Commission Recommendations – July 19, 2023, Meeting - Ordinances

President Adduci stated that now would be the time for the public to make comments surrounding the recommendation from the Traffic and Safety Commission. She asked residents to keep their comments under 5 minutes, per the Village Ordinances.

President Adduci invited Dan Wasiolek up to the podium to give public comment. Mr. Wasiolek reported being in favor of the proposed traffic infrastructure and that he believes they should be made permanent.

Next, Dr. Giuseppina Nucifora gave public comment against the proposed traffic infrastructure. She shared documents with Village Board containing data data from the Village Traffic Study, and data from the Village Traffic Survey to support her arguments. She reported that an overwhelming majority of residents oppose the barriers.

President Adduci alerted Dr Nucifora that she had gone over her allowable five-minute public comment. A resident, Kate Byrne, offered to allow Dr. Nucifora to utilize the 5 minutes she was planning on using to discuss the traffic infrastructure as she agreed with the arguments Dr. Nucifora was articulating.

President Adduci allowed Dr. Nucifora to continue.

Pat Birg made public comment against the traffic installations. He reported that there has been an increase of dangerous traffic in the alleys in the area.

Bob Armalas gave public comments in support of the proposed traffic installations. He noted that neighboring municipalities have installed similar installations and that it is time for the Village to do the same.

He also requested a truck weight limit ordinance for the Village. He also requested additional event parking mitigation methods on Greenfield and school parking and speed limit signs on Greenfield and LeMoyne. He also requested additional professional solutions to solve the cut-through traffic problem. Finally, he requested the village does not extend the Lake and Lathrop Permit.

Mary Stamatakos of 1507 Clinton gave public comment in support of the traffic installations. She also requested the stop sign be placed at her intersection.

Edward Bellock, a resident of Elmwood Park, made public comment in support of the proposed traffic infrastructure. He noted the potential for increased safety for the children in the area.

Gary Williams made public comment supporting the proposed traffic installations. He reported that speeding is additionally an issue and more traffic calming measures are needed.

Lee Wingo spoke against the installation of proposed traffic installation. He commented that he felt the traffic installations were an overreach of local government authority. He noted liking the suggestions about additional stop signs and other ways to slow down cut-through traffic. He also commented being unhappy with the overnight parking requirements in the Village.

Gregory Abcarian made public comment against the installation of the traffic barriers. He commented that the barriers did not reduce the number of cars, rather just moved the cars to different streets. He also questioned why the Village paid for a traffic study and then appeared to not have utilized the study.

Kelly Abcarian reported that the meeting minutes from the most recent Traffic and Safety Commission meeting did not appear to be accurate. She also questioned how the data was utilized from the Traffic Study.

Ron Krause gave public comment in support of the proposed traffic installations. He also proposed the Village investigate installing traffic measures on East and West streets in the Village.

Colin Hanses spoke in support of the proposed traffic installations but also proposed additional signage to help reduce cut through traffic on other streets.

Karen Neal reported not being in favor of the proposed traffic infrastructure. She reported that the barriers create a false sense of safety and may impede emergency vehicles.

Pice Chen gave public comment in support of the proposed traffic installations. He proposed the Village consider installing other traffic calming measures at other streets in the area.

Jill McMahon made public comment against the proposed traffic installations. She reminded everyone that the vote from the Traffic and Safety Commission occurred before public comment was permitted. She also reported that speeding is an issue in the area. She asked that the Village consider allowing parking on both sides of the streets in the area, so it forces drivers to slow down.

Charles Anderson commented that he was unhappy that this situation has neighbors against each other. He noted that he supports the installation of the traffic installations, and suggested the Village consider blocking off LeMoyne and Greenfield as well to block East and West Traffic.

President Adduci stated that Mr. Anderson was over his allotted 5-minute comment. Mr. Anderson gave thanks and ended his public comment.

Latrina Brooke commented against the proposed traffic installations. She reported giving public comments as a representative for the townhomes at 1406 Harlem. She commented that it has negatively impacted her daily commute. She reported that the barriers have not stopped cut through traffic as traffic can still get through on Greenfield.

She also agreed with others who stated that the meeting minutes from the Traffic and Safety Commission are not accurate. She disagreed with some of the other public comments made that evening that utilized Oak Park and other areas as an example of communities who have implemented traffic installations.

Marika Panton made public comment against the proposed barriers and noted the potential impact the barriers will have on businesses and emergency vehicles.

Stephanie Petersmarck made public comment in opposition to the proposed barriers. Ms. Petersmarck stated that she felt the Traffic and Safety Commission used an arbitrary decision process to put forth the recommendations before the Village Board. She asked that the village Board wait until the Traffic and Safety Commission utilize further tools to analyze the situation before accepting their recommendations.

Andrea Morowczynski made public comment via an email to President Adduci in support of the proposed traffic installations.

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to install stop signs in the eastbound and westbound directions of the intersection of Clinton Place and LeMoyne Street. Seconded by Trustee Brennan.

Public Works Director Loster gave background on the proposed stop signs.

Trustee O'Connell asked Director Loster for information on the "Traffic Calming Toolbox" that some residents and staff have mentioned during the meeting.

Director Loster reported the toolbox will be provided by the Village Wide Traffic study that will be presented at the September Traffic and Safety Commission meeting.

Trustee Brennan asked for further information on what type of traffic calming measures will be provided.

Director Loster gave background on some of the potential items in the toolbox.

President Adduci asked if Mr. Loster saw any alternatives to the proposed stop signs.

Director Loster stated that he cannot answer that question as he does not have the professional qualifications to answer that question.

Trustee Johnson asked how extensive the costs will be for placing stop signs.

Director Loster reported that the cost would be minimal.

Trustee Vazquez asked Director Loster on the status of the Village Wide Traffic Study.

Director Loster reported the study is in draft form and almost finished. He also stated the study does not look at the Northeast Corner of Town as the Village already utilized a separate study to address that portion of town.

Administrator Walsh stated that the Village did ask the new study to collect traffic counts on Division, Monroe and William.

Trustee O'Connell asked if there were any desire from the Board members to vote at a later date.

Trustee Brennan noted that the motion for the stop sign did not appear to receive any criticism from residents so the Board should vote.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to install stop signs in the eastbound and westbound directions of the intersection of Greenfield Street and Bonnie Brae. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Director Loster gave background on the stop signs at this particular intersection.

Trustee Gillis asked for clarification on the "Three-Way-Stop" nature of the intersection.

Director Loster noted that this intersection includes the entrance to the Fenwick baseball field parking lot.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes

MOTION by Trustee Johnson remove the plastic barricades at LeMoyne Street and Harlem Avenue and replace them with a permanent installation, allowing only southbound-to-westbound and eastbound-to-southbound turning movements. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

A member of the audience asked for clarification on the differences between the items being discussed and the Ordinances in the packet.

Director Loster provided clarification on the ordinances and then offered background on the proposed permanent installation.

Trustee Johnson asked about the potential costs of the proposed installation.

Director Loster reported that this installation would certainly be more expensive than other potential options.

Trustee Brennan asked if Director Loster had any input surrounding the ability of emergency vehicles to utilize the intersection if the proposed infrastructure was implemented.

Director Loster stated that the Village has tools, such as, "Auto-Turn" that help the Village analyze the ability of the Emergency Services vehicles to utilizes the intersection.

President Adduci asked the staff members from Public Safety if they had any input on this.

Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek reported that the he did not foresee any issues.

Trustee Bachner asked about the visibility of the proposed infrastructure during the winter snow months.

Director Loster reported that the Board could consider reflective bollards or plantings to make the installation more visible.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: Johnson

Motion Passes

MOTION by Trustee Bachner to remove the plastic barricades at Greenfield Street and Harlem Avenue and replace them with a permanent installation, allowing only southbound-

to-westbound and eastbound-to-southbound turning movements, with a design that specifically allows for bus traffic to easily traverse the intersection. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Director Loster provided background on the proposed infrastructure.

Trustee Bachner asked if making the installations larger for buses would also make them easier for people to go around.

Director Loster reported yes.

Trustee Johnson asked how costly it would be to remove the barriers if the Village received additional information later stating they would not be needed.

Village Administrator Walsh provided clarification on the proposed use of the Traffic Toolbox.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: Johnson

Motion Passes

MOTION by Trustee Gillis to install stop signs at all exit points in alleys bound by Harlem Avenue, Greenfield Street, William Street and North Avenue in addition to all three legs of the "T" alley intersection just west of Harlem Avenue and south of North Avenue and to install seasonal speed bumps within the same alleys at locations to be determined by staff – to be removed during winter months for the purposes of snow-removal operations. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Trustee O'Connell asked how speed bumps and speed tables impact public works operations.

Trustee Bachner asked if the stop signs could be placed in a different position than previously placed so as to make the signs more visible.

Director Loster stated that may not be possible because stop signs are required to be in front of the crosswalk. He proposed the Village could investigate placing mirrors in the alley for more visibility. He commented that he is open to any suggestions to better the alleys.

Trustee Gillis asked if it would be possible for the Village to remove the bumps and add tabletop bumps at a later date. Director Loster commented yes. He also noted that any future changes would come back before the Board for approval so they can be discussed at the appropriate time.

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

Motion Passes

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell to remove the plastic barricades at North Avenue and Clinton Place. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Trustee Brennan asked if there would be value in not voting on this until the Traffic and Safety Commission has the traffic calming toolbox. Trustee Brennan offered the suggestion of potential having parking on both sides of Clinton to calm traffic.

Trustee Brennan reported that she heard multiple times in the most recent Traffic and Safety Commission meeting that the commission had direction to present findings for the current August Board meeting. She stated she did not recall the Board offering direction to the commission and noted that she would be comfortable waiting for more additional information and discussion at the level of the Traffic and Safety Commission before making a vote.

Village Administrator Walsh stated that the Board approved a policy statement in April that directed the Commission to discuss the barriers at its May and July meetings, with the goal being a new recommendation. However, he stressed that the schedule is not firm and the process can be directed back to the Commission for further discussion if the Board chooses.

A discussion ensued regarding the possibility of tabling this item.

Trustee Vazquez rescinded his Second to the motion as he is worried about potential arbitrary decisions.

Village Attorney Malina provided clarification on the process of tabling.

MOTION by Trustee Brennan to table this agenda item. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

Trustee Bachner asked why the commission offered to remove these and not other installations.

Director Loster provided clarification.

Roll call:

Ayes: Vazquez, Johnson, Bachner, Brennan, Gillis.

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes

The meeting was paused for five minutes for a break.

The meeting resumed and President Adduci addressed some comments from residents so far. Village Attorney Malina stated that the Village has jurisdiction over streets in town.

8.UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Authorizing the Execution of a Fourth Amendment to the Second Amended and Restated Redevelopment Agreement for Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue – Ordinance.

Louise Mezzatesta gave public comment against the proposed authorization of the proposed redevelopment agreement. She asked that members of the audience who would also like the Village Board to vote no to raise their hand. Ms. Mezzatesta listed some of the issues surrounding the finances of the project and other various projects the developer has worked on. She suggested the Village discuss the earlier traffic issues with Oak Park.

William Belke stated that he thinks that the Lake and Lathrop project is a failure and listed nine reasons that he felt proved his argument such as the financial issues and litigation issues surrounding the property. He also asked if there is a way the Village can publish how the TIF money was used for the project.

Phylliss Rubin gave public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. She referenced prior meetings and agreements the Village has had with the developers of Lake and Lathrop and asked why the Village Board has faith in making another agreement.

Marika Panton made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement and asked if any of the Village Board members have any sort of financial ties to the development.

Lewis Rieck made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. He questioned the integrity of the development company and asked the Village to reconsider the agreement and pursue other developments.

Chris Savaiano made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. He reported his car had been splashed with concrete from the project site. He asked that the Village Board make a dignified decision.

Lawrence Garber reported moving recently to River Forest in 2020 and has liked his time in River Forest. He commented that he is not happy with the current state of the project and asked the Village consider finding a new developer or just starting over from scratch and making the site a park.

Judith McDevitt made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. She reminded everyone about all the taxes that could have been drawn from this development site over the past years but have not been due to the lack of development. She asked if the Village is liable in this situation.

She remarked how well Downtown Oak Park looks compared to River Forest. Finally, she stated any Village Board member who runs for reelection and votes yes to the agreement, she will not vote for.

Margie Cekander made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. She reported being unhappy with the items the Village has given up in the agreement and suggested that this is actually “Public-Private” development project due to usage of TIF funds and other government funds. She reminded everyone that many of the documents surrounding the project can be accessed on the Cook County Clerk’s website.

President Adduci stated that Margie has already gone over her 5-minute allotted time period.

Margie Cekander finished her comments by reminding everyone about the amount of public funds in the site.

Angie Seder read into the record a statement from a resident who put money down on the property and then withdrew the funds. The resident stated that while they loved the Village, the lack of firm timeline from the developer made them revoke their funds.

Ken Weise made public comment against the proposed authorization of the redevelopment agreement. He noted that the walkways around the development site are in disarray and reported concern about walking on the sidewalks during the winter months as many of the hazards will be hidden under snow.

MOTION by Trustee O’Connell to Authorize the Execution of a Fourth Amendment to the Second Amended and Restated Redevelopment Agreement for Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Village Administrator Walsh gave a recap on the history of the development project and the property itself.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification surrounding owed property taxes for the property.

Village Attorney Malina provided background on the property taxes.

Trustee Brennan asked if the sidewalk repair costs are included in this agreement.

Village Administrator Walsh stated those repair costs are not included in this agreement.

President Adduci invited the President of Sedgwick, Marty Paris, and the Director of Project Operations, Mark McKinney, up to the podium to field questions from the Board surrounding the property.

Mr. McKinney gave background on the project and reported on the issues that caused the delays to the project. He reported that Sedgwick is committed to getting the project done per the August 2024 timeline provided to the Village Board.

Mr. McKinney reported that Sedgwick currently has 15 contracts and 2 pending contracts for sales in the building. He emphasized that many of the amenities in the condominiums are not common to the area such as single-story living, direct elevator access, and outdoor spaces.

Mr. McKinney reported that many of the issues surrounding the property are due to actions by Wintrust Bank.

Mr. McKinney also noted that Sedgwick is committed to having monthly meetings with the Village Board in the future. He also reported being aware of the issues with the sidewalk on Ashland.

President Adduci asked Marty Paris to address the residents and Board.

Marty Paris introduced himself to the Village Board and residents. He reported feeling strongly about the project and felt completing the project is important to the Village of River Forest.

Mr. Paris commented that he felt the real estate market has embraced this project based on the number of sales and he feels as if this project will allow a new population of people to move into the Village.

Mr. Paris also stated that they intend to finish the project within the 12-month permit extension.

Mr. Paris reported that Sedgwick does have a significant financial hurdle to overcome to finish the project. He also stated that the funding for the project was stopped in November of 2022. Mr. Paris stated that if they cannot work with Wintrust, they do have backup lenders that are interested in funding the project.

Mr. Paris noted that many of the key pieces of materials for the project have nearly completed what he refers to as the, "shop drawing" portion of construction.

Trustee Johnson asked how Sedgwick plans to address the notice of foreclosure prior to the September 15th deadline.

Mr. Paris stated that they will either find a new lender or work out an agreement with Wintrust.

Trustee Johnson asked that Mr. Paris or Mr. McKinney address the mechanic's liens.

Mr. Paris stated that the liens are due to the construction lender not funding the project.

Trustee Johnson asked if they got a new loan, would that address the mechanic's liens.

Mr. Paris reported that while many of the mechanic's liens are insured, a majority of the are approved and pending funding.

Trustee Johnson noted that in his experiences mechanic's liens are based on workers not receiving payment for their work.

Mr. Paris reported that subcontractors use mechanic's liens as a leverage play towards the

general contractor.

Trustee Johnson expressed his disagreement with that statement..

Trustee Johnson asked what they planned to do regarding the property taxes.

Mr. Paris stated that the property taxes will be paid once funding is secured.

Trustee Johnson asked Mr. Paris why the Board and Village should believe a representative of Sedgwick will be present at future meetings.

Mr. Paris stated because the meetings are in the agreement, thus Sedgwick will be present.

Trustee Johnson commented that Sedgwick made the same promises during the last negotiation as well.

Trustee O'Connell asked who the general contractor will be going forward with this project.

Mr. Paris noted that it will be Alpha Construction Services.

Trustee O'Connell asked if Alpha Construction services is part of Mr. Paris' organization.

Mr. Paris stated that Alpha is an affiliated entity.

Trustee O'Connell asked if they plan to work through the winter.

Mr. Paris stated that in general the construction will continue through the winter but that some aspects will be more difficult to complete during the winter season.

Trustee O'Connell asked what would happen if Sedgwick did not receive the necessary financing for the project.

Mr. Paris stated that they would have to determine what the next alternative is.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the September 15th date was proposed by Sedgwick.

Mr. Paris stated that the date was negotiated and talked through during discussions with the Village.

Trustee Vazquez asked if Sedgwick agrees to that date.

Mr. Paris stated that was one of the terms in the agreement.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the new funding would cover the mechanic's liens.

Mr. Paris stated the liens would have to be addressed in the new funding.

Trustee Vazquez asked that if Sedgwick cannot receive funding prior to the deadline, will they

return and ask for an additional extension.

Mr. Paris stated that if they do not have financing by September 15th, they will act on the best plan to move the project forward.

A discussion ensued between Trustee Vazquez and Mr. Paris on what would happen if Sedgwick could not secure the funding.

Trustee Vazquez stated he is not inclined to agree to any further extensions after this agreement.

Trustee Bachner reported that it has been difficult to receive any sort of information or updates surrounding the project from Sedgwick. She then asked that they reiterate what delays slowed down the project timeline.

Mr. McKinney stated that COVID, a concrete laborer's strike, running into unmarked underground utilities, and issues with the financing all impacted the project timeline.

Trustee Bachner asked why Sedgwick did not inform the Village Board about these delays as they could have informed the public.

At this point, The Village Board room internet went down, and the meeting was halted while staff fixed the I.T. issues. During this time, the Village Board took a brief recess.

The meeting was resumed and President Adduci asked Trustee Bachner to resume her questioning.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification regarding the dates on the project timeline provided to the Village as she felt that there was no accountability in the timeline.

Mr. McKinney reported that there may have been a mix-up in the timeline shared with the Board and that if needed, the Board can reference the GANTT chart provided.

Trustee Bachner commented that the dates provided are too vague and not definitive.

Mr. McKinney stated that to Sedgwick's knowledge, no members of the Board are tied to this project financially.

Trustee Bachner asked when Sedgwick first realized that they were not going to be able to finish the project in the allotted time.

Mr. McKinney stated that Sedgwick was in contact with the Village shortly before the August 2023 deadline.

Trustee Bachner reported that the Wednesday Journal published an article quoting Sedgwick stating that they knew they were not able to finish the project in April of 2023.

Mr. McKinney reported yes, as that was a few months before the August deadline.

Trustee Bachner asked if Sedgwick knew it then, why were they not providing more information to the public surrounding the project.

Mr. McKinney stated that they were working through negotiation with the Village and the lender during this time. Due to this, he felt they were not able to give definitive answers due to the fluid situation.

Trustee Bachner asked Staff when the Village was first informed that Sedgwick may not be able to finish the project in time.

Village Administrator Walsh reported that as early as August and September 2022 Village staff had been concerned about the lack of progress occurring and had reached out to Sedgwick to remind them about the August 2023 deadline.

Village Attorney Malina reported that the developer, through its attorney, notified the Village that it would require an extension back in the Fall of 2022 but that this notification was not official. Mr. Malina stated that the Village informed Sedgwick that this would be a breach of the Redevelopment Agreement.

Mr. Paris stated that he met with Village officials on May 12th of 2023 to discuss the project.

Village Attorney Malina stated that this was the first time the Village discussed an extended timeline in addition to the settlement regarding outstanding fines.

Mr. Paris added that he thought April was when the Village and Sedgwick started having serious discussions surrounding the project. Mr. McKinney reported making note of having a meeting around that same time.

Trustee Brennan stated that she was concerned that if the Board agreed to the extension, that the pattern displayed by Sedgwick of unpaid taxes, fines, and violations will continue. She also asked if Sedgwick would be willing to give an estimate of the taxes due on the property into an escrow so that the Village has the taxes.

Mr. Paris stated that the current construction escrow has money allotted for around three years of taxes.

Trustee Brennan asked if that is the case, why are they not being paid on time.

Mr. Paris stated it is because the bank has not funded the loan since November of 2022.

Trustee Brennan asked if Sedgwick could place the Village fine in an escrow as well.

Mr. Paris stated that while those funds are not in an escrow, the payment of those funds is in the agreement before the Board.

Trustee Brennan commented that she does not believe that the fines should be reduced for Sedgwick's attendance at Village Board meetings.

Trustee Johnson asked when they expect the building to be closed so as to make it easier to work in the winter months.

Mr. McKinney stated within the first quarter of next year.

Trustee Gillis asked why the previous financial institution pulled out of the project.

Mr. McKinney stated that they are attempting to figure that out as well and that it may be a byproduct of a regional bank issue the entire county faced.

Trustee Gillis asked if they expect the people who signed contracts to wait for the building to be completed.

Mr. McKinney stated the total number of contracts signed over the course of the project is thirty-five but that currently up to seventeen contracts that are filled or in the process of being filled.

Mr. Paris stated that they are obtaining around one contract per month.

Trustee Gillis asked for clarification on the River North Project in downtown Chicago.

Mr. McKinney stated that the building is 14 stories and has 31 units and was originally marketed as a condominium building like the River Forest building. However, Mr. McKinney stated that for a variety of reasons they changed the property to rentals.

Trustee Gillis asked how long the construction took for that project.

Mr. McKinney stated that the project was mostly delayed to due COVID and the total project time took around four to five years.

President Adduci reminded residents and the trustees on the history of this project and development site, specifically the environmental problems that were discovered on the site that delayed development for years.

President Adduci reminded everyone that it will not be easy for the Village to acquire a new developer for the site if they chose to not extend the permit as it will also involve the project lender Wintrust.

President Adduci stated that she is in no way shape or form invested in this property.

President Adduci stated that Sedgwick must manage the upkeep surrounding the property and that a failure to do so will have consequences.

Mr. McKinney stated that he understood what President Adduci was saying.

Trustee Bachner stated she was concerned that other members of the Board may be faced with having to vote on another extension in the future. She also stated she was worried that Sedgwick would not follow the agreement once the extension is granted.

Trustee Gillis asked for clarification on the earliest date Sedgwick could start construction on the property.

President Adduci stated it was February of 2022 as prior to this they could not build due to the EPA clean up.

Village Attorney Malina provided context on the difficulties the developer and the Village faced during Covid when dealing with the State and County.

Trustee Vazquez commented that he is not involved in the Lake and Lathrop project. He also apologized to Trustee Johnson for mistaking some details about discussions they had.

Trustee Vazquez also echoed the same sentiments that President Adduci made surrounding the EPA involvement with the property. Regarding the agreement itself, Trustee Vazquez stated that he felt the agreement before the Board is strong due to the defined dollar amounts and conditions listed in the agreement. He also reminded everyone that finding a new developer is not an easy task, especially if the property is involved in litigation between the developer and the lender.

Trustee Bachner reported being frustrated with the continued extensions of supposed final deadlines.

Trustee Brennan echoed the same concerns of Trustee Bachner.

President Adduci asked Village Clerk Keller to take the vote.

Roll call:

Ayes: Vazquez, Johnson, Gillis, O'Connell

Absent: None

Nays: Bachner, Brennan

Motion Passes

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Trustee O'Connell. Seconded by Trustee Gillis

Roll call:

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

Absent: None

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 11:40 p.m.


Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk