

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 9, 2019**

A Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, September 9, 2019 at 6:00 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 6:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Brennan, Henek, O'Connell and Vazquez

Absent: Trustee Cargie

Also Present: Village Clerk Brand-White, Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant to the Village Administrator Jonathan Pape, Deputy Clerk Sara Phyfer, Village Attorney Greg Smith, Police Chief James O'Shea, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann

**2. PRESENTATION ON RECREATIONAL CANNABIS**

Assistant Village Administrator Scheiner [presented](#) information on establishing recreational cannabis establishments.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

In response to a question from Trustee Brennan regarding smoking lounges. Assistant Administrator Scheiner stated that the Board can prohibit consumption on the premises of a dispensary.

Daniel Lauber, 7215 Oak. Mr. Lauber encouraged the Board to proceed with a rational zoning set of amendments to allow recreational cannabis and to impose a 3% tax on sales. He stated recreational cannabis is a reality and makes sense as long as it is not sold to anyone underage.

Marilyn Thomas, 7911 North. Ms. Thomas stated her preference is that this use is banned in River Forest.

In response to a question from Ellen Liebner, 411 Ashland, Police Chief O'Shea stated there is currently no test for cannabis impairment that is similar to a breathalyzer, but that it is something the industry is working on. He assured that the Police Department is trained on impaired driving detection.

Liita Forsyth, 411 Park. Ms. Forsyth stated that she is opposed to this use. She further stated that she is the child of an addict and did not see anything good come of it.

Ingrid Liu, 931 Thatcher. Dr. Liu stated she is a physician in Oak Park and a member of the Society of Cannabis Clinicians. She reviewed facts about cannabis use that she has seen in research and through her practice, and she encouraged the Board to make their decision based on facts and not fear.

Nicole Miller, 7629 Vine. Ms. Miller stated she is in favor of allowing this use. She reviewed some studies from Colorado, noting they show that recreational cannabis facilities have no greater impact on a neighborhood than a coffee shop or pharmacy, and that home values increase in municipalities that permit this use. She encouraged the opportunity for a diversity of businesses.

Another resident inquired about conducting an economic analysis, including traffic volumes. He encouraged the Board to exercise caution moving forward and suggested it may be better to learn from other communities' mistakes first rather than committing them ourselves.

Assistant Administrator Scheiner clarified that in 2020, the State will only issue 47 licenses in this region, which includes Chicago and extends to Naperville and Elgin. She commented that it will be a very competitive marketplace to attract even one dispensary. Based on revenue projections done by the finance director, Ms. Scheiner estimated about \$400,000 per license in annual revenue to community. She reiterated that a significant amount of revenue will become available at the State and local levels for a variety of programs.

Administrator Palm explained that the Village would be able to control issues like traffic, access, and delivery hours through planned developments and special uses.

Carolyn Kilbride, 1335 Park. Ms. Kilbride stated that recreational cannabis is not a panacea, and encouraged the Board to exercise caution with regard to licenses. She reviewed some studies from Colorado suggesting increases in traffic fatalities and stated that there is no net gain in taxes.

President Adduci clarified that Illinois is rolling this out cautiously, which is why the region is only getting 47 licenses. She also explained that the licenses are issued through the State, not the municipality.

Robert Zeh, 836 Bonnie Brae. Mr. Zeh stated allowing this use would make it harder to keep his children drug free, and that keeping them safe was one of the reasons why his family is here. He commented on CBEs' lack of access to the federal banking system.

Mary Anne Zeh, 836 Bonnie Brae. Ms. Zeh stated she had the same opinion and asked whether parents who host underage cannabis parties will be prosecuted similarly as for alcohol.

Police Chief O'Shea stated that there is currently no State or County laws to address this but that the Village Board could confer with the Village Attorney to discuss creating a similar ordinance.

Barbara Langer, 415 Franklin. Ms. Langer stated that as a cyclist, she opposes this use and did not want to invite any more sources for an impaired driver that could run her off the road.

Trustee Brennan asked whether there was any benefit of waiting to see how this goes in other municipalities and whether it would be difficult to go through the process of repealing this.

Assistant Administrator Scheiner stated the land use piece should be in place by the end of the calendar year so people know what to expect when the law permitting recreational cannabis use becomes effective January 1, 2020. She stated that the Department of Revenue needs to have the local tax on file by October 1, 2019, but the Village would only collect revenue on the excise tax if there is a dispensary in town. She clarified that the tax ordinance can be repealed if there is a decision now or in the future to prohibit this use in the Village. Additionally, she explained that it is the same process to repeal an ordinance regarding the land use: a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance requires a public hearing and the Zoning Board of Appeal's recommendation to the Village Board.

President Adduci stated that even if the use is permitted, the Village may end up waiting several years for a dispensary due to the State's restriction on the number of licenses it will issue at a time. She noted that item 8A on the agenda for the regular meeting is to direct Staff to hold a public hearing for a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Vazquez made a motion, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Roll call:

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

Absent: Trustee Cargie

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk