

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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 Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson, Bachner, Gillis, O'Connell, Village Clerk Keller

Absent:

Also Present: Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Deputy Fire Chief Bochenek, Police Chief James O'Shea, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Assistant Finance Director Keke Boyer, Village Attorney Michael Marrs, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek, Public Works Management Analyst Seth Jansen, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Village Administrator Matt Walsh.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

President Adduci invited Juli Ann Geldner up to the podium to make public comment.

Ms. Geldner made public comment about a telephone call she received from Village Administrator Walsh on Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup> regarding ribbons she placed on parkway trees in front of her home. Ms. Geldner stated that Mr. Walsh told her that due to a complaint filed with the Village, the ribbons would have to be removed from her trees.

Ms. Geldner reported that she felt that the complaint filed with the Village was based on antisemitism due to the targeting of her specific ribbons. She also stated that Mr. Walsh informed her that the Village will be uniformly enforcing the ordinance that reportedly does not allow ribbons to be placed on trees. Ms. Geldner also addressed the ordinance cited by the Village that does not allow ribbons and stated that she does not think it applies to ribbons on trees.

President Adduci asked the Village Board if they would like to revisit the ordinance regarding objects on trees.

Trustee Vazquez asked if the Village has taken any steps to remove the other ribbons placed on trees around town.

Mr. Walsh stated the Village was planning on contacting residents but has not done so yet.

President Adduci suggested that for the time being, all ribbons be allowed to stay up.

President Adduci invited Phylis Rubin to make public comment.

Phylis Rubin made public comment stating that she was troubled by the comments made by Ms. Geldner. Ms. Rubin gave thanks to the Village for the improvements at the Lake and Lathrop Property. She also made public comment regarding the proposed traffic and safety barriers in the Northeast portion of town.

Ms. Rubin asked for an explanation of the bog like structure at Keystone Park.

President Adduci stated that the structure is a water reservoir to help mitigate stormwater issues.

Ms. Rubin asked if the Village had taken any action on a grant she shared with the Village that would help with current influx of migrants in Oak Park.

President Adduci stated the Village will investigate the grant.

#### **4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustee Bachner gave a land acknowledgement and gave thanks to Ms. Geldner for making public comment and commented that she felt what Ms. Geldner shared was important.

Trustee Gillis gave thanks to Ms. Geldner for making public comment and reminded everyone to be kind as we don't know what people are going through in their daily lives.

Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a safe Halloween and reminded everyone of the trickier treating hours.

Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the permanent record.

Trustee Brennan asked that people donate clothing items to the migrants in Oak Park.

Trustee Johnson wished everyone a happy Halloween and gave a reminder of the Village fall leaf collection schedule and protocols. He also suggested residents dispose

of their pumpkins at the Pumpkin Smash event on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Roosevelt Middle School.

Trustee O'Connell had nothing to add.

President Adduci had no comments.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2023
- b. Village Board of Trustees Executive Session Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2023
- c. Administration Department Report
- d. ~~Electric Power Supplier Agreements – Street Lighting and Pumping Station~~
- e. Ageism Awareness Day Proclamation
- f. Native American Heritage Month Proclamation
- g. Italian American Heritage Month Proclamation

Trustee Brennan asked that Agenda Item D be pulled for separate consideration.

**MOTION** by Trustee O'Connell to approve items a, b, c, e, f, g. Seconded by Trustee Bachner

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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

- d. Electric Power Supplier Agreements – Street Lighting and Pumping Station

**MOTION** by Trustee Brennan to approve agenda item d. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Trustee Brennan noted an error in the memo of the item. She reiterated that the electric power is not provided free of charge to the Village as the memo states, rather the costs are passed on to the residents of the Village.

Trustee Gillis asked that the Village investigate solar options to generate its own power.

Public Works Analyst Jansen provided clarification on the fees and stated that he will investigate solar options.

Trustee Brennan asked that the Village consider restructuring the Village's Franchise Agreement to move the costs of Village electricity to the Village instead of the residents.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

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

- a. Zoning Board of Appeals – Request for Zoning Variation – 7821 Thomas Street – Ordinance

**MOTION** by Trustee Johnson to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variation to Section 10-9-7 of the Zoning Ordinance at 7821 Thomas Street. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

President Adduci invited Mr. Alfredo Moreno up to the podium to give public comment on his requested variation. Mr. Moreno provided background on his property and the request.

Trustee O'Connell stated that the Village needs to be considerate of stormwater flooding issues when approving variations.

Mr. Walsh provided background information on the requirements the Village has to help prevent stormwater issues.

Trustee Brennan and Trustee O'Connell had a conversation surrounding the stormwater topic.

Trustee Bachner asked if the Village should alter this variation request to prevent any stormwater issues.

Mr. Walsh stated no.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion passes.

b. Traffic & Safety Commission – Removal of Barricades on Clinton & Bonnie Brae – Ordinances and Resolution Authorizing Additional Traffic Counts

The Board agreed to move the below three motions all at once.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve an ordinance removing the plastic barricades at North Avenue and Clinton Place. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve an ordinance removing the plastic barricades at North Avenue and Bonnie Brae. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve a resolution authorizing the execution of a change order to the Thomas Engineering Group contract to perform additional traffic counts in the amount not to exceed \$6,194.00. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

President Adduci invited Bonnie and Dave Parker up to the podium to give public comment. Ms. Parker gave thanks for the installation of the stop sign at Clinton and LeMoyne and encouraged the Board to vote to remove the barricades.

Mr. Parker asked that if the situation warrants further measures, to investigate those provided by the study.

President Adduci invited Dan Wasiolek up to the podium to give public comment. Mr. Wasiolek reported that an overwhelming number of Bonnie Brae residents are in favor of the barriers. He asked that these installations be installed like many other suburbs have done for their streets bordering North Avenue.

President Adduci invited Mary Stamatakos up to the podium to give public comment. Mr. Stamatakos made public comment in support of the proposed traffic installations. She encouraged any traffic mitigation measures in the northeastern area of town.

President Adduci invited Robert Armalas up to the podium to give public comment. Mr. Armalas made public comment in support of the proposed traffic installations. Mr. Armalas noted being dissatisfied with the Board's handling of the process. He asked that traffic mitigation methods be investigated for the entirety of the northern portion of town. Finally, he requested a truck ordinance.

President Adduci invited Pete Economos up to the podium to give public comment. Mr. Economos asked that the barriers be removed and that the Village restart this process and proceed more slowly.

President Adduci invited Gary Northrup to make public comment via Zoom.

Mr. Northrup made public comment against the proposed traffic barriers. He stated that the Village should find a way to address the intersection of North Avenue and Harlem, in its entirety, with the other surrounding communities and governments.

President Adduci invited Rene Hermes to make public comment via Zoom.

Mr. Hermes made public comment in support of the proposed installations on Bonnie Brae.

President Adduci invited Kelly Abcarian up to the podium to give public comment. Ms. Abcarian made public comment in support of the removal of the barricades. She asked that the Village utilize data to drive any future decisions made surrounding traffic installations.

President Adduci noted that the Village is part of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the surrounding towns to improve traffic infrastructure on North Avenue by way of grant funding.

Trustee O'Connell asked that the Village utilize new data from the proposed study and come back and investigate if mitigation methods are needed.

Trustee O'Connell asked how long the traffic study count for the proposed study will take.

Mr. Walsh stated the traffic count will only take a few days and that, pending board approval, Thomas Engineering is planning on coming out in three weeks to begin the traffic count. He noted that the three-week delay is to allow for traffic patterns to get used to the barriers being removed. Mr. Walsh stated the Village should have the data by late November.

Trustee Brennan asked Mr. Walsh if the Village has contacted apps that direct traffic to cut through the Village.

Trustee Bachner noted that she and Village Administrator Walsh participated in a call with Google and noted that the company does have avenues the Village can take to request the direction services be altered.

Trustee Johnson asked how the new timing of the proposed traffic study will impact the results.

Mr. Walsh noted that the study being completed in November could have an impact on the results due to potential snow or ice conditions. Mr. Walsh also noted the increase of traffic from March of 2022 to now due to people returning to the office.

Mr. Walsh reported that communication with Google died off after the Village provided the company with information on the barriers. He noted this may have been due to the temporary nature of the barriers.

Trustee Brennan asked if the recently implemented traffic measures such as stop signs and crosswalks will have an impact on this study.

Trustee Bachner stated the Village should support keeping the barrier at Bonnie Brae and also asked how the Village can implement installations along Harlem but not along North Avenue.

She also asked that the traffic study company consider historical traffic patterns and also new developments in the area such as an Amazon facility opening and a new medical facility that will be built in the coming months.

President Adduci asked that the Village address and enforce the Truck Ordinance.

Mr. Walsh noted the Village does have an existing truck ordinance but can research bolstering the ordinance.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification on if the Traffic and Safety Commission will investigate an updated truck ordinance or if the Board will. She stated she would prefer if the Traffic and Safety Commission investigated the revisions and then made a recommendation to the Village Board.

Mr. Walsh stated he will direct it to their agenda.

Trustee O'Connell asked if the Traffic and Safety Commission(T&S) has met since the most recent Thomas Engineering Presentation.

Mr. Walsh stated no.

Trustee O'Connell highlighted that the last T&S meeting was the first-time commission had access to the Traffic Calming Toolkit.

Trustee Bachner reminded everyone that multiple residents have spoken out against some of the proposed features in the Traffic Calmin Toolkit such as speedbumps.

President Adduci asked if there is a reason Jackson Avenue has been left out of some of these discussions.

Mr. Walsh stated there was no specific reason Jackson was left out.

President Adduci suggested the motion be amended to include researching the traffic counts on Jackson Avenue as well.

Trustee Gillis suggested the Village consider making the streets residential parking only to help mitigate parking issues.

The Board had further discussion around making the streets residential parking only.

Trustee Bachner suggested the Board additionally amend the motion to have Thomas Engineering Group consider historical and future traffic counts.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to amend his original motion to have Thomas Engineering Group perform traffic counts on Jackson Avenue and add the requested changes from Trustee Bachner. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: Trustee Bachner

Motions pass.

## **8.UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Consider Approval of Contract Award to Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LTD in the Amount of \$24,530.00 for Design Engineering of the Harlem Avenue Right-In/Right-Out Project

**MOTION** by Trustee O'Connell to award the contract to Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LTD, in the amount of \$24,530.00 for the 2023 Harlem Avenue Right-in Right-out project (Design Engineering) and authorize the Village Administrator to execute the contract agreement. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Mr. Walsh provided background information on the agenda item.

President Adduci asked if the barriers will stay temporary until installation.

Mr. Walsh stated that is correct.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.



## 10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to discuss: The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees. The Village Board will adjourn after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Board entered into executive session at 8:25pm.

## 11. ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** to adjourn by Bachner. Seconded by Trustee Vazquez.

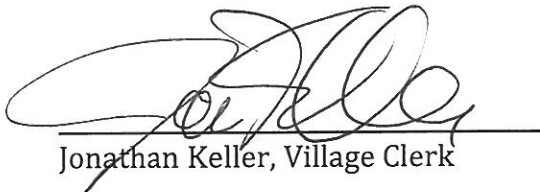
Roll call:

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

Absent:

Nays: None

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.



Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk