



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, November 10, 2021 – 5:00 PM

Village Hall – 2nd Floor Conference Room, 400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL

AGENDA

Physical attendance at this public meeting may be limited with Commission officials, staff and consultants having priority over members of the public. Public comments and any responses will be shared with the Committee. You may submit your public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: Lisa Scheiner at lscheiner@vrf.us. You may listen to the meeting by participating in a Zoom conference call as follows, dial-in number: 312-626-6799 with meeting ID: 860 8344 2555 or visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86083442555>. If you would like to speak during public comment, please email lscheiner@vrf.us by 4:00 PM on Monday, November 10, 2021.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. September 30, 2021
4. Development Updates
 - a. Lake & Lathrop
5. Continued Discussion re: Business Retention/Attraction Strategies
6. Continued Discussion and Direction Regarding Next Steps & Economic Development Commission Action
 - a. Madison Street
 - b. North Avenue
7. Other Business
8. Confirmation of Next Meeting Date
 - a. December meeting
 - b. Discussion & Direction regarding Economic Development Commission workshop meeting date
9. Executive Session
10. Adjournment

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
September 30, 2021**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Monday, September 30, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Brown, Preston, Lowes, Brangle, Graham, Chiplunkar (arrived 5:02 a.m.)

Absent: Wahlfeldt, Holt

Also Present: Village Trustee Robert O'Connell, Acting Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Village President Catherine Adduci

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Brangle and SECONDED by Graham to approve the September 10, 2021 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

4. DEVELOPMENT UPDATES AND DISCUSSION REGARDING NEXT STEPS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION ACTION

Lake and Park: Acting Village Administrator Scheiner reviewed the history, attempts at lot assembly through voluntary acquisition, and the status of the Village's efforts to develop a commercial project including retail, restaurant, and medical offices at the corner of Lake and Park. The Commission discussed the challenge of assembling contiguous parcels to create a meaningful development site, including the lack of interest from the property owner to sell the commercial building at 7777 Lake Street. The Commission suggested that the Village engage the existing developer to gauge continued interest and explore a parking lot swap with the owner of 7777 Lake Street. The Commissioners agreed that this was the preferred first course of action. If necessary, a broker could be engaged as a next step to market this development opportunity on the Village's behalf.

Lake and Lathrop: Acting Village Administrator Scheiner reviewed the status of this project as noted in a report that was included in the Economic Development Commission meeting packet and the update provided to the Village Board of Trustees.

Madison Street: Chairman Brown reported that there was a meeting with a developer for the Village-owned property in the Madison Street corridor. The developer has presented the Village with a letter of intent, discussion is underway regarding a potential mixed-use project on Village-owned property. The Village is determining the sale price of the property. Commissioner Graham stated his support for developing the entire block and not just the Village-owned property.

The Commission discussed the need to focus on and bolster entry-ways to the Village.

North Avenue TIF District: Acting Village Administrator Scheiner stated that the Village continues to monitor the area but no properties have been acquired in this corridor nor has the Village received any development proposals. She summarized the report that was included in the Economic Development Commission's packet. There was a brief discussion regarding the need for the Village and Commission to take a more proactive approach to development within this corridor, including the creation of a subcommittee regarding the potential engagement of a broker.

Commissioners also discussed the need for a workshop to better understand the corridors, comprehensive plan, and potential development sites.

Lake and Harlem: Acting Village Administrator Scheiner stated that discussions regarding the potential redevelopment of Whole Foods are on hold for the moment.

5. CONTINUED DISCUSSION RE: BUSINESS RETENTION/ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

No action taken.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

No action taken.

7. CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE

The Economic Development Commission next meeting date will be October 4, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made and SECONDED to adjourn the September 30, 2021 meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 6:05 p.m. On voice vote, motion passed.

LAKE AND LATHROP

Approved Development

In 2016 the Village Board of Trustees approved a redevelopment agreement (RDA) that envisioned a mixed-use project at this site that features commercial and residential spaces. Through this agreement, the developer has agreed to remediate environmental contamination. This project was subject to the Village's planned development permit application process and in 2018 the Village Board of Trustees granted a planned development permit for a mixed use project that included a five-story building, 32 condominium uses, 14,343 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor, and an attached two-level 86-space parking garage.

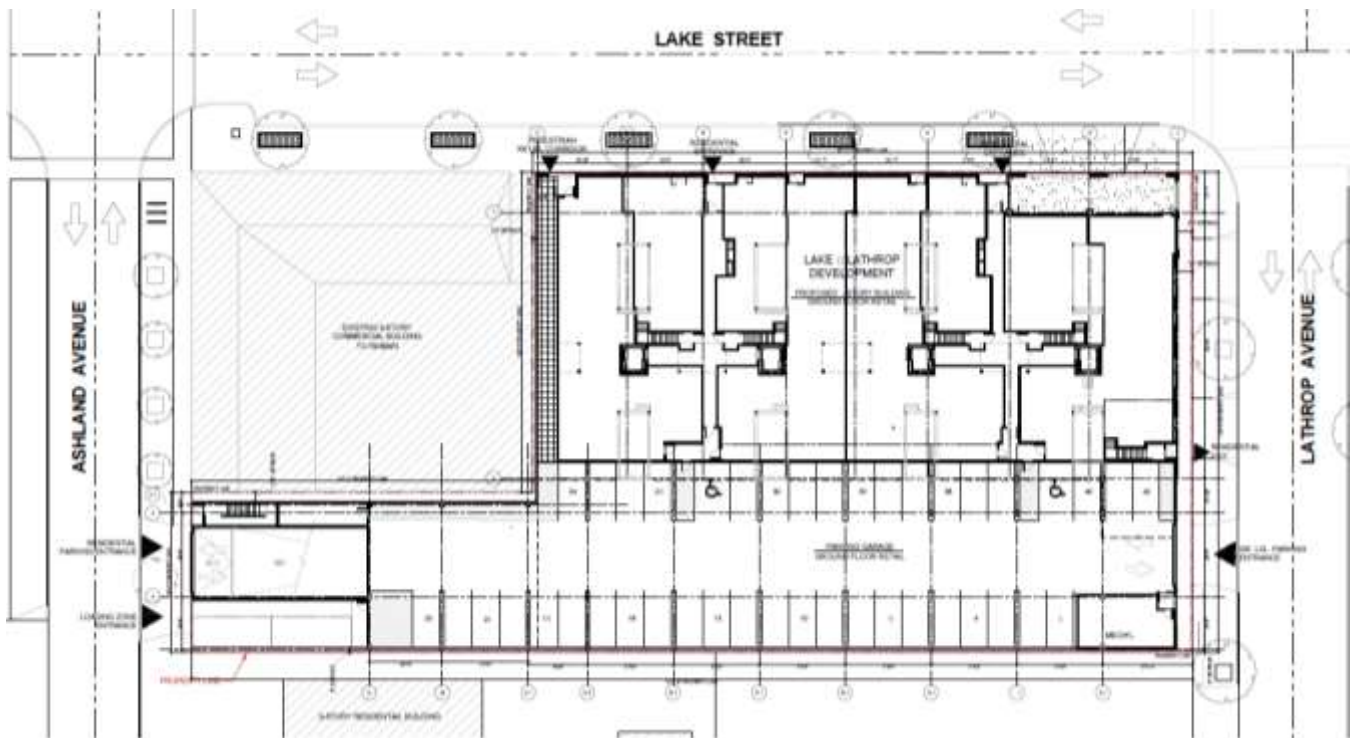
The RDA was last amended in October 2019. Since that time, the developer has obtained a bridge loan from Old Second National Bank to pay for the completion of the remediation work, substantially completed the remediation work, relocated utilities within the project area, obtained a watershed permit from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, and cleared all issues necessary to obtain a new construction building permit from the Village. During the Village's permitting process, the plans showed that the building had been reduced to four stories with 22 condominium units, but no changes in parking on commercial space.

At its October 25, 2021 Regular Meeting, the Village Board of Trustees approved an amendment to the redevelopment agreement. Meeting information can be found [here](#). The developer has until January 23, 2022 to begin construction, and 18 months to complete the project. The developer is required to immediately obtain the building permit, remove topsoil and excavate to install foundations on the site, close on construction financing, enter into contracts with the general contractor and subcontractors, and start work on the project's concrete footings. Until bonafide construction commences, the Village retains the right to take the property back if needed. At all times, the Village will retain legal rights to ensure the property is safe and maintained in compliance with the Village's standards. At the Board Meeting, the developer reported 14 of 22 units are sold, including two penthouse suites that the buyer will be combining into one. The developer also reported they have a lease in progress with one tenant, that they are in the letter of intent stage with two other tenants, and continue efforts to find occupants for the commercial space. The developer reported they have selected a lender and executed a term sheet, and that they anticipate a 60-90-day loan process, which will run parallel with their site work.

Project updates and zoning entitlement materials are available at www.vrf.us/lakeandlathrop.

Development Site Detail

The development site consists of parcels at 7601-7613 Lake Street, 7617-7621 Lake Street, and 423 Ashland Avenue.



LAKE AND PARK

Concept/Program & Comprehensive Plan

The Village's Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2019) discussed this area as follows: *Redevelopment in the 5-6 story range is appropriate and should be targeted for key sites, such as the southeast corner of Lake Street and Park Avenue and other sites that may become available. Parcel assembly is likely needed to accommodate significant development. For new buildings fronting Lake Street, portions of the building above the third or fourth floor should be set back from the lower floor frontage to create a more pedestrian scale for the area. Any new development must also take into consideration the architectural and historic value of existing buildings and strong consideration should be given to adaptive reuse where possible and appropriate. The Village Hall, Police, and Fire facility on the west side of Park will remain and no expansion plans are anticipated.*

Potential Development Site Detail



The potential project area consists of three parcels, including two under Village control (A, B), and one privately owned. In addition, there are townhomes south of parcel B that are privately owned. Since the RFP was issued the Village also acquired a parking lot adjacent to parcel B (418 Franklin Avenue). The Village has encouraged a dialogue between the developer and the owner of Parcel "C" to determine how and if deal terms could be agreed upon for voluntary sale of the property.

The subject property is located adjacent other multi-family and commercial properties. The Village expects that development should be sensitive to that fact and aim to be congruous. The Village approved an affordable housing plan and is interested in understanding the potential to integrate that into new developments that include a multi-family housing component as well as the impact on development, viability, etc.

RFP Development Site Details

	Parcel A	Parcel B	Parcel C
Address	7787 Lake Street	419 Park Avenue	7777 Lake Street (parking lot)
Approximate Square Footage	7,080 s.f.	7,341 s.f.	4,150
Owner	Village	Village	Jack Strand
Current Zoning	C3 Central Commercial	C3 Central Commercial	C3 Central Commercial
Notes	Parking Lot	Vacant Lot	Parking lot adjacent to office building. Owner's representative has indicated that he does not want to sell his property at this time.

Cost and Viability

The Village aims to achieve a fair market return on the property it acquired but has remained willing to engage in a broader discussion regarding the needs of the development community to ensure a viable, high-quality project.

Development Initiatives

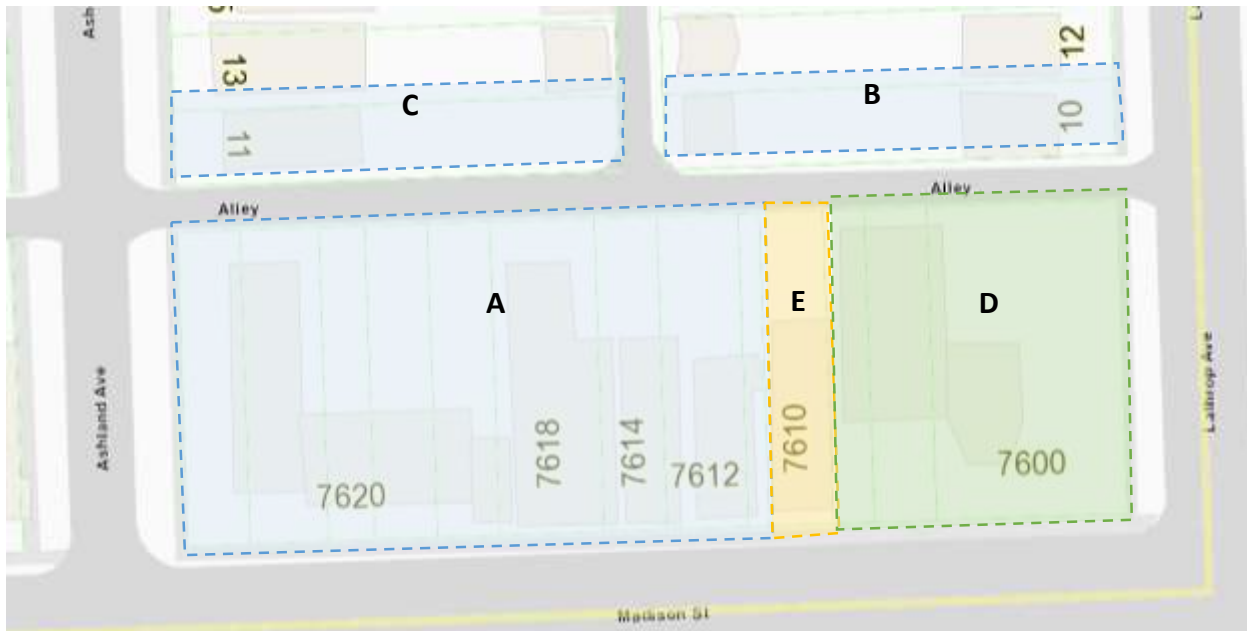
The Village has issued four Request for Proposals between 2010 and 2017. In 2017 the Village engaged Ehlers and Associates to assist with its efforts to identify a development partner. The Village and IBT Group LLC began discussions regarding a possible commercial project and the developer began negotiating with private property owners but has been unable to assemble properties. As of this writing, the property owner's representatives have declined to sell the property. The property owner has indicated that he is not willing to sell off or "swap" the parking lot to create a contiguous parcel.

MADISON STREET

Concept/Program & Comprehensive Plan

The Village's Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2019) discussed this area as follows: *This block serves as a gateway into River Forest and is a prime candidate for redevelopment. Several sites, including the former Lutheran Family Services properties, are likely and desirable candidates for redevelopment. The automotive repair use at the corner of Lathrop, although a successful business, is in need of enhancement – façade and signage improvements, and outdoor storage screening and landscaping. The sight is an appropriate candidate for possible relocation and redevelopment. Possible expansion of the commercial areas for commercial development should be considered given an appropriate and desirable development proposal.* The Comprehensive Plan offered possible solutions through the incorporation of adjacent alleys and lots immediately behind corridor parcels to increase depths, parcel sizes, and overall viability.

Potential Development Site Detail



The potential project area consists of five parcels including three under Village control (A, B, C) and two adjacent parcels (D and E) under private ownership.

Redevelopment of all parcels (A-E) would offer the best development options. However, developers have been encouraged to offer interest and feedback on the viability of developing just the three properties, the whole site, or a phased approach. The Village has encouraged a dialogue between the developer and the owners of Parcels "D" and "E" to determine how and if deal terms could be agreed upon. For purposes of this process, the Village has assumed these property owners are not selling at this time and look to facilitate a phased approach where said properties could potentially be redeveloped at a later time.

While scraping the site for redevelopment is a possibility, the Village has also entertained adaptive reuse of some or all the existing properties. The Village has provided information regarding the conditions of the existing buildings and arranged property walk-throughs with potential developers as requested.

The subject property is located adjacent to Madison Street and near single family residential property. The Village expects that development should be sensitive to that fact and aim to be congruous.

MADISON STREET

The Village approved an affordable housing plan and is interested in understanding the potential to integrate that into new developments that include a multi-family housing component as well as the impact on development, viability, etc.

	Parcel A	Parcel B	Parcel C	Parcel D	Parcel E
Address	7620, 7618, 7614, 7612 Madison Street	10 Lathrop Avenue	11 Ashland Avenue	7600 Madison Street	7610 Madison Street
Approximate Square Footage	29,125 s.f.	5,408 s.f.	5,335 s.f.	14,175 s.f.	4,227 s.f.
Owner	Village	Village	Village	Pete Collis	Pelafas Family
Current Zoning	C2 Commercial	R2 Single Family Residential	R2 Single Family Residential	C2 Commercial	C2 Commercial
Notes	Former LCFS; Comprised of one original building and three additions including a two-flat on the eastern side of the subject property	Single family home with detached garage	Two-flat residential building with detached garage	Pete's Automotive; Owner has indicated that he does not want to sell his property at this time	Two-flat commercial w/ realty business on the 1 st floor and apartment on the 2 nd floor.

Cost and Viability

The Village aims to achieve a fair market return on the property it acquired but has remained willing to engage in a broader discussion regarding the needs of the development community to ensure a viable, high-quality project.

The Village of River Forest established a tax increment financing (TIF) district in 2016 on the entire length of its Madison Street corridor, including this development site, to enable additional tools for redevelopment. The Village is interested in continuing to move key projects forward within the TIF district, particularly exploring the market for development of the Village-owned properties.

The Village was awarded a \$350,000 grant (HB 64) from the State of Illinois for demolition costs of structures on Village-owned properties at 7620, 7618, 7614, 7612 Madison Street, 10 Lathrop Avenue, and 11 Ashland Avenue.

Development Initiatives

The Village released an Expression of Interest with a deadline to submit proposals in July, 2021. The Village sent the Expression of Interest directly to 10-12 developers. Two developers expressed interest in the site and proposed rough concept plans showing residential developments with no commercial component. The Economic Development Commission did not recommend moving forward with either proposal. Village officials continue to meet with interested developers regarding potential development proposals.

In addition to posting a sign on the property, a microsite has been made available at www.vrf.us/madison to assist potential developers in obtaining this information.

The Village have begun discussions with a potential developer for a project on the site. Discussions regarding the setting of price for sale of the property to a potential developer are subject to Closed Session.