

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
September 11, 2020**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Friday, September 11, 2020, at 7:30 a.m. in the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 7:32 a.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Lee Neubecker, Timothy Brangle, Donna Slepicka, Robert Graham, Nena Maas, Carr Preston, Cuyler Brown

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Planning Consultant John Houseal and Liz Holt OPRF Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

All members participated electronically.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None**

**3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - MOTION** made by Mr. Preston to approve the meeting minutes from September 11, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Graham. Motion passes by unanimous vote.

**4. DISCUSSION: MADISON STREET BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STATE FUNDING UPDATE**  
Chairman Neubecker spoke with State Representative Welch regarding the funding from the State regarding the demolition of properties on Madison Street. The money has been budgeted but has not been received due to a backlog at the State.

**5. COVID-19 RAPID TESTING INITIATIVE**

Chairman Neubecker discussed a new initiative to provide rapid COVID-19 tests at the 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church in River Forest. There will be multiple dates. The cost of the test is \$175.00.

Resident Sheba Chiplunkar asked questions about the testing and whether the tests were diagnostic or screening. And to ensure the right testing information is conveyed to the communities.

**6. PROPOSED CHANGES TO VILLAGE'S SIGN REGULATIONS**

Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner discussed a presentation regarding proposed changes to the Village's sign regulations.

Chairman Neubecker inquired about the grandfathering of regulations which was addressed in the presentation. He expressed concerns about the ambiguity about vehicle signage and potential unintended consequences, specifically service and delivery vehicles. Ms. Scheiner believes that can be clarified.

Mr. Preston asked about any changes for existing business and will projects currently in the pipeline have to be changed? Ms. Scheiner indicated that if a business was a granted a permit previously, that sign

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would be legal but non-confirming. Those signs would be grandfathered. The only existing project in the pipeline is at Chicago and Harlem, and that project is governed by planned development.

Mr. Brangle commented that we do not want to discourage architectural type lighting. Sensitive lighting is good in his opinion. Mr. Houseal indicated that architectural lighting is not addressed in the sign regulations. This addresses window lighting. Mr. Brangle asked about if backer boards could be allowed. The individually affixed letters look better. Mr. Houseal indicated that some letters rest on a bar as opposed to a board to be attached to masonry or other architecturally sensitive buildings. That can be clarified.

Mr. Graham asked about sandwich board signs. He inquired about their use on North and Madison. Ms. Scheiner indicated that they are most effective for pedestrian environments such as Lake Street.

MOTION made by Mr. Brown to recommend the changes to the sign regulations as presented with the clarifications stated by the EDC. Seconded by Mr. Graham. Motion passes unanimously on voice vote.

## **7. DISCUSSION: COVID-19 DINING RESTRICTIONS/ BUSINESS SUPPORT/ RESPONSE TO WED JOURNAL ARTICLE**

Chairman Neubecker referenced a recent letter in the Wednesday Journal and was looking for feedback from the EDC. Mr. Palm stated that the Village Board is recommending a flat property tax levy for this year which will benefit both the the business community and residents alike.

Ms. Holt indicated that many businesses are struggling right now. She encouraged everyone to think broadly in these discussions. She believes the Village could help circulate and disseminate information. She shared the OPRF Chamber gift card program that has started that would allow their gift card to be used at any participating business. The Chamber will not be making any money off of this and marketing to all of the businesses. The hope is these could also be used as client appreciation gifts. Mr. Palm asked Ms. Holt to connect with him to discuss these programs so the Village can assist.

## **8. EXECUTIVE SESSION – MOTION made by Mr. Preston to enter into Executive Session for purposes of Acquisition of Real Property and Sale/Lease of Real Property. Seconded by Mr. Graham.**

Motion approved unanimously on roll call vote. The EDC went into Executive Session at 8:52 AM

The EDC reconvened in regular session at 9:16 AM.

The meeting was called to order at 9:16 a.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Lee Neubecker, Timothy Brangle, Donna Slepicka, Robert Graham, Nena Maas, Cuyler Brown, Carr Preston

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Administrator Eric Palm

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Preston made a MOTION to adjourn the Economic Development Commission meeting at 9:17 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Graham.

MOTION PASSED by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.