

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
REGULAR VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
Monday, December 12, 2022**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, December 12, 2022, 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 7:04 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Johnson, Brennan, Village Clerk Keller

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Also Present: Village Administrator Brian Murphy, Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Fire Chief Thomas Gaertner, Police Chief James O'Shea, Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Director of Public Works and Development Services Jeff Loster, Village Attorney Lance Malina, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS (OCCURRED AFTER ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS)

Phyllis Rubin, of 411 Ashland Ave., wished everybody a happy Christmas, New Year and Hanukkah and then remarked that there has been some activity at the Lake and Lathrop property recently, but going very slowly. She mentioned that the site is untidy and appears poorly regulated, particularly that there are sandbags blocking portions of the sidewalk which will cause a tripping hazard when they become covered by snow in the coming months. Phyllis also conveyed a request from one of her neighbors that during the winter months, the sidewalks should be shoveled the entire width of the sidewalk, not just one shovel's width.

4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Bachner began with a land acknowledgment. Trustee Bachner reported that she attended the annual Holiday Tree Trimming event on Lake Street, hosted by the Rotary Club, and complimented the event. Also attended the Holiday Bazaar at the Sheridan. Additionally, Trustee Bachner attended an event hosted by the Oak Park River Forest Association of Realtors and complimented the event. She also commented that she participated in an event sponsored by the Chicago Accessibility

Consortium regarding the state of current disability rights and activism. Trustee Bachner also participated in an event put on by Dominican University with the author of the book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, and enjoyed the event.

Trustee Gillis congratulated The Sustainability Commission, Public Works Analyst Seth Jansen and Director of Public Works Jeff Loster for being a part of the second annual Electric Vehicle (EV) Readiness group sponsored by the Mayors Metropolitan Caucus and ComEd. Trustee Gillis reiterated the importance of the village completing an EV readiness study to be prepared for the EV Readiness requirements. Trustee Gillis reminded everyone that the Light Up the Night event is taking place this Saturday, December 17th. She also attended some student final presentations at Dominican University as a guest evaluator where students proposed environmental recommendations for larger corporations. Trustee Gillis also reported that the reoccurring GreenTown meetings are continuing to make progress. Trustee Gillis finalized her comments with a happy holidays, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

Trustee Vazquez reported that he attended the Village Hall staff holiday luncheon and appreciated the event as it recognized various employee anniversary dates. He reiterated how thankful he is for all the village employees and the hard work they put in every year. Trustee Vazquez wanted to remind everyone that the School District 90 Kindergarten survey is still open and that the survey is not limited to residents with students currently in the school district. Lastly, Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday.

Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the permanent record.

Trustee Brennan reported she too attended the *Braiding Sweetgrass* book event at Dominican University with Trustee Bachner and attended the Village Hall luncheon. Trustee Brennan also attended the Staff Appreciation Lunch and acknowledged Fire Commander Jim Greenwood for 25 years of service. She also appreciated the sweater worn by Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh during the event. Trustee Brennan also gave an update on the Juneteenth Coat Drive, reporting that the drive has donated over four hundred of coats, sweaters, and other winter clothing. Due to this success, she stated that the coat drive has been extended another week.

Trustee Johnson wished everyone a happy holiday season and shouted out to members of Fenwick High School AP government class, who attended the board meeting.

President Adduci wished everyone a Happy Holidays and also reiterated that the Light Up River Forest event is December 17th. This is a great fundraiser for the Kiwanis Club. She also emphasized the District 90 Survey as mentioned by Trustee Vazquez. Additionally, President Adduci reported she attended and enjoyed her first Illinois Municipal League board meeting.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – November 12, 2022
- b. Approval of an Ordinance Levying Taxes for Corporate Purposes for the Current Fiscal Year Commencing on the 1st Day of May, 2022 and Ending on the 30th Day of April, 2023 - Ordinance
- c. Approval of Accessible Parking Space Request – 7373 North Avenue - Ordinance
- d. Approval of Emergency Operations Plan
- e. 2023 Public Notice of Meeting Schedule
- f. Accounts Payable – November 2022 - \$2,873,992.97
- g. Financial Report – November 2022
- h. Department Reports
- i. Village Administrator’s Report

MOTION by Trustee Johnson to approve consent agenda items A-I. Second by Trustee Gillis.

Roll call:

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

Absent: O’Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION

None

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

7.a.1. Zoning Board of Appeals Approval of Zoning Variation Request for 935 Franklin Avenue pursuant to section 10-9-7 of the Zoning Code – Front Yard Setback – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to approve an ordinance granting a front yard setback variation to allow the construction of a new home at 935 Franklin Avenue. Second by Trustee Johnson.

Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh gave a summary of the application explaining that the project is for the new construction of a home and that there were no negative comments from the public. Additionally, the application was approved unanimously at the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson
Absent: O'Connell
Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7.a.2. Zoning Board of Appeals Approval of Zoning Variation Request for 7227 Thomas Avenue pursuant to Sections 10-10-7 and 10-10-4 of the Zoning Code – Front Yard and Secondary Front Yard Setbacks – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Johnson to approve an ordinance granting a front and side yard setback variation at 7227 Thomas Avenue. Second by Trustee Brennan.

Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh gave a summary of the application explaining that the project is to enclose an existing terrace due to some leakage issues. Matt reported that there were no negative public comments and it was approved unanimously at the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Village Administrator Murphy reminded everyone that this agenda item and the next item (7.a.3) are for neighboring projects owned by the same individual.

Roll call:
Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson
Absent: O'Connell
Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7.a.3. Zoning Board of Appeals Approval of Zoning Variation Request for 1037 Bonnie Brae Place pursuant to sections 10-10-4, 10-10-7, and 10-10-8 of the Zoning Code – Side Yard setback and Yard Occupation – Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Johnson to approve an ordinance granting the requested variations for the property located at 1037 Bonnie Brae Place. Second by Trustee Bachner.

Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh gave a summary of the application explaining that the project is to build an additional garage on the property to help fulfill the covered parking requirements as required by the Zoning Code.

Trustee Brennan asked if any input had been received from the neighbor to the south.

Walsh reported that the village received no feedback regarding this project. And, that there were no comments from adjacent neighbors at the Zoning Board meeting.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7.a.4. Zoning Board of Appeals Approval of Fence Variation Request for 1534 Park Avenue pursuant to Section 4-8-5 of the Zoning Code - Ordinance

MOTION by Trustee Bachner to approve an ordinance granting the requested variation for the property located at 1534 Park Avenue. Second by Trustee Gillis.

Assistant to the Village Administrator Matt Walsh gave a summary of the application explaining that the property owner has a right to construct a front yard fence, as the property is zoned commercial. The applicant is requesting a variation to increase the openness of the fence and raise the fence height to 5 feet with 80% open. Assistant to Walsh reported that one resident spoke in support of the request and another resident spoke against the request at the Zoning Board.

Resident of the neighboring property Donna Murray addressed the Village Board and reported that herself and other owners in her condo building are against the increase of the fence height and that the by-right fence height of 4 feet, is in their opinion, adequate. The driveway for the condo complex is adjacent to this potential fence.

Trustee Vazquez asked Assistant to Walsh on what basis did one of the Zoning Board members vote against the application. Walsh reported that the member did not support front yard fences on any residential properties.

Trustee Gillis asked Walsh to confirm that they are currently voting on a variation to allow a 5-foot fence with 80% open. Walsh confirmed.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification if whether landscaping improvements account towards the "openness" percentage.

Walsh and Administrator Murphy confirmed that the openness requirement does not take into consideration landscaping.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

7.b.1. Traffic and Safety Commission Approval of bollard installation at the intersection of Thatcher & Oak.

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to accept the recommendation put forth by the Traffic and Safety Commission regarding bollards at Thatcher and Oak Avenues. Second by Trustee Bachner.

Director of Public Works Loster gave a summarization of how this idea came about. Director Loster explained that there have been anecdotal reports of south bound traffic on Thatcher utilizing the parking lane to get past stopped vehicles while they wait for pedestrians to cross. The proposed bollards would help prevent this dangerous situation from occurring.

Trustee Brennan asked Director Loster if there is anything unique about this intersection that would cause the bollards to be needed vs other areas in the Village.

Director Loster reported that due to the lack of stop signs on Thatcher and the volume of traffic, combined with the fact that Oak is a popular walking to school route, create a difficult situation. He also explained that in the future this area will be part of the new Des Plaines River bike path, thus this a short-term improvement as it may end up being removed by the bike path.

Trustee Gillis requested that in the future, solutions outside of typical bollards that align with the atmosphere of River Forest should be considered.

Director Loster noted that solutions such as bump outs like along Lake Street can be considered.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.a.1 Review and Acceptance of FY22 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

MOTION by Trustee Gillis to accept the Village of River Forest FY22 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. Second by Trustee Johnson.

Finance Director Rosemary McAdams provided a summary of the financial highlights of the report. Some of those highlights are as follows: Actual revenues exceed budget revenues in the general fund, income tax revenue exceeded budget revenues and sales/non-home rule sales taxes had increased as expected.

Director McAdams also highlighted that while the general fund expenditures were over the budgeted amount, most departments expenditures were close to their budgeted amount.

The Village's Audit Partner Martha Trotter, of Sikich LLP, also gave a presentation that highlighted the good financial standing of the City.

Trustee Vazquez asked Ms. Potter if it is fair to say that there are no concerns regarding the audit. Ms. Potter responded that yes, that is fair to say.

President Adduci gave thanks to the Finance staff and administrative staff for giving a refreshing and re-assuring report.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

9.b.1 Approval of purchase of street cameras and related hardware/software from Griffon Systems in the amount of \$105,114 using funds from the FY 2023 Capital Improvement Fund

MOTION by Trustee Vazquez to accept the contract with Griffon Systems and allow them to install the purchased camera and related hardware. Second by Trustee Bachner.

Police Chief O'Shea gave a summary of the status of the police camera project currently and where the project is headed. He touched on many of the pieces of technology and gave examples of the cameras being used in various situations from around River Forest.

Trustee Bachner asked for clarification on a point Chief O'Shea made where he said that the software and A.I. are interconnected throughout the entire system. She was wondering if the "system" he referred to is only the infrastructure in River Forest, or if there are other areas?

Chief O'Shea clarified that it is the River Forest system only.

Trustee Johnson asked if these are the same cameras as the license plate reading cameras. Chief reported that they are not the same cameras.

Trustee Bachner asked Chief which organizations outside of police departments will have access to the data from the cameras.

Chief O'Shea responded that the following organizations will also have access to the information: Cook County State's Attorney, Public Defenders Office, United States Attorney's Office, any attorneys that provide a subpoena, and in some cases (pending redaction), FOIAS.

Trustee Johnson inquired on why some intersections get multiple cameras instead of one.

Chief O'Shea explained that due to variables such as foliage, landscaping, and how light poles are set up, some areas need two cameras for proper coverage.

Trustee Vazquez asked if there are any further plans for an expansion of cameras in the north side of town.

Chief O'Shea explained that there are future plans for the north section of the Village, but they are limited by budgetary constraints. He also expounded on the agreement they have with District 90 that can help with school issues.

Trustee Bachner asked Village Administrator Murphy if the village anticipates using TIF funds to help fund later expansions of cameras.

Administrator Murphy explained that some cameras may be funded by TIF funds due to their proximity to alleys in the northern River Forest.

Chief O'Shea continued his presentation showing examples of how this camera system aiding in solving crime in the Village.

President Adduci requested that a representative from the police department in the future give a presentation regarding the SAFE-T ACT. Ms. Adduci mentioned she was the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and witnessed a presentation on the SAFE-T act that was very good.

Roll call:

Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

9.c.1 Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Elmwood Park regarding the North Avenue Streetscape Project – Resolution

MOTION by Trustee Bachner to approve a resolution allowing an intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Elmwood Park for the North Avenue Streetscape Project. Second by Trustee Vazquez.

Village Administrator Murphy gave a short summary of the agreement between the two villages. The streetscape plan for North Avenue will take place between the streets of Harlem and Thatcher.

Village President Adduci asked for clarification if this project is just for the stretch of North Avenue between Thatcher and Lathrop or the entirety.

Administrator Murphy confirmed it is for the entire stretch of North Avenue, from Harlem to Thatcher.

President Adduci asked for further information on the source of the money being utilized for this project.

Administrator Murphy reported that the money from our portion will come out of the North Ave TIF district. He added that this improvement may position us to go after larger grant funds.

Trustee Bachner asked if this plan is only for a portion of the streetscape and whether the improvements would calm traffic.

Administrator Murphy explained that the project will focus on the entirety of the street and that it is anticipated this project will help calm traffic.

Trustee Brennan asked for clarification if the study did not consider adding additional pedestrian crossings on North Avenue?

Administrator Murphy stated that is correct and that the study is focusing on making improvements as allowed by IDOT.

Trustee Brennan also pointed out a potential issue with the writing in the contract for this agreement regarding payments to the vendor.

Village Lawyer Lance Malina stated he will review the writing and address it. Attorney Malina recommended the motion be amended to be subject to Attorney revisions.

Trustee Vazquez amended his motion to be subject to attorney review and revision, seconded by Trustee Bachner,

Roll call:
Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson
Absent: O'Connell
Nays: None

Motion Passes

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Vazquez to Adjourn. Second by Trustee Bachner.

Roll call:
Ayes: Bachner, Gillis, Vazquez, Brennan, Johnson
Absent: O'Connell
Nays: None
Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.



Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk