



VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Village Hall – Community Room, 400 Park Ave., River Forest, IL

AGENDA

You may submit written public comments in advance of the meeting by emailing them to publiccomment@vrf.us. Public comments and any responses will be shared with the Commission. If you wish to speak during Public Comments, please email publiccomment@vrf.us by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, 2026. Please note that only those attending the meeting in person will be able to provide Public Comments. The meeting will be available for listening only through Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89153263474> or by phone at 312-626-6799 using Meeting ID: 891 5326 3474.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Minutes – May 6, 2026
4. Introduction of Commissioners
5. Chamber of Commerce Update
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

ADA Compliance: Any individual with a disability requesting a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in a public meeting should contact the Village at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting by telephone at 708.366.8500 or by email: mwalsh@vrf.us. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

May 6, 2025

A special meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Assistant Administrator Spencer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Meeting started by calling roll. Upon roll call, the following people were:

Present: Chairman Cuyler Brown and Commissioners Raj Chiplunkar, Elizabeth Muhr, and Tim Brangle

Absent: Commissioner Matt Carolan

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, and Executive Director Melissa Mallinson

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 4, 2026

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Brangle and seconded by Commissioner Chiplunkar to approve the minutes from February 4, 2026. By a voice vote, the motion passed.

Chairman Brown introduced Melissa Mallinson, Executive Director of the OPRF Chamber. She explained her background with the Chamber and her areas of focus. She highlighted some various events that the Chamber hosted last year and her plans for the future with River Forest businesses. Chairman Brown expressed his appreciation for the Director's participation in the Commission.

4. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE – BUSINESS BASH 2026

Executive Director Melissa Mallinson discussed the latest update on the Bash, taking place on Monday, May 25th after the Parade. She noted that there were twelve businesses signed up to participate in the Bash and was hoping for about twenty prior to the deadline. She is also working on incorporating some additional food truck options. She explained the benefit of having home-based River Forest businesses in front of residents at the Bash, including some student entrepreneurs.

Commissioner Muhr asked if a specific Veterans' Affairs group was attending, Director Mallinson said that she didn't believe so, Commissioner Muhr said she would reach out and invite them.

Chairman Brown stated his appreciation for the update and urged participation in the Parade and Business Bash.

5. NORTH AVENUE MARKETING STRATEGY DISCUSSION

Assistant Administrator Spencer and Commissioner Brangle discussed the progress made on seeking an economic development strategic plan, or implementation plan, for the North Avenue corridor. He mentioned the broader strategy of using the TIF district and a marketing plan that is meaningful and impactful way. Chairman Brown said that he had recently viewed the street and noted that aren't a significant number of vacancies. He suggested reaching out to JLL to seek what areas would make the biggest impact for development. Commissioner Brangle suggested reviewing the goals outlined in the TIF and revising what can still work in the corridor.

Chairman Brown suggested inviting JLL to consult to the Village, make recommendations about what would be likely to develop. He suggested having JLL do an analysis on a specific area, with the understanding that the Village doesn't own it but is interested in supporting those who do.

Director Mallison suggested cooperating with the Small Business Administration, as they have a lot of information that might provide some context to the area.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked what kind of development is being sought in the North Avenue Corridor. Commissioner Brangle discussed the purpose of the TIF funds, including specific improvements, some professional services, etc.

Chairman Brown talked about various types of development that might work with the TIF, including residential development and mixed use development. Commissioner Chiplunkar asked if JLL was the right partner for this project. Chairman Brown explained some of the areas of service that JLL offers, Commissioner Brangle also noted that they would only be as good as the frame of the request guides them, to which Chairman Brown agreed.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Brown announced that Commissioner Elza has resigned from the Commission. He encouraged those who are business oriented to please consider volunteering to join. He welcomed residents from all over the Village to apply for the commission or board positions.

Chairman Brown requested an update on Lake & Lathrop. Assistant Administrator Spencer provided the update from January regarding the court proceedings and noted the next court date is June 1. Chairman Brown asked for an update on the project, even if there isn't a solid path forward at this time. He pointed out that he is concerned residents may not be aware of the Village's position. Discussion ensued regarding the status of the property, ownership of the property, and potential outcomes.

Chairman Brown asked for an update on the Madison Street Development. Assistant Administrator Spencer updated the Commission that the application has not been submitted yet as the traffic study is still in the works. Once the application is officially submitted, it will be posted online for the public to review, prior to the public hearing to be held by the Development Review Board. Discussion ensued regarding traffic studies and how the traffic patterns may be impacted by the development. Commissioner Brangle pointed out that traffic in a commercial corridor is a “good thing” for the businesses in that area.

Executive Director Mallison asked for consideration of the medians on Madison Street, understanding they were installed to calm traffic but feels that the medians complicate traffic flow with one lane in either direction and might divert traffic to side streets as drivers try to avoid certain areas. Assistant Administrator Spencer responded that all suggestions are welcome, including Executive Director Mallison’s point, and should be brought up during the public comment portion of the hearing.

Chairman Brown asked about how the traffic from the development might be incorporated into existing patterns and what recommendations might work to minimize impact on neighboring streets. Discussion ensued regarding traffic flow along North Avenue in Elmwood Park.

Chairman Brown asked about the review process of this application with the Development Review Board. Assistant Administrator Spencer explained the process, noting that the public hearing will be scheduled once the application is fully submitted and reviewed by staff.

Chairman Brown noted that the proposal looks like a good project for the Village.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked if the Village’s law firm was reviewing the Redevelopment Agreement to ensure safeguards against failed development, Assistant Administrator Spencer confirmed that yes, there is careful review occurring. Discussion ensued regarding what the Village could do to ensure a successful development agreement and what may cause a development to fail. Commissioner Brangle noted that the project needs to be “right sized”, saying that the residents want a development that is a good fit for the community. He recalled that this commission recommended text amendment changes to increase the building height for the Madison corridor above three stories (30 feet) and that there might be a happy medium between what the developer finds suitable and what the Village can tolerate. Chairman Brown requested that various scenarios be considered from a financial perspective.

7. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Brangle and seconded by Commissioner Chiplunkar to adjourn the meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator

Date: _____