



**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LOCAL ETHICS
COMMISSION**

Monday, January 5th, 2026 – 6:00 PM
Village Hall – 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL –
First Floor Community Room

AGENDA

Public comments sent in advance of the meeting are shared with the Commission. You may submit your written public comments via email in advance of the meeting to: mwalsh@vrf.us.

Please note that only those attending the meeting in person will be able to provide Citizen Comments. The meeting will be available for listening through Zoom via the below link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86218468326>

The agenda is as follows:

- I. Call to Order/Roll Call
- II. Citizen Comments
- III. Meeting Minutes for Review and Approval
 - a. December 2nd, 2025, Meeting Minutes
 - b. December 2nd, 2025, Executive Session Meeting Minutes
- IV. New Business
 - a. Public Hearing to Review Paul Harding's Ethics Complaint
 - b. Discussion and Potential Action on Recommendation to Village Board regarding Ethics Complaint
- V. Other Business
- VI. 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 in person at Village Hall by telephone at 708.366.8500 or by email: mwalsh@vrf.us. Every effort will be made to allow for meeting participation.

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST LOCAL ETHICS COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

December 2nd, 2025

A special meeting of the Local Ethics Commission was held on December 2nd, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the First Floor Community Room at the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioner DeGroff and Commissioner Lissuzzo

Absent: None.

Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Deputy Clerk/Management Analyst Luke Masella, Village Attorney Mallory A. Milluzzi

II. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mark Hosty provided public comment regarding the recently filed ethics complaint related to the Development Review Board and the River Forest Tennis Club lighting application.

Paul Harding, the filer of the ethics complaint, provided public comment regarding his complaint.

III. MEETING MINUTES REVIEW AND APPROVAL

a. June 17th, 2025, Meeting Minutes

A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeGroff to approve the Meeting Minutes for June 17th, 2025 Ethics Commission meeting. Seconded by Chairman Ignoffo.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo and Commissioner DeGroff

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Lissuzzo

Motion Passes.

b. September 9th, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes and September 9th, 2025, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner DeGroff to approve both the Meeting Minutes for September 9th, 2025. Seconded by Chairman Ignoffo.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo and Commissioner DeGroff

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
December 2nd, 2025

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Lissuzzo

Motion Passes.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Initial Review of Ethics Complaint – Executive Session if needed

Chairman Ignoffo explained the proceedings and the purpose of the meeting, including an overview of the process by which the Ethics Commission handles complaints.

A MOTION was made by Chairman Ignoffo to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1)&(3)&(4), (1)The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity. However, a meeting to consider an increase in compensation to a specific employee of a public body that is subject to the Local Government Wage Increase Transparency Act may not be closed and shall be open to the public and posted and held in accordance with this Act. (3) The selection of a person to fill a public office, as defined in this Act, including a vacancy in a public office, when the public body is given power to appoint under law or ordinance, or the discipline, performance or removal of the occupant of a public office, when the public body is given power to remove the occupant under law or ordinance. (4) Evidence or testimony presented in open hearing, or in closed hearing where specifically authorized by law, to a quasi-adjudicative body, as defined in this Act, provided that the body prepares and makes available for public inspection a written decision setting forth its determinative reasoning. Seconded by Chairman Lissuzzo.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioners DeGroff and Lissuzzo

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

Chair Ignoffo responded to an inquiry from the audience and explained the powers of the Ethics Commission.

Chair Ignoffo disclosed that his family has belonged to the River Forest Tennis Club for ten years. He stated that he has not personally used the club in the past four years, aside from attending a swim meet for one of his children. Chair Ignoffo further stated that this connection would not affect his ability to evaluate the matter before the Ethics Commission in a fair and impartial manner.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
December 2nd, 2025

Member DeGroff disclosed that her family were previously members of the club but are no longer affiliated and that she has no ongoing ties to the organization. She also noted that the complainant's wife previously served as her daughter's speech language therapist at Willard. Member DeGroff stated that these relationships would not affect her ability to consider the matter fairly and impartially.

Member Lissuzzo disclosed that the complainant was a former neighbor during his childhood. He also noted that his wife holds a summer privilege at the club, which she uses solely for swimming, and that he himself is not a member. Member Lissuzzo stated that while these relationships warranted disclosure, they would not affect his ability to review the matter before the Commission in a fair and impartial manner.

The Commission entered into executive session at 10:27pm.

b. Action, if any, based on Executive Session

The meeting returned from executive session at 11:14am. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioner DeGroff, and Commissioner Lissuzzo

Absent: None.

Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Deputy Clerk/Management Analyst Luke Masella, Village Attorney Mallory A. Milluzzi.

Chair Ignoffo provided a brief summary of the Commission's review and made the following determinations. With respect to the portion of the complaint concerning member Yanaki's participation in the Development Review Board application and whether it requires additional consideration, the Commission determined that further review is necessary. He stated that the Commission reviewed whether membership in the Tennis Club by Development Review Board members could constitute a conflict of interest and determined that there is sufficient basis for that issue to proceed to further review by the Ethics Commission.

A MOTION was made by Chair Ignoffo that notice be provided to Mr. Yanaki, Ms. McCole, Mr. Lucchesi, and Ms. Fishman pursuant to the Village Ethics Ordinance, giving them notice of the complaint and the initial determination of sufficiency by this board and a hearing to be conducted in the future. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioners DeGroff and Lissuzzo

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

Chair Ignoffo stated that the Commission reviewed the portion of the complaint alleging untruthfulness in the application and determined that it is not subject to Ethics Commission review and that no further action is required on that portion of the complaint.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
December 2nd, 2025

A MOTION was made by chair Ignoffo for the Village Administrator or staff to notify the complainant of the fact that that portion of his complaint has been determined insufficient for a violation of the Ethics Ordinance. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioners DeGroff and Lissuzzo

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

Chair Ignoffo addressed the portion of the complaint questioning whether the Development Review Board is the appropriate body to review the Tennis Club application. He stated that the Ethics Commission does not determine how or when a petition is reviewed, that authority rests with staff and the Village ordinance.

A MOTION was made by Chair Ignoffo that Mr. Harding be advised by the Village Administrator or staff that this portion of his complaint is also dismissed because it does not state a violation in which this board can take action. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioners DeGroff and Lissuzzo

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

Chair Ignoffo responded to a public comment made earlier in the day, noting that the Ethics Commission cannot require a member to recuse themselves, cannot restart the Development Review Board's proposal process, and cannot make any determinations regarding the application itself, as these matters are outside the Commission's purview. He further clarified that the 72-hour rule cited by Mr. Harding applies only to Village covered individuals.

A MOTION by Chair Ignoffo that the Village Administrator be directed to inform all members of the Development Review Board of the initial findings of this committee that there is basis to proceed with an ethics violation investigation and that they be made aware of that prior to the upcoming Development Review Board meeting. Seconded by Commissioner DeGroff.

AYES: Chairman Ignoffo, Commissioners DeGroff and Lissuzzo

NAYS: None

Motion Passes.

Commissioner DeGroff had no further comments.

Commissioner Lissuzzo thanked his fellow Commissioners for their guidance, noting that he is a new member of the Ethics Commission.

Local Ethics Commission Meeting Minutes
December 2nd, 2025

V. OTHER BUSINESS

The Ethics Commission tentatively scheduled their next meeting for January 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Chairman Ignoffo and SECONDED by Commissioner Lissuzzo to adjourn the December 2nd, 2025, meeting of the Local Ethics Commission at 11:30am.

AYES: Commissioners Lissuzzo and DeGroff, Chairman Ignoffo

NAYS: None.

Motion Passes.

Respectfully submitted:

Luke Masella
Deputy Village Clerk/Management Analyst

From: Village of River Forest <noreply@vrf.us>

Sent: Sunday, November 9, 2025 9:49 PM

To: ethics@vrf.us

Subject: Complaint form

You don't often get email from noreply@vrf.us. [Learn why this is important](#)

The following Ethics Complaint was submitted on: 11/09/2025

Name: Paul Harding

Email: _____

Address:

Phone:

Complaints:

River Forest village government is run with a high level of professionalism in an equitable, fair manner. The River Forest Tennis Club (RFTC) lighting application and the 11.6.25 Development Review Board Hearing contained violations of village ordinances. Elias Yanaki is on the Development Review Board and represented the River Forest Tennis Club with its site lighting proposal before the board. He has participated in board deliberations on this matter and continues to do so. It is a blatant conflict of interest. What he did and was permitted to do is a clear violation of the VRF Ethics Ordinance. Paragraph 1-23-5: Ethical Standards C .9 precludes a member of a village board from appearing as a representative of a third party with a matter in front of the board on which that person serves. In the public hearing Elias represented the tennis club and gave a 30 minute presentation as the sole representative of the RFTC. That is a serious violation of the ethics ordinance. The ordinance allows him to publicly comment on his own behalf. However he did not do that. He represented the tennis club by solely giving the 30 minute presentation. Attendees giving comments on their own behalf are only permitted to do so in the public comment section of the meeting. What Elias did violated both the letter and the intent of the ethics ordinance. According to the opening statement by the village attorney there are multiple members of the River Forest Tennis Club on the Development Review Board (DRB). The RFTC is a private organization owned by the members. Those members are part owners. RFTC members on the DRB, including Elias, have a financial conflict of interest. Paragraph C 6, states that they are not permitted to participate in deliberations and voting. They have been doing so in violation of the ethics ordinance. The application by the RFTC has multiple misstatements and also contains misleading information. As pointed out by a lighting engineer neighbor in the public comment section and the VRF planning consultant, lighting design for the project does not meet the River Forest Building Code and Zoning Ordinance requirements as RFTC claimed. RFTC claimed that lighting levels meet Illuminating Engineers Society Standards. They do not according to the lighting engineer present. Lighting levels exceed those critical standards. VRF ordinances require that the application and presentation be truthful and accurate. The application is not. The presentation was not. To illustrate the project they included a photograph of tennis courts with 6 luminaires. The

lighting design includes 48 luminaires, 8 times as many. RFTC left that grossly inaccurate photograph up on the screen for 90 minutes. Knowing that the DRB was stacked with tennis club members, they applied for Planned Development approval. The tennis club facilities were built 125 years ago. This is not a planned development matter as defined in village ordinances. What they are requesting is a Zoning or Building Code Variance to add a city block of light fixtures 30 feet up the air, creating massive light pollution and glare in the neighborhood. If village ordinances were followed the RFTC lighting variance request would be reviewed by Zoning Board of Appeals or a village entity to review variance requests to the building code. It is clearly not a planned development issue as defined by village ordinances. I recommend that village ordinance violations in the application, process, and board be corrected before proceeding further. Right now the application is not truthful and is riddled with critical errors. What has been submitted does not meet VRF zoning and building code requirements. The process thus far violates the VRF Ethics Ordinance. It is not consistent with VRF's long history of local government excellence and quality impartial service to its residents. The process needs to be corrected and redone with the right village board to avoid further waste of VRF and its residents' time and resources.