

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 3, 2025**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Development Review Board was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2025, in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. Call to order

Chairman Crosby called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Crosby, Members Fishman, Martin, McCole, Shoemaker, Yanaki, and Davis
Absent: None
Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Assistant Administrator Jessica Spencer, and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

II. Minutes of the November 7, 2024, Development Review Board Meeting

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member Shoemaker to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2024, DRB Meeting.

By a voice vote, the motion passed. Member Davis abstained since she didn't attend the meeting.

III. Application #25-009: Application to make improvements to Constitution Park including reconfiguring the playground, sand volleyball court/ice rink, and ballfield; and adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms, and a sitting plaza.

Chairman Crosby opened the public hearing. Assistant Administrator Spencer swore in those who wished to testify.

Mike Sletten, Park District Executive Director and Dennis Healy, Park District Treasurer, presented the application.

Member Fishman asked why the playground equipment was proposed to be moved if it required the removal of trees.

Member McCole asked about the nature of the accessibility of the playground. Director Sletten said that the standard set by the Park Board was 70% and this equipment is over 90% accessible.

Member McCole asked about the completion date of December 31, 2025. Director Sletten said that substantial completion would be during the warmer months and there might be some final pieces that need to be done later.

Member Davis asked about the shade that is anticipated on the playground equipment. Director Sletten responded that there will be shade structures installed.

Member Davis asked if there could be a sandpit included in this design, and if the climbing structure might be reconsidered as something that currently exists at Willard Elementary School. Director Sletten said that the equipment has been discussed by the public already and selected.

Member Davis asked if there would be swings for older children at the park. Director Sletten said that there was another apparatus proposed, such as a tube swing.

Member Davis asked what was going to happen to the existing equipment. Director Sletten said it will be donated to another park district.

Member Yanaki asked about the alignment of the baseball and soccer fields in the new layout. Director Sletten described the layouts.

Member Yanaki asked about the alternative play space for baseball and soccer players. Director Sletten said that baseball teams have made other arrangements for the season and the soccer field has not been scheduled for this season.

Member Yanaki asked about storage space in the shelter. Director Sletten responded that it will be storage for the Park District's operations, not for the storage of sports equipment.

Member McCole asked about the dates of accessibility of the bathrooms. Director Sletten responded the bathrooms would be open during regular hours of operation: April 1 – October 1, 7am through sunset.

Member Martin asked about the schedule lights on the volleyball court. Director Sletten responded that the schedule is primary for the ice rink, so they typically turn on at 4pm and turn off at 9pm in the cold months. If the volleyball court was using it, the lights would be used only for specific games that run past sunset; a site supervisor would activate them.

Member Martin asked where the light poles would be located. Director Sletten indicated their location on the maps provided in the packet.

Member Martin asked whether the shelter was intended to allow parents to supervise children on the playground, noting that this would be difficult because of the limited line of sight. Director Sletten noted that there will be benches around the playground.

Member McCole noted that it might make more sense for the bathrooms to be on the south end of the structure, so the parents could sit in the shelter and observe the playing children. Director Sletten responded that the idea was to place the bathrooms on the north end of the shelter to allow visibility of the restroom doors from the playground.

Member Martin asked about the funding of this project. Director Sletten said that the Park District had budgeted for the project and that money was on hand.

Member Shoemaker asked about the lights around the baseball field. Director Sletten confirmed that there are no lights proposed to go around the baseball field at this time.

Chairman Crosby said that the signage on the northwest corner of the park and that this material is not the same as proposed for the shelter. Director Sletten confirmed that it will be a different material.

Chairman Crosby asked if the canopies on the playground will be permanent. Director Sletten said they would be removed for the winter months.

Chairman Crosby asked if there would be a temporary fence structure for the baseball field outfield. Director Sletten said that wasn't his plan, however if the baseball teams did it would be their decision.

Member McCole suggested that the bathroom doors should be located on the south side. Director Sletten said that most parents and children would be on the playground, not under the shelter. He pointed out the locations for the benches on the drawings.

Chairman Crosby opened the hearing to allow for public comment.

Member Davis believes that District 90 plans to construct fencing on the south border of the Park property; Director Sletten confirmed that he was aware of those plans.

Member Yanaki asked if District 90 was responsible for any costs. Director Sletten said no.

Chairman Crosby shared that he is concerned about the appearance and materials of the shelter. He hoped that it would match the stone in other objects like the monument sign. He noted that he also liked the idea of flipping the bathroom location.

Chairman Crosby invited Administrator Walsh to discuss the Village's review.

Administrator Walsh discussed the memos that were provided in the packet. He mentioned that the Police Department had expressed a concern regarding cameras on the site, and the security of the bathrooms for visitors. Public Works, he stated, had no concerns regarding the drainage or utilities on the site at this time, as those points are usually addressed during the plan reviews. The Fire Department requested an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in the event of emergencies. Administrator Walsh reviewed the land use of the site, including the 5 site development allowances that are being requested.

Chairman Crosby asked about the security camera as noted by the Police Department. Director Sletten confirmed that they are shopping for camera systems in consultation with the Police Department.

Chairman Crosby asked about the AED. Director Sletten said they typically don't put them in the parks, but they are looking into it.

Member Shoemaker asked if there were any cameras at Keystone Park. Director Sletten responded yes.

Member Fishman asked about the location of the AED now. Director Sletten confirmed that it is not accessible to the public unless there is staff on site at that time.

Member Martin asked when staff would be at this site. Director Sletten said only when there is programming taking place, which varies.

Member McCole noted that there is a clear line of sight for the bathrooms should they be moved to the south end of the structure. She asked if there would be consideration to move them. Director Sletten said that the plans are set at this time.

Member Davis asked if feedback was provided from residents who live immediately adjacent to the property. Director Sletten said there were 4 public meetings conducted on this topic.

Hearing no additional questions, Chairman Crosby closed the public hearing.

Chairman Crosby asked for feedback from the Members.

Member McCole said that overall, she liked the design of the proposal. She asked how many people play volleyball. Member Davis said she believed there might be organized teams or a league in the summer. Director Sletten responded that there are 2 seasons of volleyball league that operate, in the spring and summer.

Member McCole asked the purpose of the fence around the ice rink. Director Sletten said it was to keep visitors off the liner while the ice is hardening. Discussion ensued regarding the frequency of users on the sand volleyball courts.

Member Martin stated that he would make the motion to allow all the 5 site development allowances that have been explained by Administrator Walsh and should also recognize the recommendations by the Village bodies, specifically conditioned on the installation of security cameras and rule signage. Member Martin also proposed including the condition of the installation of the AED, installed on the exterior of the structure. He also suggested that the Park District reconsider the orientation of the structure and the materials of the structure.

Member Davis asked about the cost for the AED and do other parks have it accessible. Director Sletten said he believed this device might be cost prohibitive. Discussion ensued regarding the AED costs and security of this type of device.

Member Martin asked about landscaping plans; Assistant Administrator Spencer noted that it is a condition of the building permit process already.

Chairman Crosby asked about the location of the bathrooms.

Member McCole said she liked the point made by the Chairman about the building materials. Chairman Crosby proposed the Park reconsider the position of the structure for consideration of the Board. Administrator Walsh noted that input had already been considered by the public by the Park District Board and cautioned the DRB from suggesting substantive changes to the design.

Attorney Skrodzki affirmed Administrator Walsh, noting the authority of this Board in relation to the applicants.

Chairman Crosby asked the applicant to reconsider the use of materials for the structure.

Member Martin asked Attorney Skrodzki to clarify if this Board is able to question the architectural design. Attorney Skrodzki said that aesthetic aspects are different than architectural features and in terms of ‘design’, there is deference to the other taxing body. Discussion ensued regarding the Village’s authority over developers verses other taxing bodies.

Member Martin made a motion, seconded by Member Davis, to recommend that the Village Board approve the application, granting all five (5) site development allowances, conditioned upon the installation of security cameras, proper signage, and an AED on the exterior of the structure. The motion also requests that the applicant reconsider the orientation and materials of the structure.

Member Yanaki asked if there should be a recommendation to reconsider instead of a condition for the AED. Attorney Skrodzki confirmed the terms of the motion.

Member Fishman asked if the Fire Department was aware of the access to the AED as presented this evening. Chairman Crosby read the recommendation by the Fire Department noted in the memo. Member Fishman responded that she was concerned about the location and access to the public as currently described.

Member Martin confirmed his motion is to make the AED accessible to the public. Discussion ensued regarding the access and intended use of an AED. Member Martin reminded the group that this is a recommendation to the Village Board.

Ayes: Chairman Crosby, Members Fishman, Martin, McCole, Shoemaker, Yanaki, and Davis

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

IV. Public Comment

There was none.

V. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Member Davis and SECONDED by Member McCole to adjourn the April 3, 2025, meeting of the Development Review Board at 8:43 p.m.

By a voice vote, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jessica Spencer, Secretary

