

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 6, 2025**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Development Review Board was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 6, 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 7:34 p.m. Upon roll call, the following people were:

Present: Chairman David Crosby, Members Jane McCole, Mary Shoemaker, Elias Yanaki, and Corina Davis, Ron Lucchesi, and Maryanne Fishman
Absent: None
Also Present: Assistant Administrator Jessica Spencer, Deputy Clerk Luke Masella, Secretary Cliff Radatz, and Attorney Anne Skrodzki

Chairman Crosby asked if there was any public comment not related to the Public Hearing. There was none.

Chairman Crosby introduced the next agenda item.

II. Minutes of July 10, 2025, Development Review Board Meeting

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member McCole to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2025, DRB Meeting.

Member Fishman pointed out a spelling error which Assistant Administrator Spencer noted.

Present: Chairman Crosby, Members McCole, Shoemaker, Davis, Yanaki, and Fishman
Abstain: Member Lucchesi

The motion passed.

III. Minutes of July 31, 2025 Joint Meeting of the Economic Development Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission, Development Review Board, and Village Board

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member McCole to approve the minutes of the July 31, 2025 Joint Meeting.

Present: Chairman Crosby, Members McCole, Shoemaker, Davis, and Fishman
Abstain: Members Lucchesi and Yanaki

The motion passed.

IV. Application #25-0012, Amendment to Ordinance #3863, An Application to install lights to illuminate the tennis courts at the River Forest Tennis Club

Chairman Crosby opened the public hearing for the River Forest Tennis Club application. He invited Attorney Skrodski to address the DRB members who might also be members of the RFTC. She invited those who believe they have a conflict to recuse themselves at this time. Member Yanaki recused himself from the discussion and left the dais

Chairman Crosby outlined the next steps of the hearing, which include a presentation by the applicant, staff feedback, and then public comment on this topic before the Board begins its discussion.

Secretary Radatz swore in those who wished to testify.

Elias Yanaki presented the application regarding illuminating the tennis courts at the River Forest Tennis Club.

Chairman Crosby asked the Village to present its findings. Assistant Administrator Spencer summarized the outcome of the Technical Review meeting and introduced John Houseal and Nicole Campbell of Houseal Lavigne to present their analysis. Mr. Houseal introduced himself and his firm and emphasized that his role is to provide accurate information for the Board to use during its deliberations. He then gave an overview of his memo on the project and responded to some of the claims made by Mr. Yanaki.

Chairman Crosby asked for questions from the Members. There were none.

Mr. Yanaki asked to respond to several comments in the Houseal Lavigne memo. He asked for clarification on the Village standard of 0.5-foot candle measurements and noted differences between residential and commercial use at the property line. He requested that all foot candle standards be applied evenly across all properties in the Village, as he feels they are not being applied evenly now. He stated that the hours of use have been revised from 10:00pm to 9:30pm and that the impact of the expanded hours would be 80 minutes, not 4 hours as stated in the memo. He disputed the memo's statement about the benefit to the public. He also noted that adding the lights does not constitute a material change of use to the planned development ordinance under the Village ordinance. He further disputed the memo's opinion about inconsistency with the comprehensive plan.

Chairman Crosby invited John Houseal to offer his rebuttal.

Mr. Houseal addressed several of Mr. Yanaki's points in his response. Among his comments, he stated that he disagreed with the assertion that the proposed changes were material changes to the ordinance. He clarified that he did not say the project was consistent with the comprehensive plan. He noted that 0.5 foot candles has been the only Village standard referenced. He also stated that the lights are intended for the entire tennis court surface, even if they are not always in use.

Chairman Crosby again asked for questions from the Members.

Chairman Crosby asked for clarification on the distinction between public benefit and private club use. He also asked about swim lessons and tennis lessons offered to individuals who are not members of the club.

Mr. Yanaki stated that swim and tennis lessons are available to the public for a fee and that both members and non members must pay for these lessons.

Mr. Houseal clarified that the use of lights would not affect the ability to provide lessons and reiterated that the lights are the main focus of this application.

Member Lucchesi asked why the RFTC is requesting an extension from April 1 to October 31.

Mr. Yanaki explained that the request is due to the variable nature of the weather each year.

Member Shoemaker inquired about the possibility of lighting only a smaller number of courts to reduce the impact.

Mr. Yanaki noted that installing only a portion of the lights in phases could increase the overall project costs.

Member Lucchesi asked if they could see the lights currently in use.

Mr. Yanaki mentioned that a similar lighting setup exists at a court in Evanston, Illinois.

Member Lucchesi suggested that some concerns might stem from a general hesitation toward change.

Mr. Yanaki also highlighted the light fixture he brought as an example for the Board to review.

Chairman Crosby asked if any Commissioners had additional questions, and none were raised. He then provided instructions to the public for those wishing to offer comments that evening.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Jason Jeunnette outlined his credentials in the field of lighting and pointed out several aspects of Mr. Yanaki's presentation that he believed were inaccurate, forming the basis for his recommendation against the application.
2. Peter Krauss, a member of the tennis club with his family, expressed support for the application. He noted that it would increase the number of lit courts, benefiting over 280 local children and providing them with more opportunities to play tennis. He added that expanding activities for children between August and October aligns positively with the character of the Village.
3. Mark Hosty expressed concerns about the increased activity and noise from the pickleball courts since they were installed and indicated that he does not support the application. He highlighted that the proposed lighting would allow use from 6:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. daily and raised worries about potential traffic congestion during the school year. He also clarified that the opposition is not based on a fear of change among homeowners.
4. Joe Castillo shared his experience working with children in Village sports and expressed support for the application, emphasizing its benefit to the community. He noted that securing court time at Keystone is very challenging, highlighting the value of expanding access.
5. Adam Block described his decision to purchase his home in the Village over 15 years ago and expressed concern that the proposed lights would increase traffic and noise in the

neighborhood. He also noted that the lighting would reflect into the night sky, affecting the quality of the evenings.

6. Adira Block expressed her opposition to the application, explaining that the lights would make it difficult for her to concentrate on homework and could interfere with her ability to fall asleep.
7. Monika Block described how she and her husband chose their home in the Village and expressed concerns about current traffic on her block caused by club members. She stated that even extensive landscaping could not obscure the height of the proposed lights. She also noted that the additional lighting would increase both brightness and noise, affecting her children, and emphasized that it is unfair for the closest neighbors to bear the impact of recreational activities enjoyed by others for just an hour or so each week.
8. Ethan Block shared that the proposed lights would make it harder for him to fall asleep. He explained that staying up later would make it difficult to concentrate on his activities and add extra distractions to his routine.
9. Maureen O'Brien, a member of the RFTC, expressed that she does not support the application. She mentioned that she might have chosen a different home if the courts had been lit and urged the Board not to place the burden of the lights on nearby neighbors.
10. Spencer Kirk noted that he resides across from the Roosevelt Middle School lights mentioned earlier. He stated that he has not experienced any negative impacts from the school's lights, and added that he is a member of the tennis club.
11. Dan Pohlman expressed concern about the proposed lights, noting that they would directly affect him. He questioned the notion that the lights serve a public benefit, describing that claim as misleading. He also raised a question about the legal guidance concerning Board membership in the RFTC and potential conflicts of interest.
12. Steve Zoller expressed support for the application, highlighting its recreational benefits and noting that it would not cost the Village anything. He indicated that he believes the traffic impact would be less significant than suggested and added that he would not be bothered by a small amount of light spilling into the street, especially since the area is quite dark when the trees are in full leaf.
13. Jeanne Calabrese reflected on the changes she has observed at the River Forest Tennis Club since moving to the Village nearly 30 years ago. She discussed the qualities that contribute to being a "good neighbor" and inquired about the number of club members living within 1,000 feet of the club as well as the total number of members residing in River Forest.
14. Damitha Bandara, a Village resident for approximately 20 years, expressed his opposition to the application. He raised concerns that increased traffic from club members could lead to headlights shining into his home and disturb the evening tranquility. He urged the DRB to consider the impact on nearby neighbors and also noted concerns regarding safety and potential effects on property taxes.
15. Daniel Lauber outlined his relevant credentials and expressed his recommendation against the application. He raised a variety of concerns, among them the following: he noted his surprise that Mr. Yanaki was presenting to the Board and stated his agreement with Mr. Houseal's assessment. He expressed concern that the project would change the character of the neighborhood and highlighted its inconsistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Drawing on his experience living near a McDonald's, he questioned whether members would realistically ride their bikes to the RFTC at night. He suggested a compromise of installing lights on only two courts initially to evaluate their impact.
16. Paul Waters urged the Commission to carefully consider the proposed end time for the lights, particularly if the application were to be approved. He discussed the "line of sight" of the

lights in relation to the existing pool lighting and described how it affects the use of his backyard.

17. James Ford expressed concern about how the proposed lighting would affect his enjoyment of his front porch in the evenings. He stated that the overall wattage would illuminate the night sky and create a public nuisance from April through October. He also strongly suggested that any DRB member who does not recuse themselves from the vote should step down.
18. Carey Palmer described how her home faces the courts and pool, and how the proposed lights would affect her family's daily life and evening routines. She stated that if nighttime court play had existed when they were buying their home, she and her husband likely would not have chosen the property. She expressed that the height of the light poles would be visually intrusive. Palmer provided a graphic, highlighting nearby homes with concerns about the proposal and submitted a petition from neighbors opposing the application. She also suggested exploring collaboration with the RF Park District or the OP Tennis Club near Lake and Harlem to address potential congestion.
19. Bradley Palmer expressed strong opposition to the application, stating that its approval would be upsetting and would alter the character of the Village. He noted that while the Village has nearly 11,000 residents, only 385 families are members of the club. He highlighted inconsistencies in the presentation and used his 35-minute commute to play golf as an example of a personal preference that should not dictate changes to the Village. While he appreciates the current appearance of the club, he stated that the addition of lights would significantly change it.
20. Peter Darley shared that he and his wife have greatly enjoyed living near the RFTC over the years but expressed concern about how the proposed lights would affect their quality of life. He believes the impact of the lighting would be more significant than indicated in tonight's presentation. Mr. Darley referenced a 2012 application submitted by the RFTC and noted that the Keystone lights are not comparable to the proposed application. While he appreciates the club, he described the proposed lighting as "over the top." He also raised concerns about the composition of the Board and their possible membership of the RFTC.
21. John Lawrence, a lifelong River Forest resident and RFTC member, spoke in favor of the application. He pointed out that many club members walk or bike to the facility, and that usage is unlikely to be concentrated at any one time. He expressed trust in the findings of the traffic study and reminded the Board that the Village, as an urban suburb, is not entirely quiet at night. Lawrence also highlighted the club's efforts to be mindful of neighbors, including landscaping, wind screens, and other measures to show good faith.
22. John Vandemore was called to speak but chose not to provide public comment.
23. Paul Harding stated that the River Forest Tennis Club is a private organization and could alter its plans at any time. He noted his familiarity with the lighting proposal and expressed concern that it would create a burden for neighboring residents. Mr. Harding also warned that approving the application could set a troubling precedent for future lighting requests in the Village. Additionally, he raised concerns about potential conflicts of interest with RFTC members serving on the DRB.
24. Dan Bakers was called to speak but chose not to provide public comment.
25. Jonathan Kirk, who lives near the RFTC, expressed his opposition to the application. He raised concerns about the potential impact on the appearance and character of the surrounding properties.
26. Sean Vitale shared his appreciation for the sense of community he has experienced in the Village. Having lived across the street from the RFTC, he noted that he has never felt the lights or activity were problematic. He believes that the addition of the lights would be a

benefit to the community and observed that the existing ambient noise in the area is more noticeable than the sound from existing tennis activities near his home. Based on this, he expressed support for the application.

Chairman Crosby asked if anyone else from the public wished to comment on this topic, and no additional comments were offered.

Chairman Crosby concluded the public comment portion of the hearing. Noting that the time was 10:11 p.m., he proposed continuing the meeting to November 20 and sought input from the group.

Member Davis proposed holding a vote that evening, but other members indicated they were not prepared to decide.

The Development Review Board noted that there is a tentative quorum set for the December 4th meeting.

Attorney Skrodzki explained the process for continuing the hearing and then offered a potential motion to formalize the continuation.

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member McCole to continue the hearing to December 4th.

Ayes:	Chairman Crosby, Members McCole, Shoemaker, Davis, Lucchesi, and Fishman
Nays:	None
Abstain:	None

By a voice vote, the motion passed.

V. Public Comment

There was none.

A member of the public inquired whether any Board members would recuse themselves. Chairman Crosby responded that recusals had been addressed at the start of the meeting.

Chairman Crosby then outlined the next steps for the continued public hearing, including this Board's discussion and potential recommendation to the Village Board.

Member Davis asked if the applicant could clarify the foot-candle calculations referenced in both the presentation and the Village's analysis.

Attorney Skrodzki noted that the Board could request this clarification now so that the information would be available for review at the next hearing.

Mr. Houseal explained that the applicant would need to align the photometric reports with the Village standard of 0.5 foot candles at the property line. He confirmed that the applicant would coordinate with staff to address this clarification ahead of the December 4 meeting.

VI. Adjournment

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member Lucchesi to adjourn the November 6, 2025, meeting of the Development Review Board at 10:19 p.m.

By a voice vote, motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jessica Spencer, Secretary