

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST**

April 17, 2025

RE: **Application # 25-0009, Application for improvements – Constitution Park – 7715 Greenfield Street, River Forest, Illinois**

PETITIONER: **River Forest Park District**

APPLICATION: **Application to make improvements to Constitution Park including reconfiguring the playground, sand volleyball courts/ice rink, and ballfield; and adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms and a sitting plaza. (“Property”)**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: On April 29, 2024, the Petitioner submitted an application to the Village of River Forest for improvements to the for the Property, (the “Application”). The Application requests permission to reconfigure the playground, sand volleyball courts/ice rink, and ballfield, as well as adding a picnic shelter with 2 single restrooms and a sitting plaza on the Property. The Application was received and processed by Village staff in accordance with the Village of River Forest Village Code.

BACKGROUND: Petitioner is an Illinois park district. The Property is Petitioner’s Constitution Park. Petitioner has operated a park on the Property for many years.

The Property is located within the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning District. The Property is surrounded by residential uses on the north, west, and east sides, and Willard Elementary School (District 90) to the south.

APPLICATION: The Applicant seeks the following five (5) site development allowances under the Village of River Forest Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”):

	Zoning Ordinance	Proposed	SDA Requested
Franklin Ave (West) - Dugout Fencing	50 feet	15.1 feet	34.9 feet
Greenfield Ave (North) – Playground Equipment	50 feet	17 feet	33 feet
Ashland Ave (East) – Garbage Can & Bike Rack	50 feet	15.8 feet	34.2 feet
Willard Elem (South) – Dugout Fencing	25 feet	15.1 feet	9.9 feet
Off Street Parking	49 spaces	0 spaces	49 spaces

PUBLIC HEARING: At the public hearing before the Development Review Board (“DRB”) held on April 3, 2025 (“Hearing”), representatives of Petitioner presented the Application. At the duly and properly noticed Hearing, testimony was taken and heard by the DRB on the Application. All persons testifying during the Hearing were sworn prior to giving testimony. All persons wishing to be heard were allowed to engage in cross-examination of the witnesses and provide testimony on their own behalf.

Following a presentation by Petitioner, reports by various Village staff, and public comment from all who wished to speak, if any, the Development Review Board (“DRB”) voted, 7 to 0, to

recommend approval of the Application to the Village President and Board of Trustees, with the conditions set forth below (together the “Conditions”).

FINDINGS: The DRB, based upon the evidence presented at the Hearing, and pursuant to Section 10-19-3 of the Village Code, makes the following Findings regarding the Application:

A. The proposed use or combination of uses is consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan.

The Property is located in the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning District. Overall, the Project is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the DRB finds that the construction of the Project will meet the Comprehensive Plan’s desire that the Petitioner provide high quality recreational opportunities for the community and maintain high quality recreational facilities in the Village. The Project is also appropriate under the Comprehensive Plan because it is anticipated that it will not have a negative impact on the residential neighborhood in which the Property is located. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

B. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use or combination of uses will not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of the residents of the Village.

Testimony at the Hearing from the Petitioner and Village staff demonstrated that the Project would not result in any condition that would be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of residents in the Village, so long as the Conditions are met. The DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

C. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses which are permitted by this zoning title.

The testimony showed that the Project will not diminish the use or enjoyment of properties in its vicinity, as the Project is set back from adjacent properties. No evidence was presented to the contrary. For these reasons, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

D. The establishment of the proposed use or combination of uses will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses or combination of uses otherwise permitted in the zoning district.

The proposed improvements in the Application are consistent with other improvements and uses in the PRI Public/Recreational/Institutional Zoning, including other parks operated by the Petitioner. The Project would not impede the adjacent residential uses and would enhance recreational opportunities for Village residents. The surrounding neighborhood has been fully developed for a number of years. Based on this evidence, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

E. The proposed use or combination of uses will not diminish property values in the vicinity.

Evidence presented by the Petitioner suggested that there would be no diminishment of property values in the vicinity of the Project, and no testimony or evidence to the contrary was presented

to the DRB. For this reason, and for the additional reasons stated above in Standard C., the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

F. Adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire service and other necessary facilities already exist or will be provided to serve the proposed use or combination of uses.

There are adequate utilities, road access, drainage, police and fire services, and other Village services, to serve the improvements set forth in the Application. No evidence was presented suggesting or establishing that the Project would be hampered by a lack of utilities, road access, drainage, police or fire services. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

G. Adequate measures already exist or will be taken to provide ingress and egress to the proposed use or combination of uses in a manner that minimizes traffic congestion in the public streets.

Given the nature of the proposed use, no material traffic impacts are expected due to the Project. The Application does not propose any changes to ingress or egress to and from, or parking on, the Property. The DRB finds that this standard has been met.

H. The proposed use or combination of uses will be consistent with the character of the Village.

The Project is consistent with the character of the Village, the Petitioner's long term use of the Property and the Village's desire for improvements and investment in community institutions. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

I. Development of the proposed use or combination of uses will not materially affect a known historical or cultural resource.

There are no historic or cultural resources affected by the Project. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

J. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses considers the relationship of the proposed use or combination of uses to the surrounding area and minimizes adverse effects, including visual impacts of the proposed use or combination of uses on adjacent property.

The Project is a use that is compatible with the existing recreational uses of the Property. The use will allow for enhanced recreational activities, including volleyball and baseball. The design of the Project is complimentary to the other uses on the Property and to the surrounding area as a whole, so long as the Conditions are met. There was no evidence or testimony presented suggesting that adverse effects would result if the Project was built and put into use. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

K. The design of the proposed use or combination of uses promotes a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment and individuals with disabilities.

The pedestrian environment would be enhanced by the addition of the Project. No testimony was presented at the Hearing demonstrating that there was any risk to pedestrians based upon the

improvements requested for approval in the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met, so long as the Conditions are met.

- L. **The applicant has the financial and technical capacity to complete the proposed use or combination of uses and has made adequate provisions to guarantee the development of any buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the proposed use or combination of uses.**

Evidence presented in the Application demonstrates Petitioner's financial and technical ability to complete the Project. There are no apparent adverse impacts on buffers, landscaping, public open space, and other improvements associated with the Application. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

- M. **The proposed use or combination of uses is economically viable and does not pose a current or potential burden upon the services, tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village, except to the extent that such burden is balanced by the benefit derived by the Village from the proposed use.**

Petitioner has produced evidence that the construction and operation of the Project are economically viable. The DRB finds that there is no evidence the proposed use would increase the burden on Village services, the Village's tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village. Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds that this standard has been met.

- N. **The application meets the additional standards for multi-family housing in Section 10-19-3(O) of the Zoning Ordinance, except to the extent site development allowances have been granted.**

Based on the evidence presented, the DRB finds this standard to be inapplicable to the Application.

CONDITIONS: The DRB's recommendation that the Application be approved is subject to the following Conditions:

1. The Project shall be built in substantial conformity with the Application and approved plans.
2. The Property shall contain the security cameras and rule signage to be posted, as recommended by the Police Department.
3. The Property shall provide an AED installed in a space that is accessible on the exterior of the shelter.
4. The Project shall comply with the landscaping requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. The Applicant shall consider the possibility of reconfiguring the bathroom plaza and/or upgrading the building materials

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION: Based upon the foregoing Findings, the DRB, by a vote of 7 to 0, recommends to the President and Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Application, including the SDAs, so long as the Conditions are met.

Signed: David Crosby
David Crosby, Chairman
Development Review Board
Village of River Forest

Dated: April 22, 2025