



Village of River Forest
Village Administrator's Office
400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
Tel: 708-366-8500

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 11, 2024

To: Zoning Board of Appeals

From: Matt Walsh, Village Administrator

Subj: Commercial District Zoning Regulations – Text Amendment

Background: In 2022, the Village contracted with Houseal Lavigne to provide professional planning consulting services to the Economic Development Commission to examine current zoning regulations along the Madison Street and North Avenue corridors. This examination was recommended as part of the River Forest Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the analysis is to determine if any zoning amendments would better enable and attract appropriate and appealing economic development.

Houseal Lavigne Analysis: Houseal Lavigne (HL) began the project in August 2022. The fact-finding stages included conversations with Village staff and a tour of the Madison Street and North Avenue Corridors. The HL team collaborated with the EDC to identify opportunity sites that were used to conceptualize potential future development. HL provided rough concept drawings for the sites to generate discussion about potential zoning changes. HL then met with residents, developers, and architects to collect information about neighborhood concerns, current market conditions and development challenges.

Economic Development Commission Discussion: The EDC discussed the proposed zoning considerations at its April and May meetings.

On May 3, the EDC voted 6-0 to approve the following motion:

- a. *The Commission recommends that the Village Board refer the zoning changes as proposed in the memo from Houseal Lavigne to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The proposed zoning changes are also to be accompanied by resident input that was provided during public comment.*

Additional Consideration: The EDC discussed and recommended the regulations for C-1 and C-2 districts. North Avenue and Madison Street are zoned those districts, respectively. Following the recommendation, staff and HL further discussed the need to revise the

restrictions for other commercial districts for consistency. The revisions to the C-3 and ORIC districts are scheduled for additional discussion at January 10, 2024 EDC meeting.

Zoning Proposals for Zoning Board of Appeals Consideration: HL has drafted a new Chapter in the zoning code that will apply to C1, C2, C3 and ORIC districts. Currently, the code has separate chapters for each zoning district. The chapters are intertwined, and sections refer to other chapters. The reason for the new chapter is to simplify with one chart that applies to the four commercial districts. This will be similar in format to the Village's Land Use Chart.

There are no changes proposed to the Planned Development process or Zoning Board of Appeals review processes. Multi-family housing and any development over 20,000 square feet will still be required to submit a planned development application and be reviewed by the Development Review Board.

The Village board directed staff to petition the Village Board at its November 13, 2023 meeting. John Houseal, the Village's planning consultant, will be at the ZBA meeting to present the proposed amendments.

Public Comment and Concerns: Residents attended a stakeholder meeting and the April & May EDC meetings to provide public comment on the proposed changes. Residents expressed concern about the process, potential impacts on traffic, parking, green space, and privacy. The minutes for the two EDC meetings are attached, in addition to letters submitted to the EDC from residents.

Request for Board Action: If the Zoning Board of Appeals is in support of the proposed amendments, the following motion would be appropriate:

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed text amendments to Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15 and 21 of the Zoning Ordinance to the Village Board.

Documents Attached:

- Houseal Lavigne Memo & Proposed Text Amendments
- April EDC Minutes
- May EDC Minutes
- Resident Letters



MEMORANDUM

CHICAGO

188 W Randolph Street Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60601
312-372-1008

LOS ANGELES

360 E 2nd Street Suite 800
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213-259-1008

SEATTLE

999 3rd Ave Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104
206-828-1008

Date: November 10, 2023

SENT VIA EMAIL

To: Village of River Forest
Matt Walsh, Village Administrator

From: Houseal Lavigne
John Houseal, FAICP, Partner | Cofounder
Jackie Berg, AICP, Practice Lead

Re: **Draft Commercial Zoning District Amendments
C1, C2, C3, ORIC Overview**

This memorandum and its attachments present proposed zoning amendments for the four River Forest commercial districts – C1, C2, C3, and ORIC. The proposed amendments combine the standards for the commercial districts, currently contained in four separate chapters of Title 10 of the River Forest Code of Ordinance (Chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15), into one new chapter 12, to enhance clarity and ease of use of the ordinance. Additionally, some amendments are also proposed for the Land Use Chart in Chapter 21, for uses relating to the commercial districts.

Amendments for the C1 and C2 Districts were discussed with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) over several meetings earlier this year, including attendance and participation by several residents, primarily from the area near Madison Street. In addition, a neighborhood/resident workshop was held for Madison Street neighborhood residents and North Avenue neighborhood residents, and several area developers, architects, and planners were interviewed. The EDC was directed to examine zoning along North Avenue and Madison Street, and therefore did not review or discuss the C3 - Central Commercial District or the ORIC – Office/Research/Industrial/Commercial District. Reconnaissance, development concepts and visualizations, and examination of existing development characteristics was also undertaken.

In general, the EDC's recommendations included:

- Increasing building height to accommodate an additional story
- Increasing allowed residential densities
- Decreasing parking requirements for residential uses

The proposed commercial district amendments reflect direction given by the EDC for the C1 and C2 Districts, and the same approach was applied to amendments in the C3 and ORIC Districts.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The following is a summary of the proposed changes to the Village’s commercial districts as compared to current requirements. The complete draft chapter is attached for review and discussion purposes only.

Allowed Residential Uses

River Forest establishes allowed uses per district in the land use chart in Chapter 21.

District	Current Residential Use Allowance	Proposed Residential Use Allowance
<i>Multiple-family dwellings</i>		
C1	Not allowed	Allowed via PD
C2	Allowed via PD	
C3		
ORIC	Not allowed	
<i>Multiple-family dwellings above first floor of permitted commercial or office uses</i>		
C1	Not allowed	Allowed via PD
C2	Allowed via PD	
C3		
ORIC		

Building Height

River Forest regulates the maximum height of buildings as the vertical distance measured from the nearest public sidewalk to the highest point of the building or structure or to the highest point of any object attached to the building or structure, whichever is higher. Attached objects include, but are not limited to, antennas of any kind.

District	Current Height Maximum	Proposed Height Maximum
C1	50 feet	65 feet
C2	30 feet	50 feet
C3	50 feet	65 feet
ORIC		

Residential Density

River Forest regulates residential density via minimum lot area per dwelling unit requirements.

District	Current Lot Area per Dwelling Unit Minimum	Proposed Lot Area per Dwelling Unit Minimum
C1	2,800 square feet	1,000 square feet
C2		
C3		
ORIC	n/a – only allowed via PD	

Residential Parking

River Forest requires a specified number of off-street parking spaces be provided per residential dwelling.

District	Current Residential Parking Minimum	Proposed Residential Parking Minimum
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1-2 Bedroom Dwellings: 2 spaces / unit3+ Bedroom Dwellings: 2.5 spaces / unit1 guest space / 5 units	1.5 spaces / unit
C2		
C3		
ORIC		

FAR

River Forest currently regulates the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of development. FAR is the measurement of a building's total floor area in relation to the size of the lot/parcel that the building is located on.

The maximum FAR standard is proposed to be eliminated and allowed building bulk and mass is proposed to be regulated only through building height, lot coverage, and parking requirements.

Other

1. Off-street parking requirements have been consolidated into a table and revised to better align with the land use chart in Chapter 21. The minimum amount of parking proposed to be required is substantially like current requirements.
2. New off-street loading requirements are proposed to replace the current standards. The current standards are very prescriptive and not reflective of modern loading requirements. The proposed standards provide more flexibility to the developer but ensure no negative impact to neighboring property or traffic.
3. There is currently a minimum average gross dwelling unit area for the R4 district of 1,800 square feet. There is not a similar requirement for dwellings in the commercial districts. The EDC has suggested that the R4 standard be reduced to 1,000 square feet. Additional discussion is needed to determine whether the lowered standard should apply to residential development in the C1, C2, C3, and ORIC.

Chapter 12. Commercial Districts

10-12-1: General Provisions 1
 10-12-2: Bulk and Dimensional Standards 1
 10-12-3: Allowed Uses 2
 10-12-4: Off-Street Parking..... 2
 10-12-5: Off-Street Loading..... 3

10-12-1: General Provisions

- A. **Purpose.** The purpose of this Chapter is to establish standards for the development and use of land in the Village’s commercial districts.
- B. **Applicability.** The standards of this Chapter shall apply to all new development and substantial redevelopment in the Village’s commercial districts.

10-12-2: Bulk and Dimensional Standards

Table 10-12-2 establishes the bulk and dimensional standards for the development or the use of a lot in a commercial zoning district.

Table 10-12-2: Bulk and Dimensional Standards				
Standard	C-1	C-2	C-3	ORIC
<i>Lot Standards (Minimum)</i>				
Lot Area (sqft)	3,275	3,275	3,275	10,000
Lot Area / DU (sqft)	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Lot Width (ft)	25	25	25	25
<i>Yard Setbacks (Minimum)</i>				
Front (ft)	0	0	0	0 [3]
Exterior Side (ft)	0 [1]	0 [1]	0 [1]	0 [3]
Interior Side (ft)	0 [2]	0 [2]	0 [2]	0 [3]
Rear (ft)	20	20	20	0 [3]
<i>Building Standards (Maximum)</i>				
Building Height (ft)	65	50	65	65
Lot Coverage (%)	100	100	100	100
<i>Notes</i>				
[1] If the rear lot line of a corner lot abuts a rear lot line in the R1 or R2 district, the exterior side yard shall be at least equal to the depth of the yard of the adjoining R1 or R2 lot's building.				
[2] If the rear lot line abuts a lot or lots in the R1, R2, and/or R3 districts without an alley or other public way intervening, the rear yard setback shall 20 feet.				
[3] If the yard abuts a lot or lots in the R1, R2, R3, and/or R4 districts the setback shall conform to the regulations of the respective residential district.				

10-12-3: Allowed Uses

No parcel or building shall be utilized for any use except for those indicated on the land use chart in Chapter 21 of this Zoning Title and after the applicable approval process.

10-12-4: Off-Street Parking

Table 10-12-4 establishes the minimum requirement for off-street parking in the Village’s commercial districts. The following rules apply when calculating the required minimum off-street parking requirement.

- A. **Fractions.** When measurements of the number of required spaces result in a fractional number, the number shall be rounded up to the next higher whole number.
- B. **Area Measurements.** Unless otherwise expressly stated, all area-based (square feet) parking standards must be computed on the basis of gross floor area.
- C. **Capacity-Based Standards.** To compute parking requirements based on maximum capacity the maximum fire-rated capacity of the facility as determined by the Fire Department shall be used.

Table 10-12-4: Commercial District Minimum Required Off-Street Parking	
Land Uses Category	Minimum Required Off-Street Parking
<i>RESIDENTIAL</i>	1.5 / dwelling unit
<i>RETAIL TRADE</i>	1 / 300 square feet
<i>ACCOMMODATIONS AND FOOD SERVICES</i>	n/a
<i>Coffee shops</i>	1 / 200 square feet
<i>Convenience food marts</i>	1 / 200 square feet
<i>Dinner theaters</i>	0.25 / person at maximum capacity
<i>Fast food establishment</i>	1 / 100 square feet
<i>Hotels</i>	1 / guest room
<i>Restaurant - drive-through</i>	1 / 100 square feet
<i>Restaurants operating outside the hours of 7:00 A.M. to 1:00 A.M.</i>	1 / 100 square feet
<i>Restaurants, sit down, greater than 5,000 square feet</i>	1 / 100 square feet
<i>Restaurants, sit down, less than 5,000 square feet</i>	1 / 100 square feet
<i>Specialty food stores</i>	1 / 200 square feet
<i>FINANCIAL, INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES</i>	1 / 300 square feet
<i>INDUSTRIAL</i>	1 / 1,000 square feet
<i>ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION</i>	1 / 300 square feet
<i>INSTITUTIONAL</i>	1 / 300 square feet

10-12-5: Off-Street Loading

- A. **General Loading Requirements.** On the same premises with every building erected and occupied for any nonresidential use involving the receipt or distribution of vehicles, materials, or merchandise, there shall be provided and maintained adequate space for standing, turning, loading, and unloading services in a manner that does not interfere with required parking, pedestrian walkways, and with the public use of streets and alleys.
- B. **Location.**
1. All required loading berths shall be located on the same zoning lot as the use served.
 2. No loading berth for vehicles over two (2) tons capacity shall be located closer than fifty (50) feet to any property in a Residential District unless completely enclosed by building walls.
 3. No loading berth shall be located within twenty-five (25) feet of the nearest point of intersection of any two (2) streets.
 4. All loading docks where the public access road to such docks has a right-of-way width of less than eighty (80) feet shall be located at least sixty-five (65) feet behind the property line.
 5. No loading dock shall be located in any front yard or exterior side yard.
- C. **Access.**
1. Each loading berth shall be designed with appropriate means of vehicular access to a street or easement in a manner which will least interfere with traffic movements.
 2. Each loading berth shall be provided with sufficient maneuvering space to accommodate the largest vehicle likely to serve the lot.
 3. Loading berth access design shall allow vehicles to access and exit the loading space without having to make any backing movement on or onto the public street.

Chapter 21. Land Use Chart

LAND USES	DISTRICTS							
	R1 And R2 Low Density Residential	R3 Medium Density Residential	R4 High Density Residential	C1 Commercial	C2 Commercial	C3 Central Commercial	ORIC Office/ Research/ Industrial/ Commercial	PRI Public/ Private Recreational Institutional
RESIDENTIAL								
Dormitories	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	S
Group homes	S	S	N	N	N	N	N	N
Halfway houses	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Home occupations	P	P	P	N	P	P	N	N
Multiple-family dwellings	N	N	PD	PD	PD	PD	PD	N
Multiple-family dwellings above first floor of permitted commercial or office uses	N	N	N	PD	PD	PD	PD	N
Nursing homes and skilled care facilities	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Rooming and boarding houses	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Short term rental	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Single-family dwelling - attached	N	PD	PD	N	N	N	N	N
Single-family dwelling - detached	P	P	P	N	N	N	N	N
Transitional housing	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 2023

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Cuyler Brown, Commissioners Robert Graham, Katie Lowes, Rajendra Chiplunkar, Carr Preston, Walter Wahlfedlt.

Absent: Commissioner Brangle.

Also Present: Interim Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Village Planning Consultant John Houseal, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Liz Holt.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Daley of the 1300 block of William expressed opposition to the traffic barriers in the northeast neighborhood and requested their removal. Daley also expressed opposition to traffic enforcement in the area.

Chairman Brown and Administrator Walsh explained the role of the Economic Development Commission and directed concerns on the traffic barriers to the Village Board and Traffic & Safety Commission.

Renee Duba of the 000 block of Franklin encouraged the Commission to consider developments outside of four or five story mixed used structures. Duba stated their belief that development is difficult and that developers will be expecting more density to make profit. Duba encouraged the Village to consider social mobility, sustainability and transit access for any development.

Renee Duba continued their comments with a letter from the Lathrop Ashland Franklin neighborhood group. Duba shared that the group wants a development that is charming and friendly to neighbors. Duba added that zoning changes are not required to attract a positive development. Duba added that developments should be reasonably sized.

Annette Madden, of the 000 block of Ashland, began their comments by comparing River Forest's zoning code adoptions with other nearby communities. Madden stated there may

be support for decreasing the size of units, however would not support the elimination of the bedroom requirement.

Cal Davis, of the 000 block of Franklin, stated that the proposed changes are not acceptable. Davis expressed concerns for light blockage and the elimination of setbacks.

Beth Cheng, of the 000 block of Franklin, asked that the Economic Development Commission take more time to consider the proposed changes and to allow for additional community input. Cheng added that variations should be considered on a case by case basis, and believes there is no need for a global change. Cheng asked for more background on the zoning recommendations.

Teresa Peavy, of the 000 block of Ashland, asked for more background for why this topic is being discussed at this time and for data on what developers need. Peavy also asked if there are any assurances that variations would not be requested.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Kathleen and Daniel Corcos of the 100 block of Franklin. The letter stated opposition to changes to square foot requirements, parking minimum decreases, cul-de-sacs and asked that sufficient space be included for any retail space.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Angie Grover of the 7600 block of Vine. Grover expressed opposition to increasing building height, decreasing parking requirements, eliminating setback requirements and asked that traffic be considered for any changes.

Administrator Walsh read a letter from Megan Sanfillippo. Megan encouraged the Commission to recommend zoning practices that allow for the highest and best use of the corridor parcels. Megan explained that this means neighborhood amenities and a mix of uses. Megan asked that consideration be given to neighbors concerns on traffic, privacy and light.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – February 1, 2023

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Graham and SECONDED by Commissioner Lowes to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

4. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE

Director Holt promoted the upcoming Health and Wellness Fair at FFC in Oak Park.

5. DISCUSSION OF MADISON STREET & NORTH AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Administrator Walsh introduced John Houseal of Houseal Lavigne and provided some background on the corridor planning process. Walsh explained the process for zoning code amendments, and the requirement that any changes are scrutinized and discussed by the

Zoning Board of Appeals. Walsh also summarized relevant comments from the February stakeholder meeting.

John Houseal, of Houseal Lavigne, introduced himself and provided additional background.

Houseal explained that every planned development proposal has required significant allowances and waivers from the underlying zoning code. The examination of zoning codes was prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan. Houseal reiterated that there are no proposed developments and explained that the concept renderings are meant to show scale and facilitate discussion.

Houseal began the presentation and reviewed the opportunity sites for the North Avenue and Madison Street corridors. Houseal explained the concept renderings. Houseal and Walsh confirmed that the primary concern from the stakeholder meeting for North Avenue was providing enough parking onsite for any uses on the corridor.

John Houseal discussed the newer mixed-use building on the Forest Park side of Madison Street and used it as a comparison for some of the zoning proposals. Houseal explained the rationale for the rendering that included a cul-de-sac. Houseal explained the challenge with matching the setback for the commercial corridor to the residential neighborhood on a different street. Houseal stated the current code does not require it.

Houseal then reviewed the existing code language and the proposed revisions and considerations for building height, floor area ratio, density, average unit size, parking standards and the bedroom requirement. Houseal then reviewed the standards with Elmwood Park and Forest Park.

Chairman Brown stated that he agrees with many of the public comments about the types of development but believes that zoning changes are necessary. The zoning changes will allow for the Village to have appealing options.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked about the impact of the cul-de-sac as shown. John Houseal explained that the cul-de-sac is not proposed, it is just shown for consideration. Commissioner Chiplunkar then asked about the potential traffic impacts when zoning changes are made. Houseal responded that traffic would be analyzed when a planned development application is received, and the specific uses are known. Chiplunkar expressed concern for the impact on the neighborhood and asked whether projections could be made based on the proposed code revisions.

Commissioner Chiplunkar asked about the impact on schools, and stated that this process starts the ball rolling for more development. Commissioner Wahlfeldt stated that the goal is to invite proposals, and there is no promise for approval of specific projects. Wahlfed added that he shares concerns about neighborhood impacts as a resident. Based on his professional

experience, the Village needs to be more welcoming to developers so that the Village can choose the right options.

Commissioner Chiplunkar reiterated his concerns and expressed doubts about the process. Chairman Brown stated that the goal is to attract charming amenities by being flexible with the zoning code. Brown reiterated that the approval process for any development is rigorous.

Commissioner Graham stated that commercial areas are bound to have impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. Graham added that development will not come without changes to zoning and that traffic flows will depend on the specific proposals. Graham stated that less people are driving, so the proposal for reducing parking makes sense. Graham continued by expressing agreement with the height increases and the density proposals.

Commissioner Lowes asked about the next steps and proposed waiting to make final decisions. Administrator Walsh responded that the Commission could decide to wait for final decisions, however the Village Board is interested in continued progress on the discussion. Chairman Brown proposed that no decisions be made tonight. The Commission expressed agreement.

Chairman Brown made a motion to table a vote on recommendations to the next Commission meeting, Member Lowes seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY RETENTION/ SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION

None.

7. DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

None

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Brown and SECONDED by Commissioner Lowes to adjourn the April 5, 2023, meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:00 p.m. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted:

Matt Walsh, Village Administrator

Date: _____

Cuyler Brown, Chairman Economic Development Commission

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
May 3, 2023**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Cuyler Brown, Commissioners Tim Brangle, Robert Graham, Katie Lowes, Carr Preston, Walter Wahlfeldt.

Absent: Commissioner Chiplunkar.

Also Present: Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Village Planning Consultant John Houseal.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Brown welcomed the audience and acknowledged the concerns that residents might have about the proposed changes. Chairman Brown stated that the Commission and residents share agreement on many subjects. Chairman Brown provided a brief history of the project and explained the process. Chairman Brown explained the goal is to attract development options.

Teresa Peavy of the 000 block of Ashland read a letter to the EDC that addressed two items. Peavy stated disagreement with the claims that traffic modeling could not be done for the proposed zoning changes. Peavy asked that TIF funds be used to study the traffic impacts and impacts on village services, including schools. Peavy then expressed disappointment in Commissioner Graham's comments from the April meeting regarding commercial districts. Peavy explained that the neighborhood was beautiful when she moved in, and the Village has made it a commercial district by creating the TIF district. Peavy asked for recognition that the decisions will impact neighbors. Peavy noted that no additional information appeared to be included in the packet since the April meeting. Peavy also requested an economic impact study for any proposed development and questioned the proposed parking requirement. Peavy asked for reassurances that future variations would not be requested.

Annette Madden of the 000 block of Ashland asked how the EDC has arrived at its decision to proceed with a vote.

Ms. Madden asked that the EDC postpone their vote to an alternative meeting when Commissioner Chiplunkar is present.

Ms. Madden noted that she supports development in the village but not the particular high-density development that may emerge from these changes.

She also asked the commissioners to say no to the proposed zoning changes.

Beth Cheng of 00 block of Franklin gave public comment regarding the proposed zoning changes. Ms. Cheng spoke out against the proposed zoning recommendations from the Village Planning Consultant.

She reported that the resident feedback appears to be left out of the recommendation. She asked for additional explanations to the residents' questions. Ms. Chang also asked if the Village could create a workshop with residents, developers, and planners on the soon to be vacant Madison St. demolition site. Ms. Cheng asked the commission to alter some of the following zoning requirements to favor residents' interest: building height, floor area ratio, lot area per unit and parking requirements. She also asked that the cul-de-sac be removed from the images as it does not relate to the zoning requirements.

Renee Duba-Clancy of the 00 block of Franklin reiterated her opposition to the zoning recommendations. Ms. Duba-Clancy worried about the quality of developer that would be attracted to the site. She asked that the Village take an incremental approach to increasing development along Madison St.

Freida Pantos made public comment regarding the proposed zoning changes. Ms. Pantos asked if a rental unit was being proposed.

Mr. Houseal stated that there are no proposed developments being considered.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that zoning regulations do not speak on whether buildings are owner occupied or rental.

Ms. Pantos stated that she did not support the proposed zoning alterations due to the possibility of rental units changing the character of River Forest.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – April 5, 2023

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Graham and SECONDED by Commissioner Lowes to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

4. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE

Village Administrator Walsh noted that the Executive Director of the OPRF Chamber of Commerce was not able to attend tonight. Mr. Walsh noted that he heard the recent OPRF chamber event on Health and Wellness was a success.

5. DISCUSSION OF MADISON STREET & NORTH AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Administrator Walsh introduced John Houseal of Houseal Lavigne and provided some background on the corridor planning process.

In response to one of the questions from the Residence, Mr. Houseal explained the process the EDC took to get to this point. Mr. Houseal reminded everyone that this process is about creating the preliminary data for the Zoning Board of Appeals to then consider. Mr. Houseal stated that the presentation depictions were exploratory and will not even be included in the presentation to the Village Board.

Mr. Houseal responded to comments and questions from the public comments.

Mr. Houseal explained that the Village has previously made these zoning changes for past developments.

He further explained that attempting to analyze potential impacts the proposed zoning changes may create in the Village before a development has been proposed is not a regular practice and difficult to do. He reminded everyone that any proposed major development in the Village is required to display that proper traffic measures will be taken place and many of the other concerns residents have voiced are not negatively impacted.

Mr. Houseal also addressed comments made in a letter to the Wednesday Journal regarding the EDC recommendations.

Chairman Brown reminded everyone that this is not a final recommendation.

Member Preston stated the changes would allow the Village to choose the best potential development and stated that the Village has a robust review process that allows for public input.

Member Graham noted that financing for projects is difficult in today's environment.

Member Graham apologized for their comments regarding the location of real estate. He reminded residents that developments take time and that he thinks nothing is happening quickly and that nothing is on the table.

Member Lowes stated the importance about publicizing information to the public and to be transparent. Chairman Brown agreed.

Commissioner Brangle stated that in the past the EDC has put forth recommendations with qualifications and that may be an option to consider.

Mr. Brangle stated that from his professional experience, this sort of zoning code review is happening in many other villages/cities in the area.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Wahlfeldt and SECONDED by Chairman Brown to recommend that the Village Board refer the zoning changes as proposed in the memo from Houseal Lavigne to the Zoning Board of Appeals for consideration. The proposed zoning changes are also to accompanied by resident input that was provided during public comment.

MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

**6. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY RETENTION/
SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION**

None.

7. DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Administrator Walsh provided brief updates on the demolition of the Madison Street site and the Lake & Lathrop project.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Graham and SECONDED by Commissioner Preston to adjourn the May 3, 2023, meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 7:35 p.m. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted:

Matt Walsh, Village Administrator

Date: _____

Cuyler Brown, Chairman Economic Development Commission

Public Comment for Economic Development Commission Meeting, May 3, 2023

My name is Beth Cheng and I live on the 000 block of Franklin. I am here again because, as my neighbors pointed out in their May 2 Wednesday Journal piece, the presentation submitted by Houseal & Lavigne does not substantively address the feedback my neighbors and I have shared. There is a new slide about developer feedback but not one on resident feedback, and the proposed zoning code amendments remain the same. There is no narrative vision and explanations of potential benefits and impacts of different options that we requested.

The first charge of the Economic Development Commission, as set forth on the village website, is to “advise the Village Board on the economic and community impact of potential developments.” This means the commission has a responsibility to consider community impact as well as economic potential.

At a high level, I would like to say there is still no rush to make a decision tonight. We should be focusing on finding a solution for the Lutheran Family Services property instead of debating zoning code amendments for all of Madison. However, if the Commission still wants to focus on zoning code amendments, I have a number of comments on the specific proposals.

Thank you for your attention and patience as I go through four main points more specifically.

1. First, there is still no rush for the commission to make a recommendation to the Board tonight. Just because the same proposal has been brought up several times does not mean it is time to just accept it.
2. Second, I will reiterate that amendments to the zoning code along all of Madison do not seem necessary or prudent, certainly not without more thorough analysis of the potential benefits and community impacts. For example, what is the actual quantifiable economic benefit to the village of increased residential density along Madison? How will it affect demand for municipal services? How will it affect parking and traffic in the area and the property values of nearby homes and what can be done to address those issues? Amendments to the code also will not eliminate the possibility of variance requests.
3. Third, instead of trying to evaluate hypothetical impacts of permanent zoning changes along the entire corridor, we should focus on figuring out how to attract development to the soon to be vacant Lutheran Family Services property. Let’s think creatively and collaboratively. For example, can the Commission or village organize sessions that include developers, residents and planners to develop a vision and brainstorm ideas for that particular parcel? Can the commission look at how to make the variance request process for the commercial district one that collaboratively balances the various interests? If developers know that residents want to work with them, this provides a more welcoming environment than battles over general zoning changes.

4. If the commission nevertheless wants to recommend general zoning code amendments, I ask that you come up with a different approach that balances developer and resident interests. Taken together, the proposed code amendments appear to generally favor developer interests by making every effort to increase density, reduce parking requirements and keep current setback requirements despite increased height. I have tried to keep an open mind about the specifics as I am not an expert in the area but offer thoughts on five issues for consideration.
 - a. On height, consider a more modest increase to between 40' to 45' which should still accommodate four stories. The proposed increase to 50' includes a 15' first floor, and 11' for the other floors. My own home has 9' and 8' ceilings that are more than sufficient,
 - b. Keep the floor area ratio requirement or explain why its elimination will not lead to increased density. There is no data shared on what other communities FAR requirements are. The FAR limits the size of a building by saying that the amount of floor area you can build is determined by the square footage of the property. So the current 2.75 ratio means if a property is 1000 square feet, then you can only build a building with 2,750 square feet of floor area. At least that is what I think I figured out by staying up late to read about zoning codes.
 - c. Maintain a reasonable lot area per unit requirement. The proposed figure of 500 to 1000 square feet of lot area/unit is a big decrease from the current 2800 square foot requirement.
 - d. Evaluate and increase the setback requirements if building height and volume is allowed to be greater. Current code if I am reading it correctly says that five feet is required if abutting a side yard. Imagine a four story building five feet away from the side of your home.
 - e. Maintain parking requirements sufficient to avoid congestion on neighborhood streets, perhaps 1.5 spaces per unit. Remove the drawing that shows a cul de sac on Ashland because it does not relate to the zoning amendment proposals. If the cul de sac is necessary to help developers meet parking requirements, then it needs to be stated explicitly so that the merits of disrupting traffic patterns and taking a public street for that purpose can be openly debated.

I want to close by emphasizing that the residents of this neighborhood do want to see development on Madison and want to work cooperatively to make that a reality. I hope we can move forward by focusing on finding a solution to the problem of how to develop the soon to be vacant Lutheran Family Services property.

Thank you for your consideration and your volunteer service on this important commission.

Public Comment for Economic Development Commission Meeting, March 1, 2023 (comments delivered at April 5, 2023 meeting)

My name is Beth Cheng and I have been a resident on the zero hundred block of Franklin for over twenty years.

Thank you for your service on the Economic Development Commission and working to promote economic development in our village, which we all want to see and know is challenging to create. We want to see viable development that also preserves and enhances the quality of life for residents.

My first request tonight is that the EDC take some more time before making any recommendations to the village board on potential zoning changes, since there is no specific development proposal on the table. The proposed zoning changes were posted publicly for the first time last Friday and the concept renderings that were shown at the February Economic Development Commission meeting and to a small group of residents at a meeting that I heard about only through word of mouth have not been shared publicly at all. Residents need time to become informed and have the opportunity to ask questions and provide input on these important proposed changes.

Overall, my view is that the village should consider variance requests in the context of specific development proposals and that there is no need to make a global zoning change for the entire street of Madison. If we make a global change now, there will undoubtedly still be requests for variances in the future from the new code.

If you do proceed with a recommendation tonight about making zoning changes in the absence of a specific development proposal, I ask that you limit that recommendation to the site of the Lutheran and Family Services building. We can then see whether that type of proactive change succeeds in attracting an appropriate development. In addition, I ask that you include a recommendation that neighborhood concerns such as traffic, parking, density, privacy and setbacks be considered as the process moves forward.

To help residents understand and have informed opinions about the proposed zoning changes, it would be helpful to see a written vision for development of the Madison corridor that includes multiple options under the current or modified zoning code. The vision should assess potential demand for different types of commercial or residential spaces; benefits for the neighborhood and village as a whole; how specific proposed zoning changes will help attract development and compare to similar municipalities that have successfully attracted development; and ways to address impacts on the neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

From: [Kathleen Corcos](#)
To: [Matthew Walsh](#)
Subject: Letter to the EDC. Please forward ASAP. Thank you.
Date: Wednesday, May 3, 2023 4:14:15 PM

5/3/23

TO: River Forest Economic Development Commission
Chair Cuyler Brown
Commissioner Katie Lowes
Commissioner Robert Graham
Commissioner Tim Brangle
Commissioner Rajendra Chiplunkar
Commissioner Walter Wahlfeldt
Commissioner Carr Preston
Liz Holt, Ex-Officio

FROM: Kathy Corcos, River Forest resident
RE: Your Considerations for Rezoning of the TIF South Corridor C2 District

Dear EDC Commissioners:

I cannot be at the EDC meeting tonight, so I write to you with my sincere concerns. Thank you for your attention as I state them.

We look to you to listen carefully with a balanced intake of all views to be presented. We count on you to carefully develop our community with an eye to long-term returns of all kinds when it comes to building in our town. This includes not changing the personality of our neighborhoods to such a degree that no one would choose to live in them. We want good development which will be an invitation to join this town, not building out so large and in an unfitting way as to drive people away. We want affordable housing. We want local businesses on the ground floor (at a price per square foot that is competitive). This development opportunity for the C2 area (between Ashland Ave and Lathrop at Madison St.) must be set up so as to be successful. Density to the point of destroying a neighborhood area, we feel, will destroy the area. This drives down the value of our town as a destination place to call home.

There is much concern and consternation among River Forest residents that live all around River Forest, but mostly among those living on the zero & 100 blocks of Lathrop, Ashland, Franklin, Park Ave., plus those on the 7600 to 7800 Vine and Park Drive. Their unhappiness stems from the unchanged proposals from Mr. Houseal after months and months of meetings with local residents. I've heard his position described as a "consultant" and also as the RF "Village Planner." Whatever it is, he is representing the Village and he is not listening to the Stakeholders and those in adjacent blocks even through months of meetings with them.

No doubt you have read the almost half-page article in the “Viewpoints” section of today’s local newspaper, The Wednesday Journal :

<https://www.oakpark.com/2023/05/02/neighbors-feeling-distinctly-unheard/>

I, myself, have written a similar letter of unhappiness regarding Mr. Houseal’s way of doing business which, I’m told, will be in next week’s newspaper.

Our neighborhoods do not want:

- a) Such density as to overwhelm a neighborhood – building too large a building for the small footprint with inadequate parking for future residents and shopping customers.
- b) Giving a blanket zone change in our town that invites this type of building out which is not conducive to our goals of integrated neighborhoods.
- c) Closing off a major ingress/egress at Madison and Ashland, as proposed by Mr. Houseal in his drawings / renditions.
 - Where are those cars from the zero-block of Ashland to go to access Madison Street to the city or elsewhere? They will have to go north to Vine Street and mostly west, to the 4-way stop at Franklin & Vine and then south again to Madison St. As it is already, that 4-way stop is often no stop at all; cars and trucks blow through as though there were no stop signs. Cars from the zero block of Ashland won’t often be traveling north to Vine and then south to Madison because it is a no left-hand turn for hours each day. You are creating danger.
 - The suggestion has also been made to allow all day and night parking (as I’ve been told) on the zero-block of Franklin. That will make it even more dangerous. These are not wide streets. Do you want another debacle such as the one the Village Board has been fighting with hundreds of north R.F. residents on unsafe road changes? This has been a huge black eye for the Village Board already.

All across the USA including our area, there is a glut of open, small retail spaces on first floors of buildings that sit vacant. No revenue is coming in. Why would we replicate what is not working elsewhere including next door in Forest Park? The last thing needed are empty storefronts, that sit empty for years. The Illinois House Bill 0202, the Vacancy Fraud Act, was introduced to help curb misuse of empty storefronts by building owners.

We do not want Houseal’s proposed changes to allow an overly large unit building with super density which is one to two stories higher than adjacent buildings to be built on this small footprint of land. The fact it does not provide adequate parking for future residents nor for storefront customers is a huge issue. Small retail spaces with estimated high per-square-foot prices are not going to attract businesses.

The long and short of it is this: The Village of River Forest representatives are pushing an agenda that is in direct conflict with its own Comprehensive Plan and its Core Objectives. The idea of making blanket zoning changes for the entire area to attract a builder is not good for this area of quiet homes on residential streets. There are ways to bring in taxes and fulfill our role as a responsible Village with respect to

adding affordable housing without overbuilding a compact area to the point that the livability of the neighborhoods is compromised. Too much density in one spot is not advantageous to the greater good of the Village. This would not happen in the center of River Forest. In Oak Park, the public meetings were packed. This is happening in River Forest, too, but our RF Village seems to have no interest in what its residents are asking and as stated, they are in contradiction of their own Comprehensive Plan in their rush for income. Please prove us wrong.

Again, we ask that you listen very carefully to what is presented and not just "rubber stamp" the proposal being put forth by Mr. Houseal. It is not in the Village's best interest and it will not reflect well on the EDC. We look to you for careful consideration of making development opportunities in our village to be a positive change and not a blight to our area.

Thank you for your time. I apologize for rambling a bit. As you can tell, I, like many others care deeply about our lovely neighborhoods and look forward to positive development for all of the Village.

Respectfully,

Kathy Corcos

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Kathleen Corcos

April 10, 2023

To the River Forest Village Board and Economic Development Commission:

My name is Teresa Peavy, and my family has lived at 13 Ashland for 25 years. I would like to address two issues brought up at the April 5, 2023 Economic Development Commission (EDC) meeting.

At the meeting, Mr. Chiplunkar asked for a traffic study and a study of the burden on other River Forest services, such as schools, library, police, etc. with these new zoning proposals. Mr. Chiplunkar was told that a survey can't be done because they don't know what will be going in the new TIF locations, but that it would be done once a developer explained what they wanted.

I take exception to this excuse – clearly Mr. Houseal, the EDC, and the village know what can go at Madison and Ashland, as well as the North Avenue TIF, because they drew the ideas into a comprehensive plan and are now asking the EDC to change the zoning laws to fit these developments. At the Madison and Ashland site, they are asking for at least a four-story building, with a smaller per unit footprint to accommodate more housing. If that is what Mr. Houseal and the village envision, then they can surely do modeling now to see how the maximum number of units they have drawn into the plan at this parcel would impact the area around it. Why not determine now for a developer that it would fit, using facts and data instead of anecdotal stories of what “could” fit?

I urge the village to use the Madison Street Corridor TIF money to study how a four-story building with the number of units being proposed by the plan at the corner of Madison and Ashland would impact the traffic next to my home, as well as the impact on other village services like our schools.

Secondly, I was very frustrated to hear Mr. Graham's comments during the EDC meeting, that if I didn't want to live in a commercial district, then I shouldn't have moved where I did. When I moved into my home, it was a beautiful neighborhood and most assuredly was NOT a commercial district. It was the village who decided to put my home in a commercial district, not me or my family, or my neighbors. The village made it a commercial district when they decided to make this area a TIF district, and then Mr. Graham had the gall to blame me, my family and my neighbors for living there. Mr. Graham's remarks were disrespectful to an entire community within the village and I think he should apologize.

I request not only an apology from Mr. Graham, but also a recognition by Mr. Houseal, the EDC, and the village board that the decisions being made by them affect River Forest residents and families. Throughout this process, we have been told repeatedly that the village wants to “be a good neighbor.” But I have seen very little regard for considering the concerns of people who live in and around the village TIF districts, and Mr. Graham's remarks show me that the intention to “be a good neighbor” is not shared by everyone.

Sincerely,

Teresa Peavy
13 Ashland Ave.,
River Forest, IL

Renée N. Duba
24 Franklin Avenue
River Forest, Illinois
60305

April 6, 2023

To: All members of the River Forest Economic Development Commission

Dear Chair Brown and fellow EDC members,

Thank you for your attention and patience during yesterday's EDC meeting while my neighbors and I expressed our concerns and suggestions regarding the 7600 block of Madison Street development opportunities.

I am deeply appreciative that the commission decided to take more time to digest the commentary of the stakeholders who spoke up last night. After listening to your discussions and Mr. Houseal's presentation, I have the following comments and questions:

1. Chair Brown's comments seemed to frame the decision as being one between keeping blighted buildings in place versus inviting a 50' tall new development. This leads me to think that the EDC is not up to-date on the status of the parcels' demolition: We are working with the village to implement an 'interim development' plan for the parcels since there is plenty of evidence development will take quite some time to materialize. As such, I do not see the decision tree as either a blighted building or a new development.
2. Is there some empirical evidence that the commission can share showing that zoning changes as proposed triggered an influx of new interest and bids for development?
3. I believe the difficulty in attracting a developer is more complex and nuanced than what Mr. Houseal is portraying to the EDC and community:
 - a. Economic conditions are very volatile and not in a good way. Developers may be waiting for more certainty before bidding on new projects. This condition may persist for another few years. It also means that what was economically viable over the past decade may change dramatically. Thus, taking more time to reimage with us what would be best to build seems like a prudent undertaking while the economy settles out. My hope is that this process would lead the EDC to search for and proactively solicit bids from a wider range of developers, including smaller firms.
 - b. The lot is shallow. It's 125' deep. Adding in the width of the adjacent homes improves the depth to 155', but there is a promised setback of at least 10', and depending on what gets proposed, it's likely there will be a demand for 20'. If surface parking is

contemplated, the lot is back to 125' in depth. This is the same depth as the parcel the West Madison Apartment building occupies across the street.

- c. The area has not been well maintained. That landscaped median is awful and telling.
4. Even though Mr. Houseal repeated ad nauseum that changing the zoning codes to permit a 50' tall building doesn't necessarily mean that a 50' building would be proposed, **you are explicitly inviting a 50' tall development by amending the code in this manner. The community told you last night that a 50' tall building is unacceptable.**

Moreover, I am not convinced that such changes would "modernize" the code to meet up with current commercial standards, given those current standards are the product of an economic environment of low inflation/low interest rates that no longer exists today. The standards are on the move, and I encourage the EDC to be forward looking and not make changes based on what used to be.

5. Lastly, I would like to directly address the comment from one of the commissioners last night who said that if we didn't want to live in a busy commercial area, then we should not have bought a house near a busy commercial area:

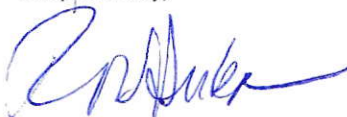
When I purchased my home, it was not in the shadow of a 50' tall building. If it were, I probably wouldn't have bought it, and if I did, I sure the heck wouldn't have offered nearly the same amount of money to buy it. You put that 50' building up, you destroy the value of my investment, and you know that.

Perhaps you may not understand that on our end of town, we live in homes that once housed folks who worked for people living north of the railroad tracks. Our homes are more modest, situated on smaller lots. Did you ever consider that for most of us, this was what we could afford? Or that for most of us, the value of our homes represents the largest asset we own?

What an offensive, insulting and insensitive comment to make, and displayed conduct unbecoming of a person who sits in a position of power tasked with serving the best interests of the entire community. I have very serious concerns about a person with this kind of callous perspective sitting on the EDC.

In closing, I look forward to a more collaborative process with the River Forest Village and EDC as we work toward the manifestation of a wonderful new development for our end of town.

Respectfully,



Renée N. Duba

April 5, 2023

Village of River Forest
Economic Development Commission
Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue
River Forest, IL 60305
sent via email to mwash@vrf.us

RE: April 5 EDC Meeting, Agenda Item #5

Members of the Economic Development Committee:

My name is Angie Grover and my family and I have lived at 7617 Vine Street in River Forest for the last 10 years.

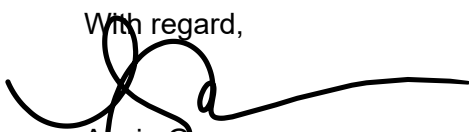
I am writing to weigh in on tonight's Agenda Item #5, specifically the Madison Street Redevelopment Plan, as you consider next steps. I am excited that the Village is moving forward to bring vibrant, community-friendly business and living space to the other side of our block.

There are several concerns I have with the proposal as it stands, and I ask that you weigh the path forward more comprehensively as to respect our neighborhood. I will touch on each of these concerns very briefly, all which stem from the proposal to change zoning –

1. Height – I do not support increasing the limit on building height by changing the zoning code. There are no buildings that exceed three stories until you are east of Oak Park Boulevard and for miles to the west through Maywood and Hillside. Additionally, the building diagonally across from the proposed site should serve as an example of what not to do. It overshadows the neighbors to the south across the alley and its commercial space remains vacant.
2. Parking – Density and parking go hand in hand. Based on the proposal, there should be sufficient parking for visitors and potential commercial uses that does not encroach on residential properties or the already crowded streets.
3. Setback – the setback on Ashland must be maintained. We chose to live in this part of the Village because it is extremely walkable and to reduce the setback is not in character with the existing development nor would allow for sufficient space for foot traffic.
4. Traffic – Last year, the Village responded to our efforts to slow traffic on Ashland with a stop sign at Ashland and Vine. There are more than 40 children in this six-block radius and you must take traffic into consideration for the community's safety as you move forward.

Thank you for taking these comments into the record and for seriously considering the impact of your decisions on the people who have chosen to live here.

With regard,



Angie Grover
7617 Vine Street, River Forest

Kathleen & Daniel Corcos
102 Franklin Ave.
River Forest IL 0305

Village of River Forest
Economic Development Board Meeting
April 5, 2023

RE: Public Comment on Proposed Village Building Codes
Pertaining to Development Proposal for Madison TIF area
Specifically, the Madison & Ashland plot & future plot of Madison & Franklin Streets

ATTN: Matt Walsh, Interim Village Administrator
Cuyler Brown, Katie Lowes, Robert Graham, Tim Brangle, Raj Chiplunkar, Walter Wahlfeldt, Carr Preston, Liz Holt

Dear EDC Commission Members & Mr. Walsh:

First of all, thank you, Mr. Walsh for agreeing to read aloud, letters from River Forest residents who cannot attend this EDC meeting in person or via Zoom due to attending annual Religious Holidays which start today and this evening.

I am writing to make points regarding proposed village code zoning changes to the TIF areas of River Forest. These points were discussed and presented in drawings of proposed construction at the “stakeholders” meeting for the Madison TIF area. I am very much against code change which would change and allow:

1. Current square foot requirement for homes, allowing small studio units, therefore adding to area density
2. Parking for only 1.2 to 1.5 cars per unit. Where will the cars go?
3. Building higher than 3 storeys tall - adding an eyesore to the area which does not fit in our community
4. Changing traffic flow by adding a cul de sac / blocking of Ashland Ave. at Madison St. – How will these cars access Madison St. to get anywhere? They will have to drive north on Ashland Ave. to Vine Street and then turn east or west on Vine to get to a street (Lathrop or Franklin) to again drive south to access Madison St. Left hand turns are not allowed from Lathrop Ave. onto Madison for hours each day. The 4-way stop at Vine and Franklin is already a “slow to optional pause” for many. This intersection will become more dangerous. The traffic flow will be drastically increased.
5. Putting insufficient 1st floor space in this building for viable businesses to rent. This is a situation occurring all over the country. At the stakeholders meeting, these 1st floor business opportunities were referred to as “incidental” businesses or something to that effect. Across the street from this building site is a brick building in Forest Park. It has storefront space on the first floor and residences above it. These storefronts have been empty since the building was erected, years ago. Based upon a suggested square foot rental price and the small space allowed to “incidental” businesses, these spaces will also likely sit empty. Where will their customers park? How can they make money with so little access to customers? Isn't the oft-cited definition of insanity, “repeating a past action and expecting a different outcome?” If you are going to allow a building with 1st floor business rental opportunities to bring in tax revenue, you have to set them up for success – large enough space, sufficient plumbing and parking.

I welcome new development and businesses in our community AND affordable housing, but it must fit into our community and be set up to be successful and not to further degrade our traffic problems here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Kathleen Corcos
Daniel Corcos



Lathrop Ashland Franklin

A NEIGHBOR ORGANIZATION

LAF Comments for EDC April 5, 2023

Introduction

Our neighborhood coalition very much looks forward to new development coming to Madison Street on our end of town. We are energized by the future of a safer, more beautiful, and vibrant community where we have for years tolerated empty, blighted, and toxic village-owned properties. As such, we welcome, encourage, and support development on the LCFS property currently under delayed abatement and demolition.

After the small stakeholder meeting on February 22, our neighbor group held our own “focus group” to discuss our desires for the replacement of the buildings in the 7600 block of Madison. We appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts with you tonight.

In a nutshell, we want something charming, not alarming, to replace the dangerous eyesore that current sits on those parcels. We want the property developed to be friendly to our community.

We also understand that prevailing economic conditions along with the configuration of the parcels will to a significant (entire?) degree drive the decision-making process for development, both from the viewpoint of the village needs and municipal capacities, and from the developers themselves.

As such, we recognize that economic conditions for the real estate sector in general have changed over the past year and continue to change rapidly and dramatically as we shift into the post-pandemic routines and economic realities. We believe these factors will result in a long wait for the village to find a suitable, able, and willing developer.

We do not believe changing current zoning regulations will have any impact on attracting a developer, and do not favor changing current C2 zoning across Madison Street. It is essential for the longstanding stakeholders in this neighborhood to proactively plan and work with the Village of River Forest and any future identified developers to ensure that any new construction benefits our greater community and respects existing residential homes and neighbors.

Community Friendly

We define a community friendly building as follows:

1. Not taller than 30'.¹
2. Contains quality retail/office rental space that is affordable for small, locally owned businesses to occupy. Higher cap rates lead to higher rental rates, which lead to only larger, regional/national businesses moving in. Locally owned business will reinvest profits into our community. Larger companies will not do so.
3. Contains residential units (rental or condo) of a reasonable amount so that the amount of traffic on our residential streets is not overloaded and does not increase danger: As our end of town evolves demographically, we are seeing more small children who walk to and from Lincoln and Roosevelt school. Traffic loading and patterns are of critical importance to keep our children safe.
4. Contains residential units (rental or condo) of a reasonable amount not to overwhelm our municipal and educational resources.
5. Built with quality materials in a style that is consistent with our neighborhood. Any proposed oversized building taller than the current three-story zoning will be adjacent to a number of existing 2-story residential homes in an established neighborhood.

¹ In his presentation materials at the stakeholders meeting on February 22, and in the packet provided for the EDC meeting on April 5, John Houseal erroneously exhibited a slide and provided materials stating the zoning height of 35'. At the EDC meeting on April 5, this error was noted and corrected; the zoning code provides for 30'. Among the other errors on the slides, we noted Madison spelled as "Maddison," and that the document was entttled "COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE & FUTURE LAND USE MAP Town of Wake Forest," rather than River Forest.

Zoning

At our “stakeholder” meeting, Houseal, who stated that he has received every development project in River Forest in the last 26 years, claimed that River Forest zoning is “out of whack” with other municipalities.

His statement belies the facts.

In examining 21 comparable Chicago suburbs Zoning Code Dates we found that the dates of their codes were earlier or comparable to River Forest, *to wit*:

River Forest	1995	
Wilmette	1993	River Forest Comparative preference
Forest Park	1969	Adjacent
Elmwood Park	1992	Adjacent
Brookfield	1996	Next Adjacent
Westchester	1964	Close by
Western Springs	1992	Close by
Des Plaines	1998	
Evanston	1993	
Schaumburg	1995	
Palatine	1988	
Oak Lawn	1975	
Mount Prospect	1993	
Tinley Park	1978	
Northbrook	1988	
Deerfield	1978	
Elk Grove	1995	
Roselle	1985	
Palos Hills	1968	
Elgin	1992	
Prospect Hts.	1977	
Cicero	1977	

See also, Oak Park 2017, **but maximum code height in Oak Park is 45 feet, not 50 feet.**

The River Forest Code for C2 on Madison between Lathrop and Thatcher should not be updated across the board to eliminate all height, density, parking, FAR, and setbacks in current zoning. Re-zoning to accommodate a four to five story building as proposed is a significant departure from the currently adequate zoning of three stories.

Any zoning for a single building can be accomplished by variance on an *ad hoc* basis.

Density

To specifically address the density recommendations of Mr. Houseal, we are open to reducing the minimum required area for residential units, but not to eliminating the bedroom requirement.

Parking

We may be open to the reduction of parking spaces per unit, but any development should include sufficient parking for visitors and potential commercial uses, to not encroach on our residential properties or flow over to our residential streets.

Height

Increasing the limit on the building height by changing the zoning code is not acceptable to our neighbors.

Current 1995 expanded the prior zoning from two-stories to three-stories. Madison Street primarily comprises single and two-story buildings. **Three stories are more than sufficient to replace the current two-story building and is 30% higher** than the current building.

The suggestion of four-five stories (four stories is 45' and 50 feet is higher than four stories) is completely "out of whack" with our residential neighborhood.

Below are some photo illustrations of the imposition of a three-story new construction building next to a block of family homes. First photo is across North Avenue in Galewood, and the second photo is the four-story apartment building in Forest Park on Madison across from the LCFS property:



Even a three-story building up against our alley/homes would obstruct our views, light, and air, and change the character of our neighborhood. But the zoning has already been modified to accommodate a three-story building.

Setback

While Mr. Houseal specifically stated that the setback on Ashland would be maintained, a visual illustration he provided appeared to show elimination of the setback, such that a new building was closer to the sidewalk/street. We do not approve of a building that expands wider into the current setback on Ashland.

Traffic

Any zoning *variance* for increased density should be carefully vetted for traffic and parking concerns in our residential neighborhood.

Conclusion

We ask the EDC, when making your recommendations to the village trustees to consider not the highest and best use of these properties, but also the impact on the residential neighbors. It is essential for the longstanding stakeholders in this

neighborhood to proactively plan and work with the Village to ensure that any new construction benefits our greater community and respects existing residential historic homes and neighbors. Our small neighborhood cannot support a massive and dense structure at the end of our streets.

And ask yourselves, “Would you want this in your backyard?”

Thank you for your time.

We are,

Lathrop Ashland Franklin Neighbors