

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
FINDINGS OF FACT & RECOMMENDATION -  
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO C1, C2, C3, AND ORIC ZONING DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, Petitioner the Village of River Forest (“Village”), based upon direction from the Village President and Board of Trustees, has requested consideration of, and a public hearing on, proposed amendments to be made to Title 10 (Zoning) of the Village of River Forest Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Code”) related to: adjusting the height maximums for buildings from 50 feet in C1 Commercial District (C1) C3 Central Commercial District, (C3) and Office/Research/Industrial/Commercial District (ORIC) to 65 feet and to increase the C2 Commercial District (C2) from 30 feet to 50 feet; decreasing residential density requirements for lot areas from 2,800 square feet in C1, C2, and C3 to 1,000 square feet, and reducing off-street parking requirements from a minimum of 2 (for 1-2 bedroom dwellings) or 2.5 (for 3+ bedroom dwellings) to a minimum of 1.5 per unit; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board of Appeals (“Board”) held a public hearing on the question of whether the requested amendment to the text of the Zoning Code should be granted on January 11, 2024, March 14, 2024, and April 11, 2024, as required by Section 10-5-5 of the Zoning Code, at which time all persons present and wishing to speak were given an opportunity to be heard and all evidence that was tendered was received and considered by the Board; and

WHEREAS, public notice in the form required by law was given of said public hearing by publication not more than thirty (30) days nor less than fifteen (15) days prior to said public hearing in the *Wednesday Journal*, a newspaper of general circulation in the Village, there being no newspaper published in the Village; and

WHEREAS, at the January 11, 2024, March 14, 2024 and April 11, 2024 public hearing, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, and Village Consultant John Houseal, on behalf of Petitioner the Village of River Forest, explained that the proposed amendments would not rezone any properties, or change the planned development review and approval process for any developments that would qualify for the same. The Village presented evidence of the current standards of surrounding communities with regards to building height, density and parking. In addition, the Village Administrator and Village Consultant addressed many of the concerns raised by commenters and clarified that the proposed amendments did not change the core characteristics of any zoning districts (i.e. no residential that would not have been previously allowed would have become permitted by the amendments) nor would bedroom requirements change. The Village Administrator and Village Consultant indicated that the Village Board and the Economic Development Commission (“EDC”) felt that the changes would bring the Village more in line with current development standards and would attract redevelopment to the Village. EDC Chairman Cuyler Brown provided testimony to support the changes and explain the Commission’s process.; and

WHEREAS, at the January 11, 2024, March 14, 2024 and April 11, 2024 public hearing, members of the public spoke both in favor of and against the proposed amendments. Reasons given in support of the proposed amendments included that they brought a more modern

standard to the Village and would attract redevelopment which would enhance the walkability and vibrancy of the Village in the long term. Reasons given in opposition to the proposed amendments included concern that the new standards would become a new base level from which to seek additional modification, and about effects on neighboring properties, village services and infrastructure. The petitioner stated that impacts on neighboring properties and public services would be addressed during the planned development review process for specific proposals as has been done in the past; and

WHEREAS, after the close of public comment, the Board discussed the proposed amendments. Members expressed differing views on the proposed amendments and their potential impacts. Members specifically cited concerns about the reduction in parking requirements, and concerns that the proposed amendments were too extensive and had too great an impact on Village character; although many members expressed support for some elements of the proposed changes. Members felt that the lack of commercial development had not been sufficiently linked to the restrictions of the zoning code to justify the scope of the amendments, and that absent good reasons, the Village should not be emulating “comparable” communities. In addition, members felt that the planned development process protected the Village by allowing approval of individual variances after public hearings, comments, and negotiations with the developer. Members expressed interest in the idea of stepback height design requirements or some version of compromise between the current height restrictions and the changes suggested in the proposed amendments, possibly incorporating the feedback and suggestions from residents in order to address their concerns. Members also expressed that the density and parking revisions were too drastic, and that the proposal overall could incorporate more community feedback; however, members also emphasized that while they could not recommend the current proposal they were not opposed to economic development and saw need for some change; and

WHEREAS, following discussion, the Zoning Board of Appeals, pursuant to Section 10-5-5(B)(2) of the Zoning Code, and by a vote of 6-1, did not recommend approval of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Code.

WHEREAS, following the recommendation, the Zoning Board of Appeals provided reasoning for their recommendation vote as follows;

NOW THEREFORE, the Zoning Board of Appeals makes the following findings of fact and recommendations pursuant to Section 10-5-5(B)(2):

A. That for the various reasons stated above, and by a vote of 6-1, the Zoning Board of Appeals finds that the Proposed Amendments are not in the best interests of the Village and its residents and property owners; and

B. That the Zoning Board of Appeals, pursuant to Section 10-5-5(B)(2) of the Zoning Code, and by a vote of 6-1, therefore does not recommend to the Village President and Board of Trustees that the Zoning Code be amended as proposed.

5/9/2024

