



Village of River Forest

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 27, 2025
To: For Public Release
From: Lance Malina, Village Attorney & Matt Walsh, Village Administrator
Subj: Village Board Consideration and Result of Ethics Complaints Filed on January 27, 2025 and February 10, 2025

On February 10, 2025, the Village Board voted 4-2 to approve an Exclusive Listing Agreement with Jones Lang LaSalle Americas (“JLL”) and authorize the Village Administrator to execute the contract subject to final attorney review. The Economic Development Commission (“EDC”) reviewed proposals from potential brokers and recommended JLL to the Village Board.

The Village Board is aware of public concern regarding an alleged perceived conflict of interest, and has received two citizen complaints alleging violations of the Village’s Ethical Standards. The Village Administrator provided a Memorandum, available on the Village’s website, that disclosed the issue and ensured the Village Board considered the matter in conjunction with the proposal for broker services.

The first citizen complaint, received January 27, 2025, was directed to the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission was bound to meet and conduct an initial review, which it did on January 31, 2025. *See VRF § 1-23-8(C)(2)(c)*. The Village Board deferred its January 27, 2025 consideration of the RFP for Broker Services recommendation to permit that initial review. After the Ethics Commission determined the allegations did not fall under its purview, the complaint was re-directed to the Village Board. Even if it was apparent that the alleged violations did not fall under the Ethics Commission purview, the appropriate body to make that determination was the Ethics Commission. The second complaint, received February 10, 2025, was directed to the Village Board.

Under Section 1-23-5(E) of the Village Code, the Village Board has authority to enforce the Ethical Standards of the Village. Section 1-23-5(B)(6) requires covered individuals to disclose potential conflicts of interests and abstain from participating in deliberations or decision-making where conflicts may exist. The EDC avoided the appearance of a conflict of interest by ensuring the Commissioner, who is also an employee of JLL, recused himself from deliberations and did not take part in the EDC’s vote.

The Village Board’s approval concurrently considered the allegations, reviewed the EDC’s selection process, and determined the EDC adhered to the appropriate procedures in drafting the RFP, impartially reviewing proposals, ensuring potential conflicts were addressed proactively, and arriving at a thorough and ethical recommendation for the Village Board to consider.