



JASCULCA TERMAN
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

**River Forest Community Dialogues – 10.3.24 – Community Center
Notes from Resident Comments**

Who was in attendance?

- 13 residents
- Matt Walsh (Village Administrator)
- Rick Jasculca & Nell DeCoursey Brennan (Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications)

River Forest General

- Appeal of River Forest
 - Walkability / accessibility
 - Transit options
 - Still close to the city
 - Great for families
 - Leafy suburb/greenery
 - Great schools
 - Safety
- Broader concerns
 - Lots of conversations around safety
 - People's recent experience with attempted burglaries
- Distrust between Village/Community
 - People upset about the Lake & Lathrop process – red flags were ignored
 - Lost faith in decision making
 - TIF / Economic Development / Fear of Eminent Domain has also created tension
 - Community doesn't want to fight for things like this, they want to be informed
 - The people of River Forest want to make informed decisions about economic development plans/opportunities
 - Village must do a better job sharing proof of concepts, vetting of developers and specific information about opportunities, etc
 - Share updates about economic development planning more regularly
 - Consistent, regular cadence of updates in village newsletter and through more consistent engagement

Concerns re: Madison and Ashland Property

- Safety
 - Safety should be top priority with whatever goes there

- Process
 - Community feels left out, with information given to them last minute
 - How can it be improved?
 - Sharing full, vetted proposals with the community highlighting pros, cons, etc
 - Opportunity for virtual meetings/presentations
 - Information shared beforehand, opportunity to pre-submit questions
 - Developers Forum for community residents
 - Transparency
 - Sharing data, research, information from developers, setbacks, etc
 - Sharing the Village's vision is important
 - Important for developers to build trust with community
 - These conversations should be the beginning of a more sustained engagement process
- Parking
 - People going to locations in Forest Park have been parking in our RF neighborhoods. No matter what goes there, parking needs to be a major consideration
 - One of the bigger concerns
- Community Benefit
 - No matter what gets put there, it should benefit the community., e.g., quality retail/restaurant

Future Wants/Concerns

- Commercial
 - Some feel very strongly about doing what it takes to get commercial space of any kind
 - Commercial on street level under residential
 - Though there was concern about ensuring the viability of businesses that might fill commercial space, and whether the Village has any influence over which tenants a property owner chooses to fill space.
- Medical Offices
 - Don't bring in sales taxes, but could be interesting
- Restaurant/livelihood
 - Everything west of Des Plaines stops, becomes quiet – not a lot of foot traffic
 - Understand the turnover/difficulty of restaurants, but people feel like it is missing in RF
- Residential
 - Concern about burdening the school system
 - Parking concerns here as well
 - Question about creating opportunity for more affordable housing through this spot

- Include question of public/private partnership for a rent to own opportunity
 - Even if not a partnership, something that is more affordable that could help families enter the community
 - Would not want something like the building on Forest Park side of Madison
 - Don't want a tall space with a bunch of balconies looking into neighborhoods
 - Would need to be designed to fit with the vibe of the Village
 - One resident felt that only allowing low density residential options like the townhomes further west would be a missed opportunity
- Community Space
 - Rec center with space for teenagers/younger families
 - Oak Park rec center with membership requirements referenced as an example
- Office/Condo Space
 - Owned units, professional service spaces
 - Dentist office, lawyers office, etc

Other

- TIF / Economic Development
 - Though agreement that a TIF is valuable, there is anger from the earlier TIF process which carries over here
 - Would love this process to be more robust from the Village/openly shared
 - Do research about the impact of economic development/share report with village residents
- Traffic
 - There has been a major increase in traffic on Madison that has caused problems
- Specific Developers
 - Is there an opportunity to approach local developers, those living in RF?