



JASCULCA TERMAN
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

River Forest Community Dialogues – 9.27.24 – 100 Block of Keystone
Notes from Resident Comments

Who was in attendance?

- 7 residents
- Jessica Spencer (Assistant Village Administrator)
- James Chase & Nell DeCoursey Brennan (Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications)

River Forest General

- Appeal of River Forest
 - Walkable community, close to things
 - Nearby nature with the Forest Preserves
 - Close to city – get the space, but still have access to urban living
 - Great schools
 - Community/neighborhood
 - Homes have character, nothing cookie cutter
- River Forest is a place for the schools and quality of life, but if you want to do anything else you leave to experience (entertainment, restaurants, etc.)

Concerns re: Madison & Ashland Property

- Businesses on Madison don't seem to do well
 - Little foot traffic
- Whatever gets built should align with the character of the village
- Question about whether Forest Park has a say in what building goes there
- Parking needs to be a priority, no matter what kind of development happens at the property
 - Without improved parking, it will be difficult for any businesses at the property to attract customers except for those nearby in the neighborhood
- Housing
 - Priority should be ensuring that development on the property is beneficial to the community. If development is only housing, opinions were less strong about the type of housing.
 - Mixed use with first-floor retail would be important if the development is primarily housing
 - Lower height is important

- Cap on the number of floors. Specific cap varied: mentions of 2-3 stories up to 7 stories.
- The condos in Forest Park stand out too much. Condos in RF should fit in more with the feel of the village.
 - Avoid making them look like random hotels/mass condos
- Cannot lose the residential town feel
- Some community members mentioned townhomes as a viable option
- Condos over apartments

Future Wants/Concerns

- What is missing in River Forest?
 - Public art
 - Local restaurants
 - Possibility for outposts from the city (Publican Quality Bread, Small Cheval)
 - Daytime options with soups/salads/sandwich
 - There are downtown Chicago restaurants that are establishing new locations in further-out suburbs. Why aren't they coming to us?
 - Local boutique
 - Coffee shops. Especially one set up for people to work during the day and providing space for events, performances, general gathering place in the evening.
 - Need to bring businesses into the community. Much of the village is taken up by residential, education, government and nonprofit.
 - Community pool
 - Activities for teens/tweens
 - A “downtown” area. Residents cited a few examples of suburbs and Chicago neighborhoods that the village should try to emulate.
 - Lincoln Square
 - Southport Corridor
 - Elmhurst on York
 - Downtown Naperville
 - New shops/buildings, but they maintained the “old vibe”
 - La Grange
 - Glen Ellyn

Other

- Lake & Lathrop
 - Would be great to see a restaurant with a patio, something family-oriented
- Forest Park collaboration
 - Residents encourage collaboration on complementary economic development efforts along and near Madison St
 - Forest Park seems to be more curated in terms of businesses they attract
- Keystone Park / Public Park
 - Though operated by the Park District, people shared their interest in plans to build out this park area for the community