

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES  
January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

A regular meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue – River Forest, IL.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Brennan, Johnson, Gillis, O’Connell, Vazquez, Village Clerk Keller

Absent: Trustee Bachner

Also Present: Village Attorney Lance Malina, Village Administrator Matt Walsh, Village Finance Director Rosemary McAdams, Police Chief James O’Shea, Fire Chief Tom Gaertner, Director of Public Works and Engineering Jack Bielak, Deputy Police Chief James Greenwood, Police Commander Michael Swierczynski, Deputy Fire Chief David Bochenek, Human Resources Manager Trish Ivansek and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

President Adduci led the pledge of allegiance.

**3. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Margie Cekander made a public comment and expressed disappointment in the Village Board's actions and discussions at the December 16<sup>th</sup> Village Board meeting. She reminded the Board that the term limits were a citizen driven initiative and thus should be addressed so the voters can be decided.

Ms. Cekander then expressed concerns about the handling of the electoral board by the Village’s attorneys and raised additional concerns about Klein, Thorpe, and Jenkins. She raised potential ethical concerns regarding the Village’s use of firms such as Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications and Jones Lang LaSalle IP, Inc. Additionally, she expressed concerns about the powers vested in the Office of Village President and the established Village Board members. Ms.

Cekander concluded by stating that implementing term limits could help mitigate the concerns she raised earlier.

#### **4. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Trustee Gillis wished everyone a happy New Year and highlighted accomplishments made by the River Forest Sustainability Commission and thanked the Commissioners for their work. She noted being excited to see what other accomplishments the Commission and the Village will make in the coming years.

Trustee Vazquez wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Village Clerk Keller had nothing to add to the record.

Trustee Brennan expressed her appreciation for the lights adorning homes and buildings around town during the winter months.

Trustee Brennan responded to a comment made by Trustee Vazquez at the previous Village Board meeting, emphasizing that she takes her role as a Village Board Trustee seriously. She stated that any suggestion or implication that she votes based on personal bias or animosity is both disrespectful and insulting. She urged the Board to keep the discussion focused on the issues at hand.

She then asked for an update on the term limit referendum.

Village Administrator Walsh noted that a petition for referendum was filed on December 30<sup>th</sup> and noted that the deadline for certification is January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Trustee Brennan asked if the certification is for Village Clerk Keller to decide.

Administrator Walsh stated that the Village Clerk is the local election official, thus the certification of the referendum and candidates is in his authority.

Trustee Johnson wished everyone a Happy New Year and apologized for missing the last meeting. He asked that the Board and the community act civilly when discussing Village matters.

Trustee O'Connell thanked the Public Works Department and reminded residents of the Senior Snow Removal Program that the Village offers.

President Adduci wished everyone a Happy New Year and told Trustee Brennan that she did not remember the comment made by Trustee Vazquez but will re-listen to the recording to make sure to hear what was said. President Adduci then stated she agreed with the comments made by Trustee Johnson.

Trustee Brennan noted that the Board received a comment from a resident stating that their comments were not recorded in the meeting minutes from the last Board meeting.

President Adduci stated that Consent Agenda Item a will be removed.

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- b. Administration Department Report
- c. Monthly Department Reports
- d. Accounts Payable – December 2024 – \$1,873,811.76.
- e. December 2024 Financial Report
- f. Award of Contract – 2025 Street Patching Program – Schroeder Asphalt Services – \$98,260.15
- g. Award of Contract – 2025 Curb and Sidewalk Replacement Program – Schroeder & Schroeder, Inc – \$198,925.00
- h. Award of Contract – 2025 Asphalt Pavement Crack Sealing Project– Denler, Inc. – \$48,150.00

The Board chose to remove item, “a. Village Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024,” for consideration at a later date after a resident noted that their comments were not recorded in the minutes.

**MOTION** by Trustee Brennan to approve Consent Agenda Items B-H. Seconded by Trustee O’Connell.

### **Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee Bachner

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

## **6. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION**

None.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

### a. Zoning Board of Appeals

- i. Variation Request – 506 Edgewood Place – Lot Coverage – Ordinance

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variation to Section 10-9-5 of the Zoning Code at 506 Edgewood Place. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on the variation request.

The Village Board and staff discussed whether the proposed pergola would impact lot coverage on the property.

**Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee Bachner

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

- ii. Variation Request – 633 Ashland Avenue – Lot Coverage & Setbacks – Ordinance

**MOTION** by Trustee Johnson to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variations to Sections 10-9-5 and 10-9-7 of the Zoning Code at 633 Ashland Avenue. Seconded by Trustee Gillis.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on the application.

Trustee Brennan asked why Chairman Martin abstained from the vote.

The applicant explained that Chairman Martin abstained from the vote because he had missed a previous meeting when the application had been discussed.

**Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson  
Absent: Trustee Bachner  
Nays: None

Motion Passes.

iii. Variation Request – 1105 Park Avenue – Setbacks – Ordinance

**MOTION** by Trustee O’Connell to approve an Ordinance granting the requested variations to Section 10-9-7 of the Zoning Code at 1105 Park Avenue. Seconded by Trustee Johnson.

Administrator Walsh provided background information on this agenda item.

**Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees O’Connell, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson  
Absent: Trustee Bachner  
Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Neighborhood Dialogues – Presentation – No Action

Administrator Walsh gave a presentation which recapped the findings of the Village’s Neighborhood Dialogue Program.

Trustee Brennan asked if the Economic Development Commission will be bringing an agreement or a recommendation for a broker to the Village Board for approval.

Administrator Walsh stated the Commission will be bringing a recommendation.

Administrator Walsh mentioned that staff intends to spend the next three months collecting further feedback from residents on development sites around

the Village. He also noted that in the subsequent months, the Village aims to begin receiving and reviewing proposals from developers.

Rick Jasculca of Jasculca Terman Strategic Communications spoke about the Neighborhood Dialogue program. He thanked the staff for their efforts at the dialogues, encouraged the Village to continue hosting them, and shared that traffic and parking were among the top concerns raised by residents.

Resident Debbie Borman asked how many people participated in the neighborhood dialogue program.

Administrator Walsh noted that it was around seventy-five but that the notes that would be released the next day will have additional breakdown.

Ms. Borman then asked if the Village would continue with the dialogue program and if so, would it cost the same as the first set of dialogues.

Mr. Jasculca stated that his firm does not need to be involved in further neighborhood dialogues as he felt the Village staff is capable of running the program.

Ms. Borman suggested that, in the future, the Village hold public meetings open to all residents rather than spending additional funds on further dialogues. She also reminded the Village Board of the feedback collected at the April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting and the report she and her neighbors had submitted to the Board.

Mr. Jasculca commented on the differences between a large public hearing and a smaller dialogue meeting.

Ms. Borman took exception to some of the comments made by Mr. Jasculca and offered additional background information on the report she submitted to the Village Board. Ms. Borman also noted that she was not aware of any discussion surrounding the Community Center as mentioned in the presentation given by Administrator Walsh.

Administrator Walsh noted that any discussions about a Community Center should not be interpreted as a set plan moving forward, rather the center was brought up by residents at the meeting.

President Adduci stated that there could be future conversations about the Community Center.

Trustee O'Connell asked if the Village's Development Review processes were explained at the meetings.

Administrator Walsh reported that it was explained at some of the meetings but noted that there are a lot of steps in that process, and it should be reiterated in the future.

Trustee O'Connell asked if residents were aware of the Comprehensive Plan and the work that was put into the document.

Administrator Walsh noted that some of the residents were aware and at one meeting, copies of the document were shared with residents.

President Adduci commented on the three years of work that went into the Comprehensive Plan. She also explained the differences between the Development Review Board, the Plan Commission, and how they interact with the Comprehensive Plan.

She then noted being in support of more upfront engagement with the community and potentially using "community ambassadors" to help share information on Village issues.

Trustee Gillis noted that the Comprehensive Plan is a dense document and asked if there is a plan to make it more digestible.

Administrator Walsh noted staff is having discussions about breaking the document down into more readable pieces.

President Adduci thanked staff for their work on the Dialogues.

## **10. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to discuss: Pending Litigation.

**MOTION** by Trustee Vazquez to enter Executive Session pursuant to 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) to discuss: Pending Litigation and the Village Board will adjourn

after executive session and will not return to open session. Seconded by Trustee O'Connell.

**Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees O'Connell, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee Bachner

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** to adjourn by Trustee Johnson. Seconded by Trustee Brennan

**Roll call:**

Ayes: Trustees Bachner, Vazquez, Gillis, Brennan, Johnson

Absent: Trustee O'Connell

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

The Village Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

  
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Jonathan Keller, Village Clerk

Date: ~~1/13/25~~ 1/27/25