

VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
March 6, 2024

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the 1st Floor Community Room of Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Cuyler Brown, Commissioners Katie Lowes, Tim Brangle, and Walter Wahlfeldt. Commissioner Carr Preston arrived at 6:08pm. Commissioner Bob Graham and Raj Chiplunkar attended via Zoom.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Jessica Spencer and Deputy Clerk Luke Masella

There was no quorum present at the beginning of the meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

**3. CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING BUSINESS COMMUNITY RETENTION/
SUPPORT STRATEGIES AND COMMUNICATION**

Executive Director Darien Marion-Burton introduced himself and discussed a few of the recent events of the Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce. He explained the free 6 - month program for new business license holders and noted that *Ice Ice Baby* (7361 North Ave, River Forest) is a new member who was quite active during the first six months. He also encouraged residents to attend the Health & Wellness fair on April 21. Chairman Brown was excited to have Director Marion-Burton at the meeting and asked what he can do to support the Chamber in River Forest. He would appreciate having the calendar made available to him so he can attend Chamber meetings.

Assistant Administrator Spencer discussed the various ways that the business community is supported in Village publications, including how business license holders are advertised in the "Business Spotlight" each week via the Village newsletter.

Commissioner Preston asked how many businesses do we have contact information for in the Village? Director Marion-Burton offered to send the Village the list of businesses in the Chamber to compare.

Commissioner Wahlfeldt asked Director Marion-Burton if there were any new businesses opening recently. He responded that there was a 30% retention rate on the 6 months of free membership window and no significant drop in membership recently. The Director stated he hopes to continue to see participation increase from all members. He mentioned there are no community events that occur in River Forest at this time, but he is interested in participating here in future. Chairman Brown said he would love to see how that can be explored, possibly outside when the weather is nice.

Commissioner Brangle asked what other types of events are typically held by the Chamber. Director Marion-Burton said there are 8 events per year and about 12 programming events per month.

Chairman Brown asked if one would need to be a member to attend the Chamber events. Director Marion-Burton said no, there are member and non-member rates that are typically available for these events. He also invited everyone to sign up for the Chamber Advantage newsletter, which is published on Sundays.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Preston and **SECONDED** by Chairman Brown to allow Commissioner Chiplunkar and Commissioner Graham to attend the meeting via Zoom. **MOTION PASSED** by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Graham said that the biggest event the Village has is the Memorial Day parade and asked about having some focus on the business community as well. Director Marion-Burton agreed, having a captive audience is important to spreading the message of the business community.

Chairman Brown thanked Director Marion-Burton for joining us tonight.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 7, 2024

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Lowes and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Chiplunkar to approve the minutes of the February 7 meeting. **MOTION PASSED** by unanimous voice vote.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT RFP FOR BROKER SERVICES

Assistant Administrator Spencer introduced the draft Request for Proposals, which had been emailed to the committee prior to the meeting. Commissioner Brangle asked what the objective for the RFP was, to seek a broker to sell the property? Commissioner Wahlfeldt clarified the goal was to sell the property, not look for someone to lease the property from

the Village. The broker would then target the right developer to use the property in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

With regards to four vacant parcels of land that the Village owns, Chairman Brown said one broker would make the most sense to represent the Village.

Commissioner Wahlfeldt confirmed that the RFP should ask for submitter to propose the fee structure.

Assistant Administrator Spencer laid out the process for the RFP approval and publication.

Chairman Brown discussed the zoning considerations that are also happening in the Zoning Board of Appeals, asking how many brokers might be interested in this listing? Commissioner Wahlfeldt said that there might be five or six, and he recommends working with someone in the western suburbs, who may have experience working in this region. Assistant Administrator Spencer invited the committee to send her the contact information for those who might be interested in this RFP, and she would notify the committee when the RFP was published.

After a brief discussion, Commissioners Lowes and Brangle volunteered to be on the review committee for the RFP. Chairman Brown expressed his excitement to be moving forward on this project.

6. NORTH AVE/MADISON ST/LAKE & LATHROP UPDATE

Assistant Administrator Spencer updated the committee with regards to each location:

- North Avenue: no update at this time.
- Madison Street: The damaged fence will be repaired by the end of this week.
- Lake & Lathrop:

Last week, Ascend Real Estate Group, the court-appointed receiver currently responsible for the Lake & Lathrop project site, submitted their quarterly report. The report provides details regarding efforts to market the site, including five proposals to purchase the site. The receiver is currently negotiating contract terms with the high bidder, Michigan Avenue Real Estate Group. The potential sale of the property will be subject to court approval. The next court hearing is scheduled for March 18. The Village retains authority over the approval of any development plans proposed for the property.

There were no further questions at this time. Chairman Brown asked if it would be possible to learn who the other bidders were, to see if they would be interested in other developments in the Village. Assistant Administrator Spencer said she would inquire. Discussion ensued regarding the potential use and sale of the land.


7. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

8. ADJOURNMENT

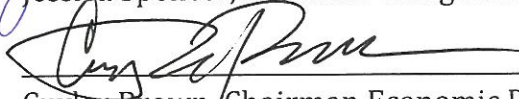
A MOTION was made by Commissioner Preston and SECONDED by Commissioner Wahlfeldt to adjourn the March 6, 2024, meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 6:57 p.m. MOTION PASSED by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator

Date: 5/1/2024



Cuyler Brown, Chairman Economic Development Commission