

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES
September 17, 2018**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Board of Trustees was held on Monday, September 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Oak Park River Forest Room of the Koehneke Community Center at Concordia University, 7400 Augusta, River Forest, Illinois.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:22 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: President Adduci, Trustees Cargie, Conti, Vazquez, Henek, and Gibbs
Absent: Trustee Corsini
Also Present: Village Clerk Kathleen Brand-White, Village Administrator Eric Palm, Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Police Chief James O'Shea, Fire Chief Kurt Bohlmann, Public Works Director John Anderson, Finance Director Joan Rock, Village Attorney Gregory Smith

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Adduci led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ELECTED OFFICIAL COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Recognition of the LemonAid event

Trustees noted the success of the LemonAid event, and thanked the various Village departments for ensuring the event ran smoothly.

b. Recognition of River Forest U11 Boys Little League State Championship

President Adduci recognized the River Forest U11 Boys baseball team on their recent state championship and presented a River Forest Certificate of Achievement to each of the players.

4. CITIZENS COMMENTS

President Adduci explained that citizen comments would be limited to three minutes to ensure that all commenters had enough time to speak.

Joan Cusack, of 7575 Lake Street, discussed ingress and egress on Ashland Avenue associated with the proposed Lake and Lathrop development. Ms. Cusack noted that there is a 56-unit condominium facility south of the development and wondered whether a stop-sign could be placed at the driveway to account for pedestrian safety. She expressed her appreciation for the LemonAid event, and the loving/caring nature of the community. She

also discussed the influx of condominiums in the 1960s and 70s, and subsequent attempts in the 90s by the Village to limit such construction. Ms. Cusack noted two buildings in the Village since the 1990s that have violated Village regulations. Ms. Cusack noted her concerns over the proposed development at Lake and Lathrop.

Shelby Boblick, president of the Windsor Condominium Association, provided a summary of the concerns of Windsor tenants regarding the Lake and Lathrop development. Ms. Boblick expressed that development of the area is welcome and necessary, as long as proper environmental remediation is done. She advised that the Windsor's construction and demographic mirrors those of the proposed development. The following five points represent the unanimous opinion of the Windsor's residents: 1) the proposed parking ratio is grossly inadequate for the development; 2) the lack of visitor parking will burden the entire neighborhood; 3) heavy reliance on street-parking will exacerbate already-challenged intersections in the area; 4) the beaux-arts style of the development is inconsistent with the architectural style of the Village; 5) the number of units proposed is too large for the size of the parcel.

Phyllis Barron, of 410 Ashland Avenue, discussed the property at 423 Ashland Avenue. She is concerned that she has not heard very much about plans for development of the property. She has heard it will be a ramp for the River Forest Building parking structure; she wonders what the ramp will look like, how much traffic it will get, and whether it will be landscaped. She is concerned about parking in the area.

Doreen Neuhauser, of 831 Bonnie Brae, expressed her dismay regarding the proposed development at Chicago and Harlem. She feels the project is way too large for the space.

Dan Roche, of 815 Bonnie Brae, implored the Board to take a closer look at the Chicago and Harlem proposal. He feels that the developers have been less-than-forthcoming regarding statistics and financial information. He supports development in the space, but feels that this is the wrong approach.

Suzanne Morrison, of 7205 Iowa, made comments regarding both the Chicago/Harlem and Lake/Lathrop developments. Ms. Morrison feels that the development review process unfairly benefits developers. She does not feel that the community receives adequate notice of proposed developments. She requested that the Board kick the proposals back to the Development Review Board to provide the community with a better chance to give feedback.

Richard Tavares, of 842 Harlem, discussed the proposed development at Chicago and Harlem. He recently moved into his home, having not heard much about the development. He feels that the proposal is too large, and destroys the character of the neighborhood he thought he was moving into. He feels that the development will dismantle the fabric of the community.

Gay Heppes, of 444 Ashland, shared that she was never informed about meetings regarding the proposed developments. She is alarmed at the scope of the developments, and feels they will change the community too much.

Joseph Baptist, of 825 Bonnie Brae, spoke regarding the Chicago and Harlem development. He thanked the Board for their service. He is concerned about the precedent the proposed developments would set (rapid, large-scale developments) as well as the scale of the developments.

Mindy Credi stated she supports efforts to bring additional tax revenue to the Village, but has problems with the proposal for Lake and Lathrop. She opposed the overall size of the structure, she is concerned about the parking ratio, and she is concerned about the plans for the rooftop. She opposes the parking burden the development will foist upon surrounding streets. She opposes, outright, the rooftop plans. She requested that the Board require additional off-street parking and change various specifications before approving the project.

Barrington Lopez, of 417 Lathrop, is concerned about the proposal for Lake and Lathrop. He feels it is too big and out of character with the community. He feels that the parking plan is inadequate.

Julie Patterson, of 7575 Lake Street, stated that she likes the design of the proposed Lake and Lathrop building, but not the location. Ms. Patterson noted several deficiencies in the proposal's application; she felt it was not forthcoming regarding the height of the building. She expressed concern for the students and seniors living in the area over increased traffic from the development. Ms. Patterson then posed several questions to the Board: 1) what has the Board done to make sure the developer has completed previous projects as planned? 2) Will the prospective buyers have a definitive list of plans and construction materials for interior units and common areas? 3) Will there be additional environmental studies of the property? 4) Have any of the remedial steps from previous studies been completed? 5) How do the developers plan to accomplish any necessary environmental remediation?

Pat Belke, of 534 Lathrop, noted that the developers of the Lake and Lathrop proposal have only implemented one of many suggestions from the public regarding the design of the building. Ms. Belke feels the project is unsightly, and out of character with River Forest's rich architectural palette. Ms. Belke noted the public outcry over the proposal, and lamented the Board's failure to heed such complaints. She feels the community is being ignored. She also expressed her concern over prospective condominium owners being able to look down onto neighboring properties.

John Mims, of 903 Bonnie Brae, spoke regarding the Harlem and Chicago development. He noted how he particularly enjoys the influx of young families into the River Forest community, and hopes not to stem that tide with these kinds of large developments. He also noted that he expected to see and hear more about the benefits this proposal would offer the community, given the substantial concessions afforded to the developers.

Kathleen Heiss noted the extent of the height and unit-number variances sought by the Lake and Lathrop developers. She noted that seemingly no residents have supported variances throughout the process. She expressed that she would like to see any developments in compliance with local zoning ordinances.

Cindy Gronkiewicz, of 847 Ashland, feels that the proposals would essentially commercialize the center of River Forest. She echoed the concerns of the other commenters. She expressed her safety concerns for children and seniors stemming from increased traffic. She fears the developments will set a bad precedent in the community. She also feels the Development Review Board is not doing its job, given the extent of public outcry over the proposals. She lamented that she has had difficulty in the past obtaining slight variances for her own property, yet the developers are seemingly getting large variances with ease. She feels her incentives for leaving River Forest are growing.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

None.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS OF BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

a. Zoning Board of Appeals

- i. Recommendation regarding a Variation Request – 346 Park Avenue (Accessory Structure Height) - Ordinance
- ii. Recommendation regarding a Variation Request – 346 Park Avenue (Side Yard Setback) - Ordinance
- iii. Recommendation regarding a Variation Request - 514 Ashland Avenue (Lot Coverage) – Ordinance

Trustee Conti made a motion, seconded by Trustee Gibbs, to continue these items to the October 1, 2018 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Cargie, Conti, Gibbs, Henek, and Vazquez

Absent: Trustee Corsini

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

b. Development Review Board – Recommendation Regarding Lake and Lathrop Planned Development – Ordinance

Trustee Gibbs made a motion, seconded by Trustee Conti, to approve an ordinance granting a planned development permit for Lake Street and Lathrop Avenue development, 7601 through 7613 Lake Street, 7613 – 7621 Lake Street, and 423 Ashland Avenue.

Prior to the trustees' deliberations, President Adduci invited the development team to present any final comments or information.

Marty Paris, the president of the development team of the Lake and Lathrop proposal, introduced the development team. Mr. Paris showed examples of some of his team's previous developments. He some background information regarding the Sedgwick and introduced the sales and marketing team.

Mr. Paris then described the development: 210 feet of frontage on Lake Street, and 150 feet of frontage on Lathrop. The retail space will wrap around the development. The proposal includes 50 feet of frontage on Ashland, where there will be a ramp to the upper level of parking. The proposed building would be five stories, with retail on the first floor, and residential units on the upper four floors. The top floor of units would be the most expensive in the development.

In total, the plan includes 15,000 square feet of retail space, 30 residential units, and 86 parking spaces. Mr. Paris explained the layout of the retail space and the parking. Mr. Paris showed the residential floor plans; floors two through four have the same layouts, but for some outdoor space for the second floor units. There are eight units per floor; seven three-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit of varying square footages. Mr. Paris explained the layout of the elevators and the upper floor. He invited questions from the Board.

President Adduci addressed some of the citizen comments. President Adduci believes it is the Board's responsibility to solve the community's problems, and develop a clear vision of what the community should look like over the next 50 years. She urged attendees to sign up for the Village's e-newsletter, which contains a lot of information about the various happenings in the Village. President Adduci noted the Village's three core values: 1) safety; 2) strengthening the Village's property values; and 3) stabilizing property taxes.

President Adduci feels that the development review process is good, though admittedly imperfect. It is approximately a year-long process, beginning with a rendering to the Board of the ultimate proposal. Several levels of process follow, including various filing and mailing requirements, several hearings, and many opportunities for questions. She emphasized that the Village Board stays very engaged throughout the application process and assured attendees that the Board would consider the citizen comments regarding parking and traffic. President Adduci then opened up deliberations.

Trustee Cargie agreed that the application process was concerning. He would like to see a rendering of the building with the elevator overruns as a condition for the project's approval. He noted that the Board's information packet lacked any discussion of the team's remediation plan—he sought this, too, as a condition for the project's approval. He also shared concerns about the western façade of the building. He raised questions about the trash collection on Ashland Avenue, and the project's landscaping on Ashland. The team responded that landscaping was not feasible in that space, and that the western façade would include some lighting, and some masonry. The team also advised that trash would be collected from a screened-in area on Ashland.

Trustee Conti asked the team about its plans for environmental remediation of the property. Mr. Paris advised that they would be seeking a “No Further Remediation” letter from the EPA, which entails various remediation requirements; Mr. Paris was unable to elaborate on the technical details of such requirements. Several Trustees noted they would like to review the team’s environmental plan; Mr. Paris advised that the process was mostly outsourced to environmental experts, and had little to do with the builders and planners of the development.

Trustee Conti shared the Board’s vision for the development area as a magnet for the community; a place where people would want to walk, eat, shop, etc. She feels it is a beautiful design, and would support it enthusiastically were it one story shorter. She agreed with previous comments regarding the western façade of the project, and trash collection. She asked the development team about condominium sales. Mr. Paris advised that they had not made any sales yet, but noted “very good activity” on the project. He Paris noted that uncertainty over whether the project would be approved has affected sales. Mr. Paris touted the package of amenities included in the development.

Cory Robertson, of Jameson Sotheby’s International Realty, spoke regarding sales and marketing. Mr. Robertson advised that he was involved with a recent project—District House—in Oak Park that offered 28 three-bedroom units ranging in price from \$600,000 to \$950,000. Mr. Robertson advised that there were many similarities in the development process between District House and the Lake and Lathrop project, though the Lake and Lathrop project was generating much greater interest with prospective buyers. Mr. Robertson advised that District House had an overrun which was not counted against its height for compliance purposes; it also includes a rooftop deck.

Trustee Henek would like to see a rendering of the building with overruns; she is also concerned about the western façade of the building. She noted that she will not be voting according to her own views, but hopes to incorporate the community’s wishes, as well. She is disappointed that the development team has not incorporated many of the community’s concerns into its designs; she also feels that certain details of the project have been withheld. She wondered whether the development would be inviting to pedestrians. She proposed ways the team could enhance the visual interest of the project. She feels that the corner of Lake and Lathrop needs a development, but is unsure that this development reflects the needs and desires of the community. She wondered how the building materials could be expected to age; she has doubts over the building’s monolithic appearance.

Trustee Gibbs stressed that the variance process is part of the rules. He feels that developments and advancements such as these always face pushback that feels unwarranted in retrospect. He discussed several past developments in Oak Park and River Forest that caused backlash in the community, but ultimately proved beneficial. Trustee Gibbs fears the death of the development; he does not want the space to sit idly. He feels it is already a blight on the community. He feels that many of the community’s concerns over the project are unfounded. He feels that the Board has a history of being good stewards of the community’s tax dollars.

Trustee Henek replied to several of Trustee Gibbs's comments. She feels that the project demands the Board's utmost diligence. She feels that it is imperative to listen to a wide range of community voices to settle on the best plan for the most people.

President Adduci thanked the Trustees and the community for their participation in the development process. President Adduci stressed that she has heard the voices of the community, and is committed to making a decision in the best interest of the community at large. She noted that many River Forest residents are in favor of the project and that the project has been vetted by the Development Review Board. She feels that parking and traffic (in addition to the height variance) are her largest concerns over the development. She requests, as a condition for approval, that the Village Traffic and Safety commission conduct a review of the traffic and parking impacts the Village can anticipate as a result of the development. She requests 10 additional commercial parking spaces. She requested a process by which the Board could approve certain amendments to the contract prior to the developers taking action (for example, in the event the developers wanted to alter the color of the building, the unit layouts, the final rendering, etc.).

Trustee Conti wondered whether the retail doors could be inset from the façade of the building. She also wondered whether the Board and developers might be able to work together to subsidize certain businesses hoping to move into a different River Forest location. She also asked about the parking-per-unit at the District House; Mr. Robertson advised that District House had 1.7 spaces per unit; they ultimately sold 1.43 spaces unit. Trustee Conti wondered whether any excess residential spaces could be used as commercial parking.

President Adduci restated the five additional conditions the Board would like to attach to the project: 1) the developer shall work with the Village to purchase, lease, or otherwise add 10 off-street commercial parking spaces; 2) amendments that are considered "minor" by the Zoning Administrator per Section 10-19-8 of the Zoning Ordinance will be brought to the Village Board for review; 3) the Traffic and Safety Commission will review the traffic, safety, and parking impacts of the development; 4) the developer will provide an environmental remediation plan for approval to the Village Board at the time of demolition; and 5) the developer will work with the Village regarding tenant improvements.

Trustee Gibbs amended his motion to reflect the above amendments, which was seconded by Trustee Conti.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Cargie, Conti, Gibbs, President Adduci

Absent: Trustee Corsini

Nays: Trustees Henek

Motion Passes.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

None.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Conti made a motion, seconded by Trustee Gibbs, that the Meeting of September 17, 2018 be adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Roll call:

Ayes: Trustees Cargie, Conti, Gibbs, and Henek

Absent: Trustee Corsini

Nays: None

Motion Passes.

Kathleen Brand-White, Village Clerk