

**Process to Volunteer for Advisory Board, Commission or Committee
June 2, 2021
Public Comments By Jan Saeger**

I researched the processes to fill vacancies in neighboring Municipalities of Oak Park, Riverside, Maywood, Forest Park, Glen Ellyn, St Charles, Elmhurst, La Grange Park along with River Forest. These communities have various populations with differing numbers of Advisory Bodies. I also reviewed Municipal Code Language; Volunteer Application forms; how information appears on the community websites and if any Booklets or Manuals

Generally, there are 3 steps to fill a vacancy. 1. Applications to volunteer for a Board/Commission come to Village Hall, 2. When there is a vacancy, the President (Mayor) makes an appointment and adds the applicant to the Agenda 3. for Board of Trustees vote. Vetting is done by the President (Mayor) in – Riverside, Maywood, Forest Park, Elmhurst, St Charles and River Forest; by staff in Glen Ellyn and La Grange Park; Oak Park is the exception where a Volunteer Citizens Commission usually vets applicants. The Board of Trustees (Council) is not included in the vetting process. I'll give you some specifics.

1. **Oak Park** – www.oak-park.us **Pop. 52,381 Commissions 19**
Website review and Email correspondence with Clerk Vicki Scaman (now Village President), answering my questions Feb. 4, 2021:
“1. The Village Clerk’s Office does not pre-vet applicants. The intention is for all applicants to go to CIC.
2. The Village Clerk’s Office presents to the Village President all applicants vetted by CIC when a vacancy exists. The Village President determines when an applicant is added to the agenda, some never move forward.
3. Trustees receive a copy of applications with the Village Board agenda. They do not see applications for candidates not endorsed by the Village President.”

Hope this helps.
Sincerely,
Vicki Scaman
Village Clerk”

“Hello,
Yes, the Mayor has endorsed a candidate that has not gone through the CIC process. The Village Clerk is still tasked with adding the candidate to the Village agenda and providing a resume and summary for the public.
Sincerely,
Vicki Scaman
Village Clerk”

2. **Riverside** – <http://www.riverside.il.us> **Pop. 8,875 Commissions 7**
Website review. Board and Commission Tab statement: “All members of boards, commissions and committees are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board of Trustees. ” **Ordinances** state “to be appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the board of trustees”

3. **Maywood** – <https://www.maywood-il.org/> **Pop. 23,368 Commissions Est. 15**
Phone Conversation w/ Asst. to Mayor Jonette Greenhow. Applications go to Mayor’s office. Mayor responsible for vetting and decides when an applicant is put on Agenda for Board approval. Board consents or denies (may request more info). Applicant may attend Board Meeting, but not required. (Application is missing from Village Website per Asst. to Mayor).

4. **Forest Park** - <https://www.forestpark.net/dfp/> **Pop. 13,807 Commissions 13**
Website review. On Web pages – statement: “Board Members (Mayor Hoskins appoints board members)”. Ordinance language is consistent:

A. Code library:

2-6-1: COMMISSION CREATED; MEMBERS:

There is hereby created for the village a safety and traffic control commission, and...who shall be appointed by the mayor, by and with the consent of the village council

2-1-1: COMMISSION CREATED; MEMBERS:

“there is hereby created for the village a plan commission, and who shall be appointed by the mayor, by and with the consent of the village council

B. Commission Volunteer form: Includes the statement: “Appointments to Village Boards and Commissions are the privilege of the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Village Council.”

5. **Glen Ellyn** – <http://www.glenellyn.org> **Pop. 27,928 Commissions 11**
Phone conversation with Village Asst. Manager Emily Rodman and Website review. Per Emily--Application to Deputy Clerk. Staff reviews > recommends an applicant to President when vacancy occurs (President may participate in vetting process) > President decides when to add applicant to Agenda for Board advise and consent. Board of Trustees is Not part of the vetting process.

6. **St. Charles** – <https://www.stcharlesil.gov/> **Pop. 33,032 Commissions 12**
Website review. Brief overview on Boards and Commissions Tab and link to further info. Manual key statement Page 3 “Boards and commissions are established by ordinance in the City Code, which sets forth the composition and duties of each body. The Mayor recommends qualified candidates to fill vacancies, and the City Council votes to approve appointments. *(Downside of Manual no reference to Code numbers). “To apply, a letter of interest and resume should be mailed to the Mayor’s Office, 2 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174 or emailed to mayor@stcharlesil.gov.”

7. Elmhurst – <https://elmhurst.org/> Pop. 47,260 Commissions 12

Website review. <https://elmhurst.org/567/Commissions-Boards>

Commissions and Boards landing page Clearly States appointment process:

Advisory Boards and Commissions

Commission members are appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the City Council.

When commission terms expire, on a staggered basis, or as vacancies occur, the Mayor conducts interviews with interested citizens to determine appropriate appointments. Citizens are always encouraged to inform the Mayor if they would like to serve by submitting an appointed officials application (personal profile) form to the Mayor's office. The form is available at the municipal building in the Mayor's office or [Commission Volunteer Form\(PDF\)](#).

8. La Grange Park– <http://www.lagrangepark.org/> Pop. 13,296 Comms 8

Phone conversation with Glen Ellyn Village Asst. Manager Emily Rodman confirmed she was with La Grange Park and process to fill vacancies on volunteer Boards/Commissions is like Glen Ellyn. Additionally, **Website review.** Board/Commission overview tab includes statement: “Applications are always welcome and will be kept on file in the event of vacancies. As vacancies occur, appointments are recommended by the Village President and approved by the Village Board. Due to staggered terms, the Village is always looking for candidates.”

9 River Forest <https://www.vrf.us/index.html> Pop. 10,382 Commissions 8

+3 adhoc Web pages contain Purpose and Duties statement w/ link to Application Ordinances – (Random Selection) all contain the language “members appointed by the president with the approval of the board of trustees + a Section Powers and Duties.

Our Economic Development Commission was established 2013, Plan Commission 1982, Sustainability Commission 2016, Development Review Board 1985, Historic Preservation updated 2016 although originally established around 2007

The Language is essentially the same in the Ordinances that establish boards or commissions. “appointed by the Village President (Mayor) with the advice and consent of the Board (Council)”. They contain language about purposes/powers/duties.

The Application: Other than Maywood which has nothing on its website and St Charles that invites anyone interested to send a letter, Applications are online and/or at village hall. Scope of information requested varies greatly. No village appears to have a Mandate.

Often, web pages for the Boards and Commissions have a Purpose or Mission Statement, supported by Village Ordinance. Elmhurst is a good example because each webpage has a link to the Advisory Board Ordinance, eliminating extra menu travel and misunderstandings.

Guides/Manuals for Boards and Commissions are not common and content varies. Many don't include links to the Ordinances or even a brief overview. Glen Ellyn actually has a Board and Commission Manual that includes a government organizational chart, explanation of quorums, Open Meetings Act as well as Board/Commission references and Ordinances. A statement published in the WJ, the Oak Park "volunteer web page includes Enabling Language for each advisory body". On every page a link takes us to a 25 page Guide titled Enabling Language. However, the content is simply the ordinances copied and pasted from the Village Code book. I don't know why this example was cited to claim River Forest doesn't have ordinances for Volunteer Boards and Commissions when it's so easy to prove we do. Not created a few months ago in the dark of night, but years ago.

In Conclusion, all the Municipalities have the same appointment process as River Forest, supported by my research. There are some nuances like Oak Park with an additional layer, but the President and the Board of Trustees play the same roles in the appointment steps. We all have ordinances that establish our Volunteer Boards and Commissions including statements of Powers and Duties. So, I want people to stop dwelling on the politics, stop the fear mongering about our top government and shift the focus to concentrating on how we can better share information about the procedures. Let's work on clear communication about Board and Commission process steps. Let's get the information on the website, offering easier access. Let's create a Board and Commission Manual like that of Glen Ellyn which is more extensive and comprehensive and less confusing than those of some other communities. These are the goals that should be important to River Forest and these are the goals that I want to work on.

Thank You.

Reference to Oak Park "Enabling Language" John Grant "For reference, this process is entirely different in Oak Park, which has an actual Volunteer Application, the first page of which is a detailed description of the process. Their volunteer web page also includes "Enabling Language" for each advisory body," <https://www.oakpark.com/2021/01/29/hey-river-forest-citizens-you-matter/>
<https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-boards-commissions-committees>

Boards and Commissions Appointment Process, Available Information

	<u>Oak Park</u>	<u>Riverside</u>	<u>Maywood</u>	<u>Forest Park</u>	<u>Glen Ellyn</u>	<u>St. Charles</u>	<u>Elmhurst</u>	<u>La Grange Park</u>	<u>River Forest</u>
Est. Population	52,381	8,875	23,368	13,807	27,928	33,032	47,260	13,296	10,903
No. Volunteer Boards/Commissions	19	7	est. 12	8 or 9	11	12	12	8	8+3 adhoc
Contact/Search	Email -Clerk	Website	Convo Mayor Asst	Website	Convo Asst. Mger	Website	Website	Website	Convos
Process to fill a Vacancy									
Appl > President>Agenda for Trustees vote	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y
Appl > Staff > President > Agenda for Trustees vote					Y			Y	
Appl > Committee>President> Agenda for Trustees Vote	Y								
Appl > Trustees and President > Agenda for Trustees vote	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Volunteer Application Online/Download Info Requested Varies	Y	Y	Not found	Y	Y	Letter	Y	Y	Y
Ordinance/Code Language generally uniform	"appointed by the the Village President, by and with the consent of the Village Board of Trustees".								
Webpages -Brief Statement of Purpose	Y	Y	Sometimes	Y	Y		Y-good example	Y	Y
Manual	"Enabling Lang" List of MCO Obsolete					Y w/ MCO	Y no MCO	Y-no Commis. ref	Y-no ref Commis.
Oak Park	OP Enabling Language document as of May 29 2021.pdf					https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-boards-commissions-committees			
Glen Ellyn	https://www.glenellyn.org/DocumentCenter/View/1186/Boards-and-Commission-Manual								
St Charles									
Elmhurst							"Handbook"	"Municipal guide"	
L Grange Park									
Webpages Include Code/Ordinance Ref or direct link	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
**							2 Comm-Council Appr. Not required		
Link volunteer appl.									
Oak Park	Online and Pdf					https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-boards-commissions-committees			
Riverside	https://www.riverside.il.us/DocumentCenter/View/411/Volunteer-Application-and-Manual-PDF?bidId=								
Maywood	None found (statement of Asst. to mayor: "It's not there")								
Forest Park	https://www.forestpark.net/dfp/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Commission-Board-Application-7-18-2011.pdf								
Glen Ellyn	https://glenellyn.il.seamlessdocs.com/f/vgecommissionapplication								
St Charles	"To apply, a letter of interest and resume should be mailed to the Mayor's Office, 2 E. Main St., St. Charles, IL 60174 or emailed to mayor@stcharlesil.gov"								
Elmhurst	https://elmhurst.org/DocumentCenter/View/8840/AppointedOfficialApp2015?bidId=								
La Grange Park	http://www.lagrangepark.org/273/Committees-Commissions								
River Forest	https://www.vrf.us/boards/volunteer.html								

Askold Kozbur Public Comments to River Forest Board of Trustees.

2 June 2021

Good evening. My name is Askold Kozbur. I live at 1235 Monroe Ave.

Tonight, I am speaking in support of Mr. John Grant's recent recommendations to the River Forest Village Board for advisory body member selection dated February 8th, 2021.

Given my past experience of how members of advisory bodies are selected in River Forest, I fully support Mr. Grant's suggestions. Of particular importance is Mr. Grant's idea of power sharing between trustees and the president with strong checks and balances.

Currently, as I understand and have experienced it with the biased setting up of the Deer Task Force, the process of building advisory bodies in River Forest is primarily the purview of the village president selecting candidates from a candidate pool and presenting those candidates to the village board for a mass vote on the body. The pool of candidates and their backgrounds is closely held by the village president. The village trustees do not get a chance to delve into the

background of the candidates in the pool. This process has no safeguards whereby the village president can select those candidates supporting the village president's agenda, but not necessarily be in the interest of the majority of River Forest residents. This leaves a dangerous situation in which a select few, hand-picked candidates influence the goings-on of the village. This clearly goes against the principle of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This risk in the current broken process of advisory body selection must be corrected. Having the village trustees intimately involved with selection of the candidates will go a long way to improve the process.

I respectfully and strongly request that Mr. Grant's suggestions be seriously reviewed, considered, and implemented by the Village Board in the very near future.

Thank you for your time. I ask that my comments be attached to the minutes of the meeting. I will submit them after this meeting.

PUBLIC MEETING – ADVISORY BODY VOLUNTEER PROCESS

Wednesday | June 2, 2021 | 7 pm

Public Comments by Megan Stewart Hodge

I appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening and to provide my support for greater transparency, clarity, consistency and a more robust *Advisory Board Volunteer Process*.

To those on our Village Staff and Board who have joined this call (acknowledging the limitation of only two permitted Trustees attending a Public Meeting that Lisa Scheiner noted earlier), I appreciate your commitment and service to our community.

To my fellow community members attending tonight's Public Meeting, I appreciate you doing so (on such a nice evening!). Thank you for sharing your voices and your perspectives on how we can enhance and optimize the engagement and thought leadership within our entire community through a more robust and defined Advisory Board Volunteer Process.

I do have several specific recommendations that I would like to address this evening. However, I would like to state that my overall recommendation echoes John Grant's statement earlier this evening, his previous statements to the Village Board and his specific recommendation that we should "*allow the trustees themselves to lead a thorough review of this process, including research by trustees, direction for staff to do further research, and input to trustees by village residents.*"

I am, likewise, in support of the *Sample Action Plan* that John submitted at the May 24, 2021, Village Board meeting.

With regards to my specific recommendations and considerations, I raise these points this evening not just as a River Forest community member but also through my lens as an inclusive culture thought-leader, strategic advisor and fierce advocate for advancement, empowerment and allyship as drivers of meaningful and enduring change. Through my corporate and non-profit engagements, I work with a wide range of organizations (across a number of industries) to support their inclusive culture objectives and in turning their intentions into actions.

Inclusive cultures and representation of all groups of individuals is not just *the right thing to do* from a humanity perspective. Inclusion is also critical to the health, strength and success of organizations - including our Village of River Forest. Growth and progress occur when different views, priorities, personalities, social circles, families and lived experiences do not just have a seat-at-the-table but are welcomed and respected. Bias and groupthink are mitigated when all viewpoints are valued in information-gathering and decision-making processes. When there is this foundation of trust (including the elimination of real and perceived biases that undermine the strength and validity of a group's work) then a strong sense of psychological safety¹ is fostered thus optimizing the thought-leadership and diverse perspectives of our Village Board and the volunteers serving our Advisory Boards/Commissions.

To ensure River Forest's growth and progress as we move forward, and not to be stifled in the status quo of *business as usual*, our Advisory Board Volunteer Process must be clearly defined and publicly available well in advance of all volunteer appointments. The clarity and consistency of a well-defined process, and the

¹ Psychological Safety enables individuals to feel supported in sharing ideas, engaging in moderate risk-taking, raising concerns and asking questions authentically / without fear of repercussion.

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Public Comments by Megan Stewart Hodge

transparency of its operations, will prevent the perception (and in some cases the reality of biases) and will proactively foster a sense of trust, psychological safety and greater engagement within our community.

My specific recommendations for this *Advisory Board Volunteer Process* include:

- Prior to the Application process, clearly defining:
 - *Parameters for each Advisory Board/Commission*, including but not limited to objectives, scope of work, target demographic composition of members and target number of members, code of conduct, roles / responsibilities of individual members, decision-making process, etc.
 - Demographic composition is critical to ensure representation on each Advisory Board/Commission is intentional / strategic. This also proactively ensures mindfulness around balance and allocation of “power” (e.g., perception of establishment culture) in our community. Demographic composition includes but is not limited to geographic location in town, age/stage of life, socio-economic status, current and previous engagement on other village boards/commissions by the applicant and the applicant’s family members’ (including parents and children as there are many multi-generational families in our community), etc.
 - *Parameters for Volunteers (specific to each Advisory Board/Commission)*, including but not limited to pertinent experience, “rational” term limits, interest/motivation for applying, potential conflicts of interest, etc.
 - *Process for mid-term removal/resignation of Volunteers* for personal reasons as well as for violations of codes of conduct. For removal, process will address what constitutes violations, diligence process around violations, notification and “opportunity to address” period, decision-making on removal (e.g., Village President and all Trustees, etc.), etc.
- Communications around Open Positions & Application Process:
 - As Lisa shared earlier in this evening’s meeting, there appears to be consensus in the need to have greater *outreach to the community* about open positions. I support this outreach and stress that the timeframe for this outreach is integral as well, i.e., well in advance of applications being due.
 - *Application forms* must be robust and address all of the *Parameters for Volunteers* and specific *Parameters for each Advisory Board/Commission*. As another data point, in terms of being cognizant of the reality and/or perception of biases, I also recommend including the name(s) of individuals (if any) who encouraged the community member to apply.
 - Note, I agree with Dan Lauber’s earlier recommendations for the application process and expectations/requirements of volunteers.

PUBLIC MEETING – ADVISORY BODY VOLUNTEER PROCESS

Wednesday | June 2, 2021 | 7 pm

Public Comments by Megan Stewart Hodge

- *Completed applications* must be provided to the Board well in advance of the meeting at which Trustees “advise and consent”. Going forward, our Trustees will be able to indicate approval (or not) to each volunteer applicant in a thoughtful and consistent manner, i.e., an informed vote versus the “check the box” that is currently the reality of this process.
- Ongoing Outreach & Opportunities for Refining / Enhancement
 - Building off of the *potential improvements to the advisory body volunteer process* that Lisa shared in her earlier presentation, in order for us to continuously improve and refine this *Advisory Body Volunteer Process* the Board needs to actively solicit ongoing feedback on the process, the experience, the engagement and success of each Advisory Board/Commission from the community, from applicants, from volunteers and from elected officials. This can be in the form of surveys as well as – like any organization – a “feedback” reporting tool that enables anonymous feedback if that is the individual’s preference. All feedback must then be shared with the full Village Board (President & Trustees) so that there is collective understanding of and accountability for the “state of our Village”.

I will wrap up my comments this evening by reiterating that I support and encourage the Village Trustees to lead a thorough review and refinement of this *Advisory Body Volunteer Process*. There have been a number of specific recommendations shared by others with which I agree as well. I would be happy to share further thoughts and/or be a resource to the Board at any point in time.

Thank You.

Public Comment - John Grant - 6/2/21 - RF Public Meeting on Advisory Body Volunteer Process

Good evening my name is John Grant, I am a River Forest resident.

I want to address 2 things tonight:-First, what are the problems with the system that have brought us to this review process?-Second, how are we going about fixing those problems?

So what are the problems with the system?

1. The system is not managed well. Currently we have dozens of expired or vacant seats on committees, as well as a few expired chairperson seats, and other committees without definition. At the same time there is no discussion by the board about what to do about these seats, how to recruit residents for these seats, and how to process applications, and on and on.
2. We have lots of resident complaints about the system, including residents who reach out but receive no follow through, or residents who are removed from committees for unknown reasons, or residents who feel their work is undermined on committees, and many other complaints. Throughout all the complaints is a frustration with the lack of transparency. Nobody knows how or why decisions are made.
3. The system lacks basic definition and policies and procedures. For example, there is no guidance on what types of talent should be on each of the different committees. No guidance for balancing fresh faces with institutional memory. A hazy application process with no guidelines for interviews or other aspects of the application. Not enough input from board members.

Now let's look at the political process for trying to do something about this. What is the village board doing to solve this problem? Unfortunately, here again, there's a lack of transparency and process.

1. Who will be tasked with oversight for this review process? When the commission process was placed on the board meeting and discussed in February, President Adduci mentioned that resident Jan Saeger had done research on the topic that she would be sharing. And then, at the board meeting last week, when I made public comment asking for more definition on the board's plan of attack on this issue, President Adduci again mentioned again that "Jan Seger has been doing a lot of research." I ask that the president clarify what she means by this. Does she mean to turn this process over for residents to research? Does she mean that Lisa Scheiner, amongst her many other duties, will head up the research? What role will trustees play in the process? Are the trustees not involved with the research process, and are they giving no direction to the staff or outside consultants or attorneys for this process? I ask that the Village Board as a body define exactly who will play which part in this process.
2. What is the goal of the process? President Adduci said at the board meeting last week that the intent is to come up with a "policy document that can be posted on the website". Is that the consensus of the board? Are we talking about making absolutely no changes to the process that are codified with an amendment or ordinance? Is it simply a type of description document that we are looking for? I ask the village board to define very clearly what the goals are here.
3. President Adduci has mentioned several times that we are following the municipal code. Is the suggestion then that because we satisfy a minimum code requirement, that there needs to be no change in our process, even if it's failing? Only a change in communication? Let's be clear, the municipal code is a starting point, it is a floor, not a ceiling. Trustee Bachner just provided an excellent example

with the LGBTQ+ flag Initiative of how to adhere to codes and innovate beyond them. So let's clearly define the goals, what are we working towards? Stagnation or innovation?

4. We don't need to do this in a vacuum. I know for a fact that other municipalities are eager and willing to compare notes and collaborate with River Forest in the improvement of this issue. If we used a previous housing plan from Wilmette as a template for our affordable housing plan, why would we not reach out to other municipalities, including Wilmette, on this issue?

5. This is an opportunity. Board members or others have made note of awards we have won for budgeting. Why would we not be a role model and win an award for effective and transparent government? This is a moment to turn a challenge into an opportunity.

Lisa Scheiner

From: Kristen Coe <kcoe@cmsii.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 2, 2021 7:02 AM
To: Lisa Scheiner
Cc: Kristen Coe
Subject: VORF Commission Review

Dear Lisa,

Detailed below please find comments to be shared with the board in advance of the Public Meeting – Advisory Body meeting this evening. I would also like to request that these be read into/included in the minutes at today’s meeting (not sure if they’re read or simply included?).

I have another commitment this evening but if I can jump onto the Zoom meeting, I’ll read it myself – just not sure if I can swing both Zoom obligations. Does that mean that I should ask for the time to offer public comments? Many thanks for whatever clarification you can offer.

With appreciation,

Kristen Q. Coe
kcoe@cmsii.com
708-267-4567 (cell)
Project of the heart: www.betheboat.org

Dear Village President and Board of Trustees,

I am writing in support of revisions to our commission process as proposed by various community members, most especially those of John Grant. My thoughts about these recommendations are rooted in my twin concerns around process and community engagement.

Process

- *Communication Opportunity:* As someone who has been very involved in village service, I’d be hard-pressed to explain commission terms and the means by which one rolls onto or off of a commission. You are much closer to it and thus, I’m sure you’re completely familiar with the process. While I may be the only person for whom there is a lack of clarity, I’m guessing I’m not. This is not intended as a criticism but rather a statement that there appears to be a *communication opportunity* available to the Board. Namely, the opportunity exists to clarify the following:
 - Commission Terms (do term limits exist?)
 - Commission Openings (“terms” are listed on the website but when commissioners are routinely re-appointed for years on end, it is difficult to surmise where openings exist in actuality as opposed to on paper)
 - Application Process (the application process is listed on the website but not the review/selection process) – clarification re: commission criteria, composition, institutional memory goals, etc.
 - Board Review Process (it would seem that the “advise and consent” role of the board can only happen if the above criteria are defined, vacancy applications shared and advice solicited before publication of the appointments made; absent the implementation of each of these steps, the “advise and consent” clause seems to be neutered)

- *Commission Terms:* River Forest has benefitted from the expertise of numerous, highly-qualified residents, many volunteering over many consecutive years of service to the village. This is both an incredible gift to the community and an incredible deterrent to the growth of successor volunteers.

The D90 School Board regulates this by self-limiting terms to 2 terms, or 8 years. Volunteer service is different and this comment is not intended to equate the two but I believe the kernel of thought is a valuable one to consider: as community, we must grow our own volunteers by providing opportunities for them to learn, earn experience and develop leadership skills which serve both their place of service and the greater village organization.

When commissions seat, reseal and recycle volunteers, especially in leadership positions, the organic volunteer growth that ensures organizational health is stymied. This is not an indictment of individual volunteers but an acknowledgement of the risk to the village organization by developing expertise in a limited number of residents and (inadvertently) preventing others from gaining this expertise.

Community Engagement

- *Mirror of the Community:* Commissions are often the first point of access of residents to the work of the village and as such, are an opportunity for the village to reflect back to the community its dynamic composition and values. When commissions become staid, they become inaccessible – both to those who engage with the commission and those who wish to serve on them.
- *Tolerance for Disengagement:* For those of us who've come before commissions only to find commissioners routinely unprepared or absent, it is incredibly disheartening. We've all served with "that" person and been frustrated, but when "that person" has metaphorical sway over proposed work on our homes or what we see as needed stop signs on our streets, that's wrong. At that point, the entire village process is rightfully indicted. Baselines of engagement must be defined and enforced; it is ok for issues to arise which preclude continued engagement – life happens – and the commission process must be revised to accommodate/demand both the resignation and appointment of a replacement so that village residents and operations are not negatively impacted.

I believe a revised and well-publicized commission process will invigorate community engagement, expand "ownership" for village operations to a broader base within the community and expand faith in our village system of operations.

I appreciate your consideration of these issues,

Kristen Q. Coe

kcoe@cmsii.com

708-267-4567 (cell)

Project of the heart: www.betheboat.org

RIVER FOREST PUBLIC MEETING: ADVISORY BODY VOLUNTEER PROCESS

7pm, June 2, 2021

Public Comments Provided by Margie Cekander

Thank you, Lisa Scheiner, for hosting and inviting public comments, and to the 3 Trustees who are attending or tried to attend.

Our current state:

There are at least 27 terms of appointments that expired April 30 plus 2 vacancies, including a majority of members on 3 of 11 Boards and Commissions. With Board and Commission meetings scheduled in June before the next Village Board meeting on June 28, what are the implications for Village governance?

Qualified residents have volunteered, some multiple times, for specific Commissions, or generally, and were not appointed. One qualified volunteer was allowed to participate in a meeting as a member, only to have his appointment voted against at the next Village Board meeting.

Some Boards and Commissions report few communications out of committee, so residents aren't aware what they do. Some Commissioners have served multiple lengthy terms.

We are thankful for the talents and service these volunteers give to serve our Village. We also need to open up participation to others to bring their talents and experiences to serve.

The Village Board has a sample Action Plan to consider from John Grant at a May Board meeting. May I remind all this topic was on the Village Board agenda in February? Lisa Scheiner's plan omits sharing applications with the Village Board, which I believe need to be shared.

Going forward, the Village Board needs to:

- Remedy the functioning of the current appointment process.
- Open appointments to other qualified residents. An example of resident willingness is the overwhelming interest in joining the DEI Committee.
- Establish and communicate clear criteria for serving on various Boards and Commissions.
- Recruit, actively, highly qualified volunteers with broad representation of the community.
- Clearly and publicly communicate openings and reappointments in advance of terms ending.
- Be actively and deeply involved in redesigning the appointment process to include these steps to deliver its responsibility to advise and consent.

Jan Saeger's research was selective in choosing communities and co-mingled various forms of government, including mayoral government, aldermanic government and city council government, unlike our village government with a Village Board and Village President, so the research should not be considered. She is an Aducci campaign operative who spread an erroneous campaign smear, demonstrating further her bias.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to following the Village Board's work on this topic going forward.