

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

March 14, 2024

A meeting of the River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, March 14, 2024, in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm. Meeting started by calling roll. Upon roll call the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Frank Martin, Members Gary Dombrowski, Chris Plywacz, Mary Shoemaker, Corina Davis, Ron Lucchesi, Sheila Price

Absent: None

Also present at the meeting: Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator; Anne Skrodzki, Village Attorney; and Clifford Radatz, Secretary.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ON FEBRUARY 8, 2024**

A **MOTION** was made by Member Plywacz and seconded by Member Lucchesi to approve the minutes from the February 8 meeting.

Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Shoemaker, Plywacz, Price, Lucchesi, Davis

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**III. APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT OF ZONING VARIATION REQUEST FOR 214 GALE AVENUE**

A **MOTION** was made by Member Plywacz and seconded by Member Lucchesi to recommend to the Village Board that this request for variation be granted.

Ayes: Members Dombrowski, Shoemaker, Price, Davis, Lucchesi, Plywacz

Nays: Chairman Martin

Motion passed.

**IV. CONTINUATION OF HEARING – TEXT AMENDMENT REQUEST – PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING COMMERCIAL DISTRICT ZONING REGULATIONS**

Chairman Martin opened up the topic for discussion with a brief history of the continuation of the hearings. He stated that he was informed that the Village is not prepared to provide the additional documents that were previously requested. However, anyone who wishes to speak can do so tonight, but there will not be a decision until additional documents are available. In addition, Chairman Martin stated that what is considered tonight may not be under consideration once the additional documents are available.

Secretary Radatz swore in those who wished to testify.

Administrator Walsh presented the proposed text amendment changes.

Member Shoemaker asked what the height of the Sheridan building is. Administrator Walsh said he would have to investigate that.

Member Lucchesi asked about the information from the school district about the anticipation of student population growth.

Public Feedback:

1. Patty Henek- She expressed that resident feedback has been provided but not incorporated into the plans at this time. She recounted her experience from previous planned development projects.
2. Debbie Borman - She asked if letters are included in the record of this topic; Chairman Martin confirmed that they are included in the recommendation to the Board, but he cannot confirm that they are read. She also recounted a history of her neighborhood on the southern edge of the Village and expressed her concerns about the potential impact of the zoning changes.
3. Kelly Abcarian - She expressed concerns regarding her statements as they were noted in the meeting minutes from the last meeting, stating that she would prefer transcripts of the meetings. She provided feedback on Administrator Walsh's statements made earlier in the meeting with regards to the conversation with Dr. Condon. She feels that the resident feedback provided in other projects was not incorporated.
4. Bridget C. Erfort - She relayed her disappointment at a previous presentation by Houseal Lavigne and questioned the recommendation of 1.5 parking spaces per lot. She thanked the commissioners for volunteering in this process. She provided a visual demonstration of vehicles traveling along northbound Harlem, illustrating her concerns regarding the impact of parked vehicles on the movement of emergency vehicles. She asked for a third party to get involved in the development of these text amendments.
5. Dan Lauber- He urges the committee to amend the code to require step-down zoning, with the tallest height of the building on the street and shortest height facing the single-family homes. He strongly encourages changes to be made to reduce the minimum lot area requirement. He also opines that there is no legal basis for the minimum size of

dwelling unit requirement. Regarding parking, he suggested that the capacity should be set on the number of bedrooms in each dwelling unit.

6. Beth Chang – She started by thanking the committee members for their service to the Village. Regarding the specific proposals, she noted that they haven't changed with regards to the public input yet. She expressed her concerns about traffic and parking. She asked some questions regarding the impact of these changes on other parts of the zoning code. She also suggested the variance process be reviewed in light of these changes, as she feels that what is approved will become the new “floor” for variances, not the “ceiling”.
7. Connie Geocaris - She is concerned about the proposed changes for C-2, Madison Street. She feels that these changes may lower the property values.
8. Susan Adler – She thanked the committee for volunteering their time. She related that the residents feel unheard. She stated that yesterday at 4:13pm was the first time she noticed the Next Door information on this meeting. She wishes there was more communication and working together with a topic of this size.
9. Greg Abcarian – He also thanked the committee for volunteering their time. He feels that the Lake and Lathrop project was a disaster of the administration, and not like this project at all. He feels that these changes aren't a “one size fits all” thing. He said that he feels no one is listening. He feels that it's better for people to ask and then permission is given, regarding variations to the Zoning Codes.
10. Angie Grover - She feels that accepting these minimum requirements just sets a new “floor”. She feels that the Village wants to develop in a responsible way. She enjoys the walkability of her neighborhood and is concerned that changing the parking requirements will make things more congested. She doesn't understand the need to change the density sizes. She feels that diversity and economic development can go hand in hand and should be done in a responsible way. She feels that there should be something on Madison St to reflect the community while bringing in the tax dollars.
11. Margie Cekander - She feels that the proposed changes may harm the community. She asked the committee to fight to maintain the character of River Forest. She provided feedback regarding the history of the Lake and Lathrop property. She expressed concerns regarding changing the height requirements, and her opinion regarding the Madison St project. She thanked Chairman Martin for requesting the shadow study in January, but questioned why it wasn't requested when Houseal was contracted. She petitioned the Board to not approve the changes presented to them. She appreciated Administrator Walsh clarifying the final decision maker on these changes.

Chairman Martin asked if the committee had any questions for those who spoke tonight. There were none.

Member Plywacz thanked those who provided these comments tonight. He assured the group that he would not “rubber stamp” anything. He promised to carefully review this amendment.

Member Davis said that she wanted to echo Member Plywacz’s comments and how frustrated the residents might be. She inquired about getting “another set of eyes” on these changes.

Discussion ensued from various Committee members regarding the recommendation to the Village Board, with the Chairman suggesting to revise the motion to recommend a different consultant to review the report presented by Houseal.

Administrator Walsh stated that the feedback provided by residents and the committee has been heard. He further clarified that part of the reason for the delay thus far is due to the considerations that are being discussed. He requested that Houseal be provided with the opportunity to present updated recommendations to this committee.

**A MOTION** was made by Member Davis made a motion and seconded by Member Plywacz to engage an independent consultant to look at these plans and the resident feedback, the minutes, and the reports.

There was no discussion.

Ayes: Members Shoemaker, Plywacz, Price, Lucchesi, and Davis

Nays: Chairman Martin and Member Dombrowski

Motion passed.

**A MOTION** was made by Member Lucchesi, seconded by Member Shoemaker to continue the public hearing to April 11, with the public portion still open.

Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Shoemaker, Plywacz, Dombrowski, Price, Lucchesi, and Davis

Nays: None.

Motion passed.

## **XII. NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2024.

## **12. ADJOURNMENT**

A Motion was made by Member Shoemaker to dismiss the meeting, seconded by Member Plywacz to adjourn. A unanimous voice vote passed the motion.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Submitted:

  
Clifford E. Radatz, Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Frank Martin, Chairman  
Zoning Board of Appeals

Date: 4/11/2024