



**Community Development Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, February 09, 2023 at 4:30 PM  
Minutes - Approved**

**I. Called to Order: At 4:30 P.M.**

**II. Present:** Mayor Ron Gunter, Manager Steve May, Trustee Frank Brady, Trustee Linda Liddle, Trustee Bruce Barker, Trustee Marie Johanik-Guzzo, Clerk Jinny Szymski, Interim Director of Community Development Doug Pollock, Deputy Director of Community Development Jason Vitell, Deputy Director of Community Development Joe Hennerfeind, Director of Finance Jamie Cunningham, Director of Information Technology Glen Liljeberg, Fire Chief Steve Riley, Public Works Director Amy Ries, Police Chief Jim Gunther, Human Resources Director Renee' Brainerd, Economic Development Partnership Director Larry Forssberg, Guest Speaker/Consultant Kon Savoy, and Village Planner Scott Williams

Trustee Amylee Hogan Simonovich, Communications Director Larry McIntyre, and Administration Supervisor Patricia Mielcarski attended remotely

**III. Pledge of Allegiance**

**IV. Approval of Minutes:** Trustee Barker made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 03, 2022 Regular Meeting and Trustee Liddle seconded the motion. Motion passed on a voice vote.

**V. Public Comment** - No one spoke during the Open Forum.

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Directors Report**

- a. Village Manager Steve May introduced the new Interim Community Development Director Doug Pollock.
- b. Deputy Director Joe Hennerfeind offered to answer any questions regarding the Directors section of the Community Development Year End Report as this was completed prior to the departure of Bruce Sylvester several weeks prior.

**B. Planning Report**

- a. Deputy Director of Community Development Joseph Hennerfeind discussed three items including the downtown incentive program status. Hennerfeind commented that the new incentive program would replace the facade and life safety grant program that is

currently in place. Hennerfeind added that the consultant had been secured, and that the first working group meeting had taken place where the consultant's research had been reviewed.

- b. The second item that Hennerfeind touched on was the Zoning Ordinance update, where proposals through the RFP process have been submitted, and the applications are currently being reviewed. Hennerfeind stated that they plan to schedule interviews in the coming weeks. Staff was pleased to see that all the proposals that came in were under budget.
- c. The third item that Hennerfeind wanted to discuss was the status of Willow Crest Golf Course redevelopment. Hennerfeind stated that there has been a special meeting scheduled for March 01, 2023. Mayor Gunter asked if multiple meetings were anticipated. Hennerfeind replied that having gone through another project in 2018 for this property, he could see the case extending to two meetings. Mayor Gunter asked staff to verify the notification process. Hennerfeind replied that notice went in the newspaper February 09, 2023; the developer is responsible for notifying the surrounding properties, and the agenda has been posted early to the website which includes a link to all the petitioner documents.
- d. Hennerfeind wanted to make mention that the Westview South Project was approved for the two lot split and car wash proposal which is encouraging since the site has been vacant for many years. Hennerfeind also provided a quick recap of the last quarter for PZC cases and B-1 Permits.

Trustee Barker asked Hennerfeind if the sidewalk issue on Linden was rectified.

Manager May replied that an easement was granted given the location of the sidewalk, however the church is still responsible for maintaining.

### **C. Building Report**

- a. Deputy Director of Community Development Jason Vitell provided the committee with various updates including the status of Royal Vale located at 515 North Cass Avenue. Vitell stated that the permit for improvements is currently going through reviews, and it is estimated that the permit for restoration would be issued within the month.

Vitell also discussed the model code updates and that there are a couple projects that will be subject to the new codes including Holy Trinity.

#### Large project update

- Quincy Station - Certificates of Occupancy have been issued and project is now complete
  - 303 W Ogden Ave (medical office building) - The lagging water issue that has since been taken care of.
  - Cass Avenue Dream Homes - The fourth and last building permit is currently ready to be issued.
- b. Online Permitting Update - Staff has been testing systems, and formulating what online submissions would look like with our lowest level permits such as water heater

replacements, and windows/doors. Staff has also been working with IT to create fillable form applications to make the process easier.

Director of Information Technology Glen Liljeberg added that testing the express permits in the system has been working pretty well, however the problem staff has been running into is with contractor registration, which is required with all permits that include contractors. Liljeberg commented that they are working with the vendor to get this issue resolved, and that with some confidence, he hopes to have everything cleared up within a three month period.

Mayor Gunter asked Vitell to comment on the status of the funeral home at 39 North Cass that caught fire. Vitell replied that the damages were limited to the front of the building, however due to the size of the building, sprinklers would be required with the restoration. Vitell added that the facade will likely change as well. Currently there is an issued "demo" permit so that they can perform a cleanout of property to stop spread of mold, odor and bacteria due to water damage. Gunter was pleased to hear the business was investing back in Westmont.

Mayor Gunter also asked for an update on the 7-Eleven fencing. Vitell replied that the parking lot was being misused with parked/staged vehicles that did not belong there, so the property owner wanted to put up the fencing to prevent people from utilizing the lot without permission. Gunter commented that they would prefer just a chain rather than a chain link construction fence because it is misleading, and could be there for an unknown period of time. The board agreed they would prefer a standardized guide to prevent vacant properties from unwanted trespassing.

Manager May asked for an update on 61st and Cass Avenue which was the vacant mall known as Westview South. Manager May specifically wanted to know about its current condition and if it needed attention since demolition wouldn't occur for a couple more months. Vitell replied that they have allowed the new owners to put site safety fencing up around the entire site to prevent things such as vandalism which had occurred prior to giving the ownership permission to erect the fence. Vitell anticipated that demolition would begin in March.

**D. Code Enforcement Report** - Vitell stated that code enforcement officers are working toward reaching compliance at Willow West Apartments in conjunction with the Fire Prevention Bureau due to FPB staff having discovered illegal dwelling units during their mandated annual inspections.

**E. Items for Trustee Discussion and Feedback:**

- a. Special Project—Downtown Incentive Program Update - Consultant Kon Savoy presented to the committee the key findings and research he and his team had gathered by interviewing the businesses and property owners in the downtown. Input from staff and the working group also contributed to the findings.

The purpose of the project is to evaluate the success of the current downtown incentive program, explore improvements to the program including efforts to enhance the viability of the existing businesses and properties, and also the focus of the program is to make it clear that it will fund improvements on private property, not public.

Savoy discussed some of the feedback he'd received from the businesses that had been through the incentive program already. Trustee Barker wanted to mention however that any complaints from the 8 businesses is a very small sample in comparison to the total number of businesses in the downtown. Savoy did reply that he agreed it was a limited sample but wanted to add that some of the things addressed were universal.

Savoy provided his overall findings with a slideshow presentation which is attached.

Trustee Nero commented that he thought it was important that the program be constructed in a way that would not allow the Village to be taken advantage of. He also commented that he would like it to be easily applied for and accessible. Trustee Nero supported a larger investment for the program.

Trustee Guzzo requested that there be a push to notify business owners and potential business owners about the program so it's public knowledge and advertised.

Mayor Gunter asked if the program would be available to businesses outside the central business district. Hennerfeind replied that they have not yet approached how the program could be applied outside the downtown area, but it would also be dependent on the funds as well as staffing. The working group is also looking into whether they'd rather target more small projects or fewer big projects yearly.

Trustee Liddle was supportive of just focusing on just the downtown to start with, and was open to considering outside the downtown in the future once the program has been running smoothly and successfully.

Trustee Barker was interested in looking further into the idea of bigger projects, and thought it would get more traction and attention which may drive more development. Hennerfeind replied that something to consider with funding larger projects would be that there is potential of turning down one project over the other and having to rate the projects which would require some sort of scoring/reviewing system. Hennerfeind also added that with larger funding, the Village may be able to dictate the quality of the projects.

Trustee Nero commented that he would like to see a more formalized program with possible application period with date ranges and was supportive of a rating system rather than first come first serve.

Mayor Gunter asked how other communities fund their incentive programs, Savoy replied that it's typically pulled from their TIF funding, and some others use their hotel/motel tax.

Trustee Guzzo added that she would like to keep as much historic preservation as possible.

There was a brief discussion regarding possible TIF extension.

Savoy noted that the fundamental question is what funding levels the Village wants, and gave the committee examples of different ways to structure the program based on similar programs in other communities. Savoy also gave examples of how other towns attract more businesses and improve existing ones.

Mayor Gunter commented that the most important and most expensive thing is life safety as far as the sprinklers are concerned, so he would like to see the Village help with that, even though as Trustee Barker expressed, it's not necessarily notable or visible to the public. Trustee Nero thought it was necessary as well and thought it would still be an attractive incentive to businesses.

Fire Chief Riley added that only 20 out of 127 downtown businesses are sprinkled, and noted that costs are only going up now that old fire alarm panels are no longer compatible with new sprinkler systems, and the connection under the street to get to the water is anywhere between \$30-\$40,000.

**IX. MISCELLANEOUS - None**

**X. ADJOURN** - Trustee Liddle made a motion to adjourn at 5:50 PM, and Trustee Nero seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved by unanimous consent.