

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL VILLAGE FACILITIES MEETING**

### **VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE**

#### **DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**

**DECEMBER 6, 2014**

Mayor Martin Tully welcomed Council, staff and visitors to the Village facilities meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

Present: Mayor Martin Tully; Commissioners Geoff Neustadt, Sean P. Durkin; Bob Barnett; Becky Rheintgen; Greg José

Absent: Commissioner David Olsen

Staff: Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker; Village Attorney Enza Petrarca; Director of Communications Doug Kozlowski; Police Chief Bob Porter; Deputy Police Chief Kurt Bluder; Deputy Fire Chief Jeff Pindelski; Village Clerk April Holden

Mayor Tully welcomed everyone to this meeting. He introduced the Council Commissioners. Commissioner Olsen sent his regrets for not being able to attend this meeting. He also introduced Village Manager Dave Fieldman and Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker. The Mayor said this is the second of two special meetings to discuss Village facilities in terms of where they should be, what is needed, and how to pay for them. The Council wants to be informative. This meeting is being broadcast and listeners can e-mail questions from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. with tours of the two facilities. He thanked people for coming and for offering their input. Additional tours can be arranged, it requested.

Mayor Tully said that while these two special meetings have been called, there have been a number of regular Council meetings that have addressed facilities. The Village has been looking at the facilities for a long time. In 2007/08, this was seriously considered prior to the recession. A facility needs study, design and funding plan was put together, and although the plan was postponed, the situation did not get better. There is a problem and the discussion is to determine the best way to address it. In 2012, Council and staff identified that \$10 million would be necessary to maintain our facilities in the existing buildings. Council and staff then started to look at whether there are better ways to address this issue. Scenarios that were reviewed included doing nothing or staying on the

existing site. Council challenged staff to be creative and innovative. Council narrowed the choices over time to identify this particular plan and proposal.

The purpose of these special meetings is to provide information about the proposal under consideration and respond to fact-based questions.

The Mayor then asked Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker to make a short presentation.

Mike Baker, Deputy Village Manager, presented information about the issues, the land use plan, benefits of the plan, and the financial plan.

Issues include outdated building systems, operational challenges, an undesirable location for certain functions, the value of the property is not fully realized, and increasing community expectations are not served well by the existing buildings. Mr. Baker noted that information is on our website including pictures depicting some of the challenges. Staff has evaluated options and has determined that construction of new facilities is the most desirable option that would occur in two phases.

There are three sites that make up the land use plan: A vacant parcel at Ogden and Lacey, the Civic Center and the site of Fire Station #1 in the Ellsworth Business Park. The Civic Center site is comprised of 8.2 acres.

Phase I of the proposal is to relocate the Police Department and Fleet Maintenance facilities and construct a new facility at Ogden and Lacey. This would require acquisition of the land as it is currently owned by the Aldi Corporation. A new Police Department, Fleet Maintenance facility and relocated Fire Station #1 would be constructed at the Ogden and Lacey site. A traffic light would be installed at the intersection. This site would also provide 3 to 3 ½ acres for commercial use. Mr. Baker said the benefits of this proposal are that it resolves operational challenges, it improves the fire and emergency medical response times, it develops the site at Ogden and Lacey with commercial uses, it is likely to spur further redevelopment, and it improves traffic safety and flow in the Burlington Highlands neighborhood.

Phase II of the proposal centers on the Civic Center site. The Village Hall would be constructed on the west side of the parcel freeing up the remainder of the parcel for multi-family residential units and putting most of the parcel back on the tax rolls. Benefits of Phase II are that it creates transit-oriented development in the downtown, it improves traffic safety and flow at Burlington and Washington, it eliminates risks to the police and dispatch staff due to railroad proximity, it creates the potential for partnerships with other governmental units and/or non-profits, and it reduces the number of Village facilities.

Mr. Baker then addressed the financial plan. The total estimate cost for both phases is \$52 million. Phase I (Ogden & Lacey) is estimated to cost \$38 million; Phase II (Civic Center) is estimated to cost \$14 million. He then discussed funding sources. Sources of funding for Phase I include drug seizure funds of \$1.5 million; Ogden Avenue TIF funds of \$6.0 million; existing revenue funds of \$12.5 million; and grants, other funds, tax levy of \$18.0 million. Phase II funds would be comprised of the sale of land for \$4.0 million, and property taxes from the development for \$10.0 million.

This concluded Mr. Baker's presentation. The Mayor said Council and staff have received e-mail questions.

An e-mail question was asked as to whether the property is contaminated and if testing has been done.

Mr. Baker responded that there is known contamination. Work was done in 2002 to extensively examine the site. In 2007, further work was done. Staff has a good understanding of what is needed. He noted there are grant funds available for remediation.

A resident asked if the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations have changed since 2007.

Mr. Fieldman said the regulations have changed. With respect to this particular parcel, the cleanup standards have been lessened due to the change from a residential to commercial use.

A question was asked about changes to parking at the Civic Center for the Main Street train station.

Mr. Fieldman said parking will likely change. The Village will work with Metra to be ensure some level of parking.

Commissioner Durkin noted that the majority of the lots near Metra are Metra lots. Mr. Fieldman said most of the property along the railroad is owned by the BNSF or Metra. The Civic Center lot is Village owned, but the Village has an agreement with Metra for its use.

Commissioner Durkin asked if conversations about this matter have started with Metra. Mr. Fieldman said staff started discussions a few years ago, have had further discussions, and will continue to meet.

A question was asked regarding moving the Fire Station and response times. Mr. Fieldman responded that the Village wants fast response times. Areas that do not fall within the six-minute response time would come into the standards with this move, and Ellsworth Park would stay within the response time.

A question was asked regarding the multi-family dwelling proposal and whether there have been studies done with respect to schools, traffic and parking.

Mr. Fieldman said there has not been a specific study, but staff has looked at this on a broader scale in terms of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff thinks the impact on schools is low but will continue to work with the schools. There will be substantially more traffic, but the development is proposed to be downtown and next to a train station which might mitigate the effect.

Commissioner Barnett asked the Manager to speak to Fire Station 1 and load leveling. Mr. Fieldman said each of the four fire stations is supposed to carry a 25% call volume. This relocation would allow Fire Station 1 to handle more calls and would reduce the call volume at Fire Station 3.

A question was asked if the Ogden and Lacey plan includes completing the sidewalks. Mr. Fieldman said it would include sidewalks on the frontage. He noted that earlier this year, Council authorized sidewalks on Ogden in general.

Commissioner Neustadt referenced the installation of the traffic signal.

A resident asked if the soil is contaminated. Mr. Fieldman said studies reveal that the contamination is in the soil.

A comment was made that moving the Police Department is a barrier for those coming to the Police Department from the train or from a Pace bus. Mr. Fieldman said staff will look into this matter.

A question was asked as to the impacts to the area around Lacey and Ogden. Mr. Fieldman said there are no plans to change anything on Grant between Lacey and Lee. The preliminary plans all access directly onto Ogden Avenue.

A comment was made as to the environmental impact to nearby sites such as garbage trucks, lights, sirens, etc. Mr. Fieldman responded that those are concerns when a building is placed in a residential neighborhood. The Village has buildings in residential areas and tries to minimize the impact. It is our intent to minimize the impact here as well.

The Mayor noted that the Village has some experience talking with neighbors surrounding this site due to other proposals. He said he lives next to Fire Station 2 and the concerns expressed have not been an issue.

A comment was made regarding the funding for the downtown facility. Mr. Fieldman said staff hopes that the construction costs will be covered through the sale of land and taxes generated as a result of the development. Developers have talked to staff about this project. Staff thinks demand is there for a high quality development.

A question was asked regarding the size of the facility in Phase I and how it relates to the site. Mr. Fieldman said the site at Ogden and Lacey is 9.8 acres. The space needs are estimated to be three acres each for commercial and stormwater detention. The estimate for the public facility is 80,000-90,000 s.f. in a two-story building.

A resident said he has never heard public officials say they want to build a smaller Village Hall. He acknowledged that the Police Department facility is in bad shape. He asked if the ISO rating will change with the move of Fire Station 1. Mr. Fieldman said the relocation of Fire Station 1 will help with the ISO rating.

A resident asked as to the impact on surrounding homes of the three-acre stormwater detention. Mr. Fieldman said the design for this site should make the immediate area better; however, he noted that this is not designed to be an area detention basin. To do nothing will result in future problems due to old tiles on the site.

Mayor Tully asked the estimated cost of remediation. Mr. Fieldman said the current estimates are about \$1 million but the exact cost will vary depending on the method that is chosen. Several sources have reviewed the cost estimates.

A comment was made that the Police Department facility is obsolete. This is a forward-thinking plan. The resident said the Village has done its due diligence.

Mr. Fieldman said the Police Department facility was built in 1979 and did not provide for changing technology. The industry has since done a better job of anticipating future changes. We would expect these new buildings to have a lifespan of 30-50 years.

Commissioner Neustadt referenced mobile work forces and said that Fleet Maintenance is also mobile and can be easily moved. New equipment would not need to be purchased.

Commissioner José asked as to the use of the Ogden Avenue TIF funds outside of the \$1 million needed for remediation. Mr. Fieldman said the TIF funds can be used for certain expenses for the development and land acquisition, site development, remediation,

wetlands, traffic signal and stormwater management.

A question was asked about the traffic impact on the area around Ogden and Lacey. The Mayor noted that the Village would do a traffic study.

A question was asked as to the type of retail that is being sought for the commercial site. The Mayor said that is still under consideration.

Mr. Fieldman spoke to the traffic impact. He said staff has not done a traffic impact study yet, but the site has been identified for commercial activity and Ogden Avenue can handle more community development. There is no plan to impact the residential streets.

Regarding commercial development, Mr. Fieldman said staff is looking to generate retail sales tax. He hopes this will spur retail development and will be of interest to Starbucks or a restaurant or a car dealership.

Commissioner Rheintgen noted that this area does not lend itself to grocery stores due to the fact that there is not a large residential area within a one mile radius of the site.

A comment was made regarding unfinished residential development in the downtown area. Mr. Fieldman said the site referenced has had challenges and staff thinks the current market is for apartment uses.

A resident said he was surprised that the Fleet Maintenance garage isn't located at Public Works. Mr. Fieldman said most of the vehicles serviced are Public Works vehicles, but there is not enough space for lifts and other equipment at their site. Staff has examined this several times.

The Mayor noted that space at Public Works will not be available for the foreseeable future.

A question was asked as to soil contamination at the Fleet Maintenance garage. Mr. Fieldman said that, although studies have not been completed, he expects environmental issues on that site. Apartment developers have experience with mitigation issues and this would most likely be part of the redevelopment agreement.

The Mayor said the Village has a fair amount of experience dealing with contamination. There are state and federal funds available to help deal with remediation.

A resident referenced four land-locked residential properties for sale near Lacey and

Ogden. He asked if the Village intends to acquire these properties. Mr. Fieldman said there is no intent to go into the neighborhood. There are no proposals for these properties on the table.

A question was asked regarding the overall maintenance budget. The Mayor noted that there are advantages with a new building in that it can be designed in an efficient manner.

The Mayor said Council and staff are openly reaching out to other governmental entities for partnership opportunities.

Commissioner Barnett said the benefits of this plan are being undersold. Council has looked at four alternatives and this seems like the best path to go down. This is a process that needs to happen. There will be more opportunities for sharing information. Council does not want to oversell the plan.

A resident noted that he is a 30-year resident of Downers Grove. It sounds to him as though this plan is well thought out. He is a police officer elsewhere and he does not think people understand the constraints of the Police Department. The Downers Grove Police Department is well thought of in the police community. This is taking a five-star police department and constraining them to work out of a one-star building. He referenced the lack of interview rooms, the booking room limitations, the open lobby issues as well as storage issues. He said he would hate for this to be kicked down the road. One of the primary missions of government is public safety. The threat to the Police Department and VOC due to its proximity to the railroad and possible derailments or chemical spills has been understated. He sees a distinct need here. He would not like to see more tax dollars go into the existing facility. He likes the plan. He, like many other empty nesters, would like to be in a downtown area with the ability to walk to places. He said he hopes Council will give serious consideration to moving this proposal forward expeditiously.

The Mayor said the Village's Police Department is outstanding and is accredited through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). It has recently been re-accredited. The Mayor was invited to summary meetings three years ago and again this year. Both times CALEA officials referenced the need to do something about the facility problems, and this year they identified facility deficiencies in a very serious manner.

Commissioner José said he agrees with the need for a new Police Department facility. Ultimately the tax payers have to fill the funding gap if there is one. The option Council is considering is actually one of the lower impact options. Other options included rehabbing the existing buildings or replacing the existing facilities with new ones on the Civic Center

site. The maintenance cost for the existing buildings is estimated to be \$10 million. Major renovations and additions are estimated to cost \$35 million with a funding gap of \$16-22 million, and the cost to tear down the existing structures and rebuild them is estimated to be between \$36 and \$41 million with a funding gap of \$22-28 million. When the costs and values are compared, the Phase I and Phase II proposal is the best balance of cost and value.

A comment was made that this is a complex plan with many moving parts. A question was asked as to the worst case scenario and its price tag.

Commissioner Neustadt noted that the Village contracts have options to terminate agreements. This project will include steps to confirm that the right decisions are being made by Council.

Mr. Fieldman said there is a high degree of complexity in this plan. It is set up for many phases and many checkpoints and decision points. Nothing commits the Council to all portions of this plan. Each phase and decision will have to stand on its own. This will occur over a two to three year period and there will be clear checks and balances throughout the process.

Mr. Fieldman noted that this site is 450 feet deep. It is considered too big for an out lot, but not big enough for a big box retailer. The Village facilities would be at the back of the site.

Commissioner Rheintgen commented that no revenue is included as a result of a partnership arrangement nor is sales tax a part of the budget for Phase I.

Mayor Tully referenced an earlier private proposal on this site that did not go forward. There were opportunities to terminate the agreement.

The Mayor said the worst case scenario would be to do nothing.

A question was asked as to how the Village would acquire the Aldi parcel. Mr. Fieldman said the Village would eventually end up in ownership of the Police Department, Fleet Maintenance and Fire Station 1 portion of the land. The Village could enter into an arrangement with Aldi's developer who could buy the land and sell the portion that is needed to the Village. Alternatively, the Village could directly acquire the property from Aldi. It depends on how much development risk the Village wants to take on and the financial return. He said staff looked at a land exchange, but Aldi was not interested in an Aldi store on the Civic Center site.

Commissioner Neustadt noted that Mr. Fieldman's background is in planning. The Economic Development Corporation has spoken to this as well and has confirmed that his plan is viable in terms of the use of the land.

A resident said he sees Phase I as almost a "no brainer." He noted there is a petition circulating to put this matter on the ballot as a referendum.

Mayor Tully said there has been a great deal of discussion about placing this on the ballot as a referendum. The reasons the majority of Council are not in support of this is due to the complexity of the issue and the moving parts that make it difficult to write a referendum question, particularly as the project could change. Further, he asked why this is different from anything else the Council votes on. Council members were elected to make decisions on big issues. The majority of the Council decided that town hall meetings would be more appropriate as they would allow for input and exchange with residents.

Commissioner Barnett said the referendum matter is a fair question as this project changes the face of the Village in terms of fire, police and Village services. However, this is a series of decisions, negotiations and steps that does not lend itself to a referendum question.

Commissioner Neustadt agreed with Commissioner Barnett. The referendum option does not lend itself to forming a question about this matter. He does not support a decision by referendum. He does not know how a question could be formed to address the scope of this issue.

Commissioner Barnett said further, that regardless of a referendum outcome, something has to be done.

Mayor Tully said Downers Grove has excellent engagement with the community. People expect this engagement and Council encourages it. It allows for community decision-making.

Commissioner José said there can be certain limitations to how the Village can engage people if a referendum is placed on the ballot. He does not see the principled basis he would like to see for putting this on the ballot. Many actions that would be a part of this are done in a fairly routine and deliberate process on a regular basis. There are any number of things that could cause this process to change.

A comment was made that the Council and staff have made a compelling argument to go forward. A question was asked as to what projects will be postponed, delayed or not

done as a result of this. Mr. Fieldman said staff is strategic in how the workload is handled. This was labeled a high priority project. Staff does not want to be in a position where a project doesn't proceed that would benefit the community. Therefore an assessment is done annually and staff would consult with Council if necessary regarding allocation of assets.

Mr. Baker referenced other capital projects and noted that over the last several years staff has identified funding sources and developed plans for infrastructure issues. Money would not be taken away from those projects.

The Mayor asked if staff would consider an Owner's representative in the project. Mr. Fieldman responded affirmatively and said it would be imperative in this situation. That question could be in front of the Council as soon as January 2015.

A comment was made that timing is everything and the timing is right for this project. It has to be done at some point, and delaying it could cost dearly.

Mayor Tully thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. He said the conversation will continue.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

April K. Holden  
Village Clerk