

# Meeting Minutes

Village of Downers Grove – Special Council Meeting

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Council Chambers

2/28/2017

6:30 PM

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In order to give as many visitors as possible an opportunity to speak and in the interest of adjourning the meeting by 9:00 p.m., please limit your comments to 5 minutes in length, unless further time is granted by Council. Thank you.

## 1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Martin Tully called the regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Downers Grove Village Hall.

**MOT 2017-7288 A.** Motion: Permit Electronic Attendance

## 2. Roll Call

**Council Present:** Commissioner Walus, Commissioner Earl, Commissioner Waldack, Commissioner White, Commissioner Hosé; Mayor Tully

**Absent:** Commissioner Barnett

## 3. Executive Session

### Convene into Executive Session

Commissioner White moved to go into Executive Session pursuant to Section 2(c) (2) of the Illinois Open Meetings Act to consider collective negotiating matters. Commissioner Waldack seconded the motion.

**Votes: Yea:** Commissioners White, Waldack, Walus, Earl, Hosé; Mayor Tully

**Nay:** None

Mayor Tully declared the Motion carried and the Council convened into Executive Session at 6:01 p.m.

### Reconvene into Open Session

## 4. Call to Order

Mayor Martin Tully called the regular meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Downers Grove Village Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Mayor Tully led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

## 5. Roll Call

**Council Attendance (Present):** Commissioner Walus, Commissioner Earl, Commissioner Waldack, Commissioner White, Commissioner Hosé, Commissioner Barnett; Mayor Tully

**Absent:** None

Council Minutes

Village of Downers Grove

February 28, 2017

**Non-Voting:** Village Manager David Fieldman, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca

## 6. Manager's Report

### REP 2016-6904 — A. Report: Facilities Sustainability Plan Update

Mayor Tully explained that this meeting would cover only one topic, which is the Facilities Sustainability Plan Update. He noted that no action would be taken on this item at tonight's meeting. The meeting will serve as an informational update to the Village's Manager's report. He noted that the meeting is being recorded, and asked that anyone wishing to speak after the presentation make their comments into the microphone. The Mayor then introduced Village Manager Dave Fieldman for background information on this item.

Village Manager Dave Fieldman noted that there is a comprehensive report on the Facility Sustainability Plan on the Village's website that includes the development proposals, a summary report of a combined Police Station/Village Hall and an Executive Summary.

Mr. Fieldman said the Police Station and Village Hall are in poor condition and require \$10.3 million of maintenance needs. The Police Station is too small to provide the services necessary to the public and to provide modern law enforcement techniques and services. The Village Hall is a large but an inefficient use of space. The Village Council has approved a plan to address both of these issues with a budget of \$16 million using existing revenues. The plan calls for a remodeling and expansion of the Police Station at a cost of approximately \$14.5 million. That leaves about \$1.5 million to address the most critical maintenance needs of the Village Hall facility.

Mr. Fieldman then reviewed the funding sources for the \$16 million budget. The plan would use existing revenues of \$2.2 million of cash on hand, and issuance of a bond of \$13.8 million. The annual debt service payments of up to \$1.1 million would be made using three revenue sources: 1) \$600,000 of property taxes that had been used to pay debt service related to library improvements; 2) \$200,000 of existing gasoline tax, previously used for improvements to Fairview Avenue; and 3) \$300,000 from capital fund previously used for new sidewalk construction.

This plan addresses most, but not all of the public facility issues. Staff, at the direction of Village Council, has explored additional options and has identified that a complete solution would be construction of a new, combined Police Station and Village Hall. The combined building would cost approximately \$30 million. Council directed staff to pursue one additional option, that being developing a portion of the Civic Center site with private development. The question was would the money generated from the private development cover the difference between the \$16 million plan and the \$30 million complete solution. The Village posted an RFP to help answer that question and received four development proposals.

To answer the question, two of the proposals do not generate enough revenue to totally cover the difference; they both fall approximately \$300,000 short. The other two proposals consist of multi-family residential units, and the revenue generated from these proposals would more than cover the difference.

Mr. Fieldman said this is a brief overview and the first of several discussions. Staff is not looking for a decision tonight.

Mayor Tully thanked Mr. Fieldman for the materials and presentation and he thanked the developers for their proposals. He noted that the Executive Summary is very complete and addresses risks, costs and objectives identified more than a decade ago. He appreciates the variety of options they have to consider. He reiterated that this is the start of the process and no decisions will be made tonight. He then asked for Council comments.

Commissioner White said he appreciated the Mayor's comment that no decision will be made tonight. The public may need more time to review this plan as it was only available Friday. Commissioner White noted that every option is better than the option that was rejected by the referendum in 2014. It costs less than the 2014 plan and we are not moving forward until we have a contract with a developer. He said, fiscally, the fourth proposal is fabulous. It takes a great deal of pressure off the taxpayers; however, it also fundamentally changes the qualitative character of the downtown. Those are two considerations that are not easy to compare.

Council Minutes

Village of Downers Grove

February 28, 2017

Commissioner José thanked everyone who came to the meeting and the developers for their proposals. There are five possibilities. The medical office would be a large office and an interesting use to bring downtown. He feels the townhomes would be ideal. There are three options that require additional taxpayer dollars and two that do not. Commissioner José said if \$20 million worth of taxpayer problems can be solved with less than \$14 million of taxpayers' dollars, they have an obligation to explore that option.

Commissioner Barnett echoed the comments of Commissioner José. There are two potential outcomes for the downtown area and they have to be thoughtful about weighing those. A medical building use is far different than the other proposals. He said all dollars are important. The math is easy. The apartment building has a huge financial benefit to the Village, but it is a very radical change to the downtown. He acknowledged that people are leery of this change in the downtown. His preference is to study the higher density options. He doesn't think there is any reasonable suggestion that they should not review. The important thing is to get a good portion of the facility needs paid for by redevelopment. He would like to expedite the process and he said he does not want to consider not doing anything.

Commissioner Waldack commented if they were just chasing after financials, there is one of the proposals sticks out. The medical building is the only one that addresses the downtown parking problem. He would like to engage the public in a similar way as was done with Acadia on the Green to find out what the residents want. He expressed concern about having more apartments than they would be able to fill, and he thinks that is a consideration. He said if money was not a consideration he would support the medical building.

Commissioner Earl said she took the tour of the facilities offered in 2007 and then again in 2014. She said there is a sixth option, which is to do nothing. She said there are four buildings going up in the downtown area that will cause a lot of changes as to makeup, traffic patterns, etc. The downtown TIF will expire in two years. When she first joined the Council she said she did not want to do anything for a year; she now sees that as two years. She noted that there is additional space in the Police Station with VOC leaving. She does not see a need for any of these developments or the previously approved Police rehab plan. She would like to wait at least two years.

Commissioner Walus said she sees pros and cons to all of the options presented. She noted that there is a great deal of uncertainty in the State and making a decision like this is a big one that she doesn't take lightly. She said it is important to consider the atmosphere of the downtown. We do not have data that shows the success of these buildings under construction. Commissioner Walus commented that she believes there are still people in the community who are not happy with the potential changes, and she wants people to weigh in on the options. There may be many uninformed people in the Village, and it is the Council's responsibility to keep them informed.

Mayor Tully said he has been involved in this discussion for some time. He's glad to have the proposals before them now. The plan in 2014 was "too hot" and it went too far with risk, costs and major changes. The 2016 plan was "too cold" and did not go far enough as it was only half of the solution. The Mayor said that it was wise for the Council to seek information on what the project could look like. He thinks they are looking at some suggestions in the area of "just right" with perhaps some tradeoffs. He does not want to see the Council kicking the can down the road. He spoke about timing and said that when the first TIF was created much of the development the Village is talking about today was contemplated at that time. The recession caused the TIF to underperform. They are seeing development occur at the tail end of the TIF. He disagrees with Commissioner Earl with respect to the sixth option of doing nothing. Doing something else with the Village campus is a good thing as there is a better use for this parcel. Mayor Tully noted that this development would be different from others in that it will be completely under our control because we own the property. We can make choices and tradeoffs if we want to. He sees ancillary benefits to this. He recognizes the developers have a great deal at stake. They are putting their reputations on the line. He said Council needs to be purposeful about moving forward.

Commissioner Waldack said he has a real fear of the State of Illinois as well as on the federal level. He does not feel very positive about the future. He commented on the conversation last week about revenues. Commissioner Waldack said he has never been a fan of the TIF. He suggested that the Village can save money on the shooting range or the gym.

Commissioner José said that what goes in the building is far down the road. He sees the uncertainty in Springfield as a reason to do this. The Village needs to find other ways to generate revenues with no regard for what Springfield is doing. If we can solve some problems with other sources of funding, we should do it as it would help deal with the uncertainty both in Springfield and in Washington. He said he agrees with the Mayor that the developers have a lot of expertise and they have a lot of risk with these proposals. Today's downtown is a product of change. It looks drastically different after the TIF and much of that is due to density.

Commissioner White said the ground rules are that there are no decisions tonight. If money were not an issue, he would choose the townhomes for aesthetic reasons. However, he wants to reach out to the larger community to get a sense of what the community wants.

Commissioner José said he is comfortable advocating for his position because he is advocating for the taxpayers.

Commissioner Barnett said the State has been a problem for a long time and that will not change soon. He noted that two of these options help the taxpayers in terms of reliable revenue streams. The Village has existing debt and existing operational costs that are problems, and some of these choices will help ease the pain for the taxpayer. The reasons for the redevelopment are financial to serve long term needs for the downtown, as well as the needs of the Village. There is no question as to the existence of the problem. The question is what path they should take. He would solicit input expeditiously as waiting or not choosing serves no one and adds to the long-term risk.

The Mayor called for comments from the public. It was noted by Mr. Fieldman that any questions raised at the meeting would be posted on the Village's website with answers if available, or where additional information could be found in the report.

## 7. Public Comments

Jon Povlivka, 6016 Washington, said none of the site plans takes into consideration a right-of-way for Washington Street. The Mayor said that they are aware of that and further discussion will take place. Mr. Povlivka asked if any consideration has been given to moving the Village Hall adjacent to the Police Station on the west side resulting in a significant cost savings. He said that 20,000 square feet would fit in that area and at a cost of \$400 per square foot it would cost \$8 million. He suggested moving Fleet Services to the Public Works facility. He said he would like to know about the TIF and what it costs each affected taxing body.

Commissioner José said there is information regarding donations from the Park District.

Karen Adamson, 4927 Montgomery, said she supports the medical building as she sees the need for the services and it will provide job opportunities. Ms. Adamson said that the residential building would mostly serve its residents, while the medical building would draw more community members into the town. She said change is seen as positive in the Village; residents get excited about new businesses or restaurants opening in the Village.

Jeff Riemer, 1430 Wood Avenue, said he is not a fan of the apartments as they are too dense. He feels the safest bet are the townhomes, but he also likes the medical building as it would bring some diversification. He acknowledges there is a risk with having a business at this location if the business should fail. He reiterated that he thinks there are too many apartments in the downtown area. It's important for them to look at the numbers closely as the proposals don't always turn out the same.

Mary Blanchard, 421 Franklin, said there is a need for vacancy data for other buildings in the Village. The footprint of the downtown is constrained and there are traffic issues. She said that they moved here because of the downtown, however, oftentimes they avoid going downtown because of the parking and traffic. There are going to be four apartment buildings going up. No consideration has been given to greenspace. She likes the townhomes and she likes the medical office building for service options it presents.

Council Minutes

Village of Downers Grove

February 28, 2017

Brian O'Leary, 401 59<sup>th</sup> Street, said he was advocating for the medical office building. He said he has seen all positive change in the downtown, but he thinks it is time to pause in terms of adding to the density of the downtown area.

Chick Briner, 5933 Lyman, said she is concerned about the numbers in the residential building. She said two years ago the Village had virtually no apartment building in the downtown, and now there are four buildings under construction and that is an incredibly rapid change. She said the medical building and townhomes are "softer" even with the less positive financial impact.

Barry Koncel, 839 Franklin, said he is excited to see the development but is concerned about the density and the State of Illinois right now. He supports the medical office building, as it is a safe, prudent approach with long-term benefits.

Mayor Tully thanked the residents for attending the meeting and for their comments.

Commissioner Waldack thanked the public for coming out tonight and encouraged them to tell their friends.

Mayor Tully said his preference would be to achieve a timely solution with the support and consensus of the community.

Mr. Fieldman said updates will be on the Village's website. There may be additional information at next week's meeting.

The Mayor said this is going to be an ongoing conversation until they are able to resolve the issue.

Commissioner Barnett asked if there is a time frame under consideration. Mr. Fieldman said that a couple of these developments are timely and decisions are being made on locations now. Some of the developments may not be an option if they take too long.

Mayor Tully said he wants to be purposeful and mindful about this. They are going to engage in many comments, but he would like to avoid unnecessary delays.

Commissioner White said that they have to get input from the community before any decisions can be made in one direction or another.

Mayor Tully suggested that similar to what was done with Acadia on the Green, they could consider community comments at the next Coffee with the Council.

The Mayor said he wants to move in a timely fashion. This will be on next week's Agenda.

Commissioner Waldack complimented the Village's Police Department for their assistance in finding an elderly man who was lost last week.

## **8. Adjournment**

Mayor Tully asked for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner White moved to adjourn. Commissioner Waldack seconded the motion.

Mayor Tully declared the motion carried by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
April Holden  
Village Clerk