

Meeting Minutes

Village of Downers Grove - Council Meeting

Council Chambers

9/23/2019

7:00 PM

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 to Order

Mayor Robert Barnett called the special meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Committee Room of the Downers Grove Village Hall.

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

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

2. Roll Call

Council Attendance (Present): Commissioner Walus, Commissioner Earl, Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, Commissioner Kulovany, Commissioner Gray, Commissioner Hosé; Mayor Barnett

Absent: None

Non-Voting: Village Manager David Fieldman, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca, Deputy Village Clerk Megan Miles

The Council meeting is broadcast over the local FM radio station, WDGC. In addition, a tape recording and videotape of the meeting are being made using Village-owned equipment. The videotape of the meeting will be used for later rebroadcast of the Council meeting over the Village cable television Channel 6.

The Mayor stated that at the appropriate time the presiding officers will ask if there are any comments from the public. Individuals wishing to speak should raise their hand to be recognized and, after acknowledgment from the presiding officer, approach the microphone and state their name. Remarks should be limited to five minutes, and individuals are asked to refrain from making repetitive statements.

3. Manager's Report

INF 2019-8271 — A. Information: 2019-2021 Long Range Plan: Priority Action Items and Strategic Goals

Mayor Barnett welcomed Council, staff and the public, and thanked them for their flexibility in making themselves available for this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to continue the long-range planning process and discuss high priority action items that consume a great deal of staff and Council bandwidth.

Village Manager Dave Fieldman said this is the fifth of six planned meetings. He said that priority action items serve as this Council's work plan for the balance of this Council's duration through the middle of 2021. He noted that this list is arguably the most important work of these meetings and determines the direction of the Village over the next 18-24 months. The characteristics of a Priority Action Item include supporting strategic goals,

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addressing key issues, requiring Village Council direction, take six months or more to complete and involves a multi-department effort. Those are the items used as a threshold to determine whether an issue rises to the level of a priority action.

Mr. Fieldman noted that the Village has been using this format since about 2009 and there has been a maximum of 12 items identified in any 18-24 month period. Seven priority action items have already been identified. The situation is unique right now in that seven items are on the board and six are already underway. The seventh item is the Village's sustainability and replacement plan which the Council provided direction on a few weeks ago. He noted that the Village is at organizational capacity through at least the first quarter of next year. At that time it is anticipated that the facilities plan will be discussed and will include new buildings and many other topics. He described it as equal to about ten normal priority action items, which is a lot. He noted that staff took the liberty of putting together a list of sub-projects that staff knows are likely to require attention. He said that staff has learned a lot this year from the 49-days they worked on the facilities project and learned the enormity of the project. The mid-point check which is generally done in the summer will probably occur somewhat earlier because once they have the elements of the facilities plan that will be a good time to check in to better predict staff's work load on that project. It is expected that the other six projects will be reaching conclusion about this time. So there's an element of confirming and possibly adding things to the board tonight. He noted that if any Council members want to add something to the list tonight it will require replacing something that's on the board right now, or starting the new proposals at the time that they do the check in.

Mr. Fieldman then reviewed the seven action items. The facilities replacement and sustainability plan will begin in December. It has two components. Developing the plan by answering the five key questions as to what are we going to build, where are we going to build it, how are we going to pay for it, etc. Traditionally plans like this take somewhere between three and six months, and since this is a priority item for Council staff will work as expeditiously as they can to develop the plan, and implement the plan with building construction.

The second priority action item involves developing a plan for the future of the downtown. Key questions to be addressed are what services should be provided in the downtown, who should provide those services, what capital projects, and what maintenance activities are involved, development of a budget and funding sources. Included with these questions is what operating agreement will exist with Downtown Management. He expects this information to be before the Council in the fourth quarter of this year, probably in November. Council direction will occur and they expect plan implementation in the first two or three quarters of next year.

The next priority action item is the development and implementation of a parking plan for the downtown. He reminded Council members that the intent was to revisit the downtown parking situation once the three major residential buildings were all in line. This parking plan should be in front of the Council probably at the last meeting in October for further Council direction, which might include forwarding it to a recommending board. It would probably come back to the Council in the fourth quarter or the first quarter of next year. It is thought that the two plans—the parking plan and the financial plan for downtown—will inform the Council on the policy decisions it makes on the facilities plan.

Mr. Fieldman noted the next priority item, which is to continue the Village's partnership with District 99 for a pedestrian and vehicular safety plan for the high schools. A second neighborhood meeting is scheduled for November and a draft plan should be put before the Council in the first quarter for Council direction.

Creation of a stormwater capital projects plan is the sixth item on the list and was discussed recently by Council. It will take several months for Council feedback

The expansion of the Human Services Ad Hoc Committee was discussed last week and the reconstituted Ad Hoc Committee will be working from January to June on updating and building on their report. It will then go back to Council for policy direction.

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Mr. Fieldman said the last item is a major staff project for the replacement of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System. It's the backbone and operating system for all of the Village departments and needs to be replaced. This is primarily staff driven and concerns a system that they use every day. There is interplay between the ERP system replacement and the facilities plan. They don't want to have to relocate physically.

Mr. Fieldman said they are looking for Council direction.

Mayor Barnett said the key tonight is whether they want to focus on the PAIs that are presently under consideration. He said they need to focus on these items, and/or come up with the Council's own list. He said it is important that they leave tonight with affirmation or change.

Commissioner Earl said her fear is knowing that facilities is going to take ten PAIs. She thinks they are underestimating it as one PAI. It is more like five and is not as easy as the explanation. She doesn't see facilities and ERP overlapping. It's a huge project and a huge problem if it becomes nonsupporting. She asked how far along this has gone.

Dan Carlsen, Management Analyst, said that they have a consultant but have not yet identified needs assessment. They are fact-finding now.

Commissioner Earl said that she knows this type of activity will take at least a year. It's a heavy workload. She said the ERP system they have now is used by everybody in one package.

Mr. Fieldman concurs and shares her concern. It's a very large project.

Commissioner Earl said she is concerned with what she sees on the board and doesn't know what she would take off and replace it with. There's nothing on the board that is not important. If she were to prioritize it would be trees, and perhaps up the amount of trees they are planting in the parkways. It would not be as time consuming but she'd like to see that included.

Mr. Fieldman said they could adjust planting with the normal budget and working to protect the trees. He said those changes will be seen in October or November.

Mayor Barnett said there are always things that come up. He thinks they have to try and keep in mind the idea there's six months or more so somewhere along the line someone will say something in particular needs adjusting. They have to keep in mind that there will be items appearing out of nowhere and taking time.

Commissioner Walus asked about the replacement of the ERP and if any options happen at the same time as the ERP.

Mr. Fieldman said that they are watching the ERP with the facilities. They learned in the early part of the year that it took ten working sub teams on the facilities project all at once with some serving on multiple teams. The important part is the implementation portion of the project.

Commissioner Walus said she thinks there's a hesitation from staff to do ERP and facilities at the same time.

Mr. Fieldman said that if they only move once it's easier. They are trying to complete the facilities implementation at the same time as the ERP implementation plan.

Mayor Barnett said that if two things fell at exactly the same time, then things have to be shifted. If they can figure out the implementation plans the same things could possibly happen at the same time.

Commissioner Kulovany asked if there are any issues with fiscal year cut over.

Mr. Carlsen said there are no issues to selecting in March or April of next year.

Commissioner Kulovany asked whether it would be a straight cutover or running parallel systems.

Mr. Carlsen replied they are still learning and are at the beginning stages.

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Commissioner Earl said that she remembers when the original facilities plan was raised and they barely saw staff they were so bogged down. She fears the ERP will be the same.

Mayor Barnett underscored that the question for tonight is whether they like the idea of trying to get those two implementation plans sorted and then reviewing them.

Mr. Fieldman agreed with that synopsis and said there is an element of learn, check in, revise plans. He doesn't know how it will look in a few months when they have more information on both items.

Commissioner José said he agrees with how will these items work together and he appreciates staff being upfront with the fear aspect. Obviously they want to work on how to put these two projects together but he thinks they are being premature on all of that. He said he has watched two clients go through the same situation very recently. One implementation of their software went unbelievably well while the second was incredibly bad. You never know until you get into the project. He said that our staff has a good history of getting things right and will tell the Council if they need to pause. He is confident they can handle it and if they can't they will tell the Council.

Commissioner Kulovany asked whether they've ceased support on the system and Mr. Fieldman said that it's coming. Commissioner Kulovany said that organizations don't budget enough, especially for training. It's important to understand what to leave behind and what are must-haves. But there are also ebbs and flows with both the facilities plan and the ERP project. He said they have to be patient and not running out of support for at least one year, and use the ebbs and flows. They have to understand that a lot of staff is going to be overworked, particularly the midlevels.

Commissioner Gray said he's seeing this for the first time and it's a lot to take in. He said three of the items are linked together already. When this has been done in the past, what were some of the contingency areas you looked at "just in case." What are the criteria to swap something out.

Mr. Fieldman said with regard to contingency staff will look for Council direction in those situations. He said short of another construction project staff thinks the implementation of these things won't be very complex. It might take effort but won't need more policy direction. It would appear that the facilities project would remain the higher priority. If they thought another item was being held up because of the facilities project, they would come to the Council for more direction.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said that facilities and the ERP are high priority to everyone and will be complex. There is no value in potential spots for things that may or may not happen. The sooner they can be talking about the facilities the better. She would prefer to move more quickly. In the past waiting and hedging worked against the Village. She sees the facilities as a large priority and wants to see it done. She thinks they should move on ERP and facilities quickly.

Commissioner Kulovany commented that they have a window of opportunity with facilities because they have to sell a portion of land. He thinks they should strike while the iron is hot and get developers involved. Prices could go down in a recession.

Mayor Barnett said he hasn't heard anyone say they wish there was something else on the list. What's being asked is do we want to keep this list and then check back in the first quarter to see where they are.

The consensus of the Commissioners was to keep the list and check back in the first quarter.

Commissioner Walus agreed with what has been said. She is in full agreement that they should be cognizant and respectful of staff, and if staff says they need a decision, the Council should be respectful of their workload.

Mayor Barnett said everyone works hard to get things done.

Mr. Fieldman replied also that staff and the Council do this very well. That has been a hallmark of the Council and staff over time.

Mayor Barnett asked for public comments.

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David Rose commented on Commissioner Kulovany's comments on selling to developers are presumptuous. He thought that was part of the option. He asked Commissioner José for more information on his example from his work life if the software update doesn't go well and how it would affect other items.

Mayor Barnett said that's what they were trying to stress, and do they have the confidence in staff to move forward and take steps.

Commissioner José said he understands the risks and he trusts this staff to manage any problems. When they have a problem, staff will let the Council now, and he has every confidence the implementation will go well.

Commissioner Earl said upgrading and replacing are two different things. Replacing the whole system is trickier. They are not just plugging in a new piece.

Mayor Barnett said that is why Dave has been underscoring this. Any organization of this size has to go through this.

Commissioner Kulovany said he's been in the ERP supply chain software business for 20 years. He saw hundreds of these systems and it is important to look at what could have been done differently. Proper training affects success factors. Mayor Barnett is right on replacement systems taking place every seven years or so.

Sue Farley said she would like to have the Council heavily focus long range on environmental requirements including green space, plants, trees, sustainability, green roofs, solar, and electrical chargers just to name a few. She would like more green space in the downtown including rain gardens at Forest and Burlington. She said the Village is behind and they need to be leading. She said that six months ago the facilities plan had no green plan. She asked that volunteers on Committees be asked to help get these things accomplished.

Pete Foernsler, 922 Warren, said he lives in the downtown and wanted to talk about the future of the downtown. He commented that his taxes are 26% higher due to the SSA and asked what the value is to residents. They get snowplowing. He doesn't understand the value of the SSA for the residents. He understands it for the commercial area. He asked if there are other viable options available. He would like to have someone quantify the value of being in an SSA for the residents besides receiving snow plowing. His building pays \$51,000 annually and he would like to know what they gives the residents.

Steve Frost who lives on Burlington commented on the future of the downtown. He said when the SSA ends their tax rate goes to zero and there will be a tax increase to the residents. The Council has worked hard to suppress tax increases, and staff does more and more with less and less. Yet the residents living in that area are paying more for receiving the same services. He said they should look at the Downtown Management Corporation, which is very important and serves an important role, but he doesn't see a consensus among residents to pay for this out of new SSA money. He encouraged paying for it out of the General Fund. If the Village wants to pick and choose services, dollars are important to the budget process. He stressed that he isn't opposed to staff's work. They all operate professionally and provide excellent services.

Sue Farley then said she wanted to make a comment on the opt in/opt out. Mayor Barnett asked her to hold her comment on that to the end of the meeting. He then said that he is hearing that all Council members want to keep this going and stay with the check in. The point of the exercise is to remember that this was the direction decided.

Commissioner Kulovany asked when they would revisit additional items. Mr. Fieldman said staff recommends that when they get to the check in of the facilities plan.

Deputy Manager Mike Baker was asked to provide information on the next steps for the future of the downtown. He said that the next Downtown Management Board meeting would occur on the first Thursday in October. At that meeting they will present some additional options to respond to concerns and comments made since August relative to rate and boundaries. He said there have been suggestions about expanding boundaries. They will also look at removing the residential component from the SSA and allow it to come forward as an entirely commercial

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only SSA. That is trying to be responsive to what they have heard. More information will come and will be discussed in a few weeks and brought forward to Council later.

Mr. Fieldman then mentioned the second issue is Strategic Goals. He reviewed the goals that were discussed in August. He noted that they did not wrap up that discussion for policy direction. They took away that they could do a better job of reporting. He then referenced how the goals fit into the Village, including the Comprehensive Plan. They will republish the Comprehensive Plan with the Long Range Report.

They are looking for further direction regarding alternatives to saying they are stewards of environmental sustainability. One idea was the Village would be a “Facilitator of Community Dialogues” and or “Environmental Leader among Municipalities.” He noted that both ideas came from Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt spoke of highlighting preserving our Village for future generations. The Village has done great things like the recent Stormwater Ordinance. She would like the Village to take a leading stance in preservation.

Mayor Barnett asked for thoughts as to adjustment and using stronger wording which is deliberate, proactive on the environmental sustainability.

Commissioner Kulovany commented that the magic word for him is trees and he would like to delegate that to the Commissions, whether the ECC or others. He was on Linscott, which has a legacy oak tree that will be coming down. It’s changed the whole fabric of that side of the street. He would like that tie in because it relates to stormwater, producing oxygen, reduces heat, etc. One of the Commissions could look at what other communities are doing. It would be useful to find what they are measuring right now. There is a composting program announced, but people seem to have forgotten about it. Another thing is that a lot of parkway trees are dying because of the mulching process. The Arboretum sent him a complete study on that and how the roots are being suffocated on parkway trees.

Mayor Barnett said the question is the forcefulness, and in reality they are always balancing. He thinks the potential is to shift the balance to leadership as opposed to steward.

Mr. Fieldman said the proposal speaks directly to how the Village would do its same projects differently. He read the proposal and explained that if those words were used it would dramatically affect how certain projects are performed.

Mayor Barnett said that historically the Village has forgone a lot of metrics, due to some degree because of limited personnel.

Commissioner José asked what it would mean when they get from the 30,000 foot level down to the 10,000 foot level in terms of time and dollars spent.

Mr. Fieldman said that staff would need direction quickly for the 2020 budget and take it to the leadership team showing how it reflects in today’s budget. He said at tomorrow’s staff meeting they would discuss some of the projects that have an entirely different approach if this is the Council’s desire.

Commissioner Gray thanked Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt for her work and input from others. For those without details but who want them, they need education. He spoke to the impact and buy-in from the community.

Mayor Barnett suggesting looking to see if there is something to compare this to.

Mr. Fieldman said that these goals have been in place for 8-10 years. They are embedded in how the Village does its business. This would be a significant change. Staff might evolve and find ways to incorporate these ideas in all projects. He can’t say yet from a public relations standpoint or education, but it would be reflected in the staff’s day-to-day work.

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Mayor Barnett asked if there is a way to get additional focus because it appears most people don't know things on the list. He can understand how without that information circulated, there would be a concern that the Village is not doing as much as we could or should.

Commissioner Walus also thanked Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt for her efforts. She said she made notes in response to this, such as bandwidth, responsibility, cost, wondering if there is any middle ground without amending that statement. They should be able to publicize more about what they are doing. She is not discounting any of the information that's been provided, but wants to know if there's a way to do more.

Mr. Fieldman said this would not be a high priority action item, but Council could direct staff. Measuring and reporting is the biggest leap.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said that measuring and reporting is how we know where we are at, and they know this takes staff time. She said they need to plan long term for the Village facilities and make sure they are planning that they last a long time. She sees something stronger than green operations where possible, but can compromise on metrics.

Commissioner Earl asked for details.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said she would like to see recycling of water, electric charging stations, native landscaping. She'd like this done from the beginning, and use their time to think how to preserve resources.

Mayor Barnett said he thinks he hears that they would appreciate a conversation on environmental improvements. He asked if there is some way to rework and focus on the additional information pulled together. He thinks there should be some way for them to increase our emphasis on environmental considerations.

Mr. Fieldman said that he is hearing publish things, refocus and look at environmental issues early.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said if anyone has specifics to let her now. She said the second statement she submitted she thought would be beneficial. The Village is often the first point of contact with residents. One suggestion would be to be the voice to bring people together on large issues such as construction. They could add on an extra half hour to Coffee With the Council a few times a year. It would involve more staff work. She could see adding a bullet point to innovation or municipal services, etc. She noted that these are things they do already but communication is important.

Commissioner Kulovany said communication is a tough one, especially when you look on social media at the misunderstandings of things that the Village does. He gave an example of the 55th Street but no one was reading the website.

Commissioner Earl said that we try. Seven of us are pushing out through our social media contacts and she thinks that improves exactly what they're talking about. It's hard because you can never answer every question or make everyone happy. She asked where they should facilitate more. It's been done in the past with mixed results. She doesn't know where the balance is.

Mayor Barnett said he feels there is a need out there; but he is unconvinced they are the right group to fill that need. He doesn't want that as a goal right now.

Commissioner Earl said it's being done through the Library already. They facilitate all kinds of community dialogues across the board.

Mayor Barnett said that all of these things entail a fair amount of work.

Commissioner Earl said that TCD took a year and fed into the first Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner José said they need an analysis of what topics and overlap with other institutions.

Commissioner Kulovany said the challenge is getting people to show up. He gave the examples of the safety meetings at the high schools. He asked how much staff work is required.

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Commissioner Walus said facilitation and dialogue is extremely important and they all agree with that. Her concern is that with everything going on right now, she would love to dive into it at some point, but is concerned about adding it to our goals at this time.

Mayor Barnett said they should keep it on the side but don't lose it. He asked for public comment on the last discussion and items not on the Agenda.

4. Public Comments

This is the opportunity for public comments.

David Rose asked whether Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt's information is available. Mr. Fieldman said he'd provide him with a copy. Mr. Rose said he hopes they don't use sustainability. He's concerned that most people don't understand what that means.

Sue Farley spoke about the September 3 meeting and the discussion regarding cannabis with the comments from the Council members on the opt-in option and taxing. She said the Village needs to lead and can do that by controlling the zoning with long term planning. The Village could be ahead of the game. She believes it is important to address things early. Her other reason for opting in is from a medical point of view. It is important to listen to other people in Downers Grove, and this is a chance for the Council to jump in and move forward.

David Rose said he thought Commissioner Hose's point was not addressed regarding the treatment of cannabis and the treatment of alcohol. This is the key point.

Mayor Barnett said this would be discussed again at the October 8 meeting.

5. Adjournment

Mayor Barnett asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: Commissioner José moved to adjourn. Commissioner Earl seconded the motion.

Mayor Barnett declared the motion carried by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Miles
Deputy Village Clerk