

VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST
STRATEGIC PLANNING MINUTES
February 27, 2016

PRESENT: Mayor John Ostenburg; Trustees: Mae Brandon, JeRome Brown, Tiffany Graham, Robert McCray, Theresa Settles (departed 1:35 p.m.)

STAFF PRESENT: Village Manager Tom Mick, Director of Finance/Deputy Village Manager Mary Dankowski, Assistant Finance Director Stephanie Masson, Assistant to the Village Manager/Personnel Director Denyse Carreras, Director of Community Development Larrie Kerestes, Code Enforcement Manager Jerry Martin, Housing Director Geraldine DuPaty, Director of Economic Development Hildy Kingma, Assistant Director of Economic Development Sandra Zoellner, Police Chief Peter Green, Deputy Police Chief Chris Mannino, Director of Public Works Roderick Ysaguirre, Chief Water Plant Operator Dave Vavrek, DownTown Park Forest Manager Sharon Bellino, Director of Recreation and Parks Rob Gunther, Program Manager Kevin Adams, Fire Chief Bruce Ziegle, Deputy Fire Chief Tracy Natyshock, Health Department Director Jenise Ervin, Nursing Supervisor Margaret Lewis

GUEST: Chris Williams

Mayor Ostenburg called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The roll was called. Village Manager Mick thanked the Board and staff for coming on Saturday to discuss the business of the Village. Budget guidelines will be going to staff on Tuesday for budget meetings in May. The Police Department was commended for their exemplary work regarding a recent horrific incident resulting in charges being filed within five days.

Six Month Financial Results

Finance Director Dankowski stated that feedback from the Board is paramount to setting budget guidelines. General Fund Revenues were reviewed. Property taxes have been impacted by Illini Apartments, Blackhawk Center, and zombie properties. Sales tax revenue, including video game revenue is received on a two to three month lag. Utility taxes are still a concern and have been impacted by telecommunication tax shifting. Deregulation of energy suppliers has impacted how taxes are applied (taxes applied on the distribution cost as opposed to the total bill). Income taxes are at 57.9% of budget, tracking higher than budget. Transfer taxes are at 161% due to the sale of Jiffy Lube and Garden House. The Village anticipates the sale of Autumn Ridge and Central Park Townhomes in the near future. While currently at 45%; it is expected the Village will meet budget by the end of year.

Department expenses for first 6 months were reviewed. IRMA costs are running below budget due to increasing the deductible which reduced premiums.

The Housing Choice Voucher program continues to see increases in portable vouchers. Case worker Pauline Hawkins is retiring in March. Two in-house part-time candidates will be moving to full-time positions. An increase in licensing fees will help fund the new staff. There is still a problem with parent housing authorities holding approximately 19% of the administrative fee. In Washington, the mayor will stress Park Forest should be treated as a large housing authority as it is probably in the top 10 in size in Illinois. Data needed to take to Washington includes a list other housing authorities considered large but are actually handling a smaller amount of vouchers than PFHA. There is nothing showing portables will plateau.

The MFT item reflects the sign grant. There is added revenue from taxes from Dollar General. Items are tracking consistent with the budget. Expenses to capital projects reflect CN money and the Orchard signal project transfer.

In 2010, the Village faced a \$680,000 shortfall at the six month mark. Fortunately the Village is back to a level where staff can budget accurately. To get to that level, revenue projections need to be accurate and hiring is delayed when practical.

Current Year Trends

The Illinois fund that housed property taxes, sales, and income tax receipts has been told that it is not compliant with SEC regulations and cannot accept third party transfers. All accounts were closed this week and a new account quickly set up to accept third party transfers.

Fuel and sales tax have been distributed since the November meeting. The Village is keeping a higher end fund balance and reserve in case some revenue gets cut by the State.

Income tax this past year finally increased over 2008. Real estate transfers are not at the 2008 levels. Building permit fees and interest rates have not recovered. This downturn has spanned eight years. Property taxes will continue to be monitored and the budget adjusted accordingly.

It is unknown how long the IRMA savings seen over the past three years will last. Deductible expenses have gone up slightly; this year's expense will probably exceed \$300,000. The reduced cost has funded one-time capital improvements including the salt dome, village-wide computer system upgrades, and salary study. There is an anticipated ten percent increase in health insurance costs. Drug discount cards could help bring down prescription costs for employees. Village Manager Mick will research the discount cards and share the information in a Board update. IMRF costs are fairly flat. As of June 20 there is a four month fund balance reserve. Levy costs are impacted by new mortality tables in 2015.

More foreclosed homes are being turned into rental properties which in turn impacts the Housing Authority. House sales prices have been increasing. Sales prices have been affected by non-local people assessing homes; properties sold at a good price have had to lower the sales price because of the lower assessments. Another assessment issue involves DownTown where Separate PINs have been issued. Tenants pay the Village for the property tax. Tax bills will come in September.

There are two litigation cases; one is coming to a close. There was a second mediation session on Tuesday for Thorn Creek. The judge will rule on the plaintiff's petition for attorney's fees. An appeal has been filed, it would go through the Appellate court. Because of the amount of paperwork, a decision will likely be rendered in six to nine months.

Extending the DownTown TIF would benefit the Village. All taxing bodies would need to submit a letter of support and it would require legislative action. There is a target date of April 2017.

The Health Department continues to monitor the census and look for initiatives to help support revenue. The Aqua Center will recommend an increase in membership fees. The Village subsidizes the operations (not the programming) of the Health Club and Aqua Center.

Phase I of the Sound Mitigation program west of Western has sunset. The program has \$256,936 in undistributed funds. Phase II expires in December 2016. Once the program is over, the Board can determine use of those funds. Undistributed funds are not restricted and can be allocated wherever the Board chooses. In October, the Board will be provided a summary of how many homes have taken advantage of the reimbursement. At that time, a decision will be made on extending Phase II. (Break 10:12 a.m.-10:23 a.m.)

Budget Amendments for 2015/2016

Sikich is working on updates to the personnel manual including following federal laws. Half of the \$6500 fee has been paid. PEG fees will be spent this year for Board room camera updates.

A third year Enbridge grant is expected. There is a bulletproof vest grant for the Police Department and the final payout for the sustainability coordinator. Economic Development received a \$805,000 grant for demolishing blighted houses in Eastgate. Some houses will be demolished as opposed to being deconstructed because of how many houses need to be addressed. The Cook County Demolition

and Diversion Ordinances will be followed. There is a potential to demolish 44 homes and deconstruct 30 homes. Part of the funding goes to the Delta Institute to train people in house deconstruction. Recreation and Parks has received a \$13,000 matching fund grant to replant trees.

The Police Department is working with their collection agency to secure a license plate reader to assist with collection efforts. A power cot for the Fire Department will need to be replaced because of an accident. Public Works will be extending the Lincoln Highway fence. The Sewer Fund previously budgeted for a wash rack and decanting station. The Downtown window replacement is completed. The Westwood traffic signal and Eastgate redevelopment have been transferred to capital projects.

A property tax rebate for Dollar General is anticipated.

Until the full time positions are filled in April, Community Development has allocated additional part-time staff to the Housing Authority to help keep up with the voucher activity. Money was set aside in the fund balance for the increases in salary implanted because of the salary study.

Economic Development Update

Ms. Bellino updated the Board on Downtown tenants. Home health care businesses continue to struggle due to the lack of State funding. Two health businesses are paid in full and still active. Reliable Health, a larger space, did vacate and turn in their key. The lease is active until August and the Village will pursue the unpaid rent. A hair salon is proposed for behind Cindy's Nails. The Food Co-Op voted on Thursday about changing locations. The outcome of the vote is not known at this time. Their option is up in March. Rinky's has keys to their space, but the ownership of the business may change. A new person would need to start over with the liquor license process. Currently there is a three year lease which is being paid since August, but they have not gone forward with opening. Main Street Diner is being used as a banquet hall using the kitchen from the Sapphire Room. There is talk of going back to the name of Heads or Tails Gaming Café. The lease states the space will be open to the public and include a restaurant. The State may have questions regarding the five gaming machines.

SZ Front Line Real Estate Partner was interviewed on February 3 to broker the sale of the property next to Dollar General, the former Marshall Fields' property (to be multi-story rental property), and Buildings 1, 6B, and 7. This will be presented to the Board in April.

Ms. Kingma reported on the Eastgate Neighborhood Redevelopment. The Village will be acquiring six more houses within the next couple of months due to the abandonment process. Homes that are vacant, blighted, tax delinquent and have outstanding water bills are targeted. The Village is not looking to acquire occupied properties. The Village will request the land bank to turn over a couple of lots on Arrowhead for a pocket park. The Plan Commission will revisit the strategic plan in 2017 to see what the Village wants accomplished in this area. Under revisions to the zoning ordinance, an urban residential district can be created allowing for a mix of residential types including single family, live/work units, and multi-family units. Cluster neighborhoods will also be investigated. There is a lot of different potential and any changes would go through the Board. An Eastgate idea exchange was held in June. Participation was small and it is hard to get follow up from the residents. Mr. Gunther stated that \$40,000 was allotted to renovate the playground at Eastgate. After seeing ideas that came from the idea exchange, the R&P Board saw the value in using some of those funds to create a tot lot, possibly at 257 Arrowhead. This would be a small playground with equipment geared to younger children and could possibly include a community garden. Eastgate Park is isolated from the east end of the neighborhood and it makes sense to have a more centralized location on the eastern side. Staff will investigate if there is a program to have an AmeriCorps volunteer live in Eastgate and do some community building. Mayor Ostenburg suggested contacting landlords to make an investment in the area and perhaps create a parks foundation so they can get a tax write off. A community house could be used more as a neighborhood center, not just an AmeriCorps house. Rakes, lawnmowers, etc., could be loaned out to help establish a sense of ownership and pride in the neighborhood.

The broker for Hidden Meadows has not been responsive; the contract will not be renewed in April. Looking forward, there will be redevelopment on Sauk Trail. Family Video may be listed. Marathon has made improvements. No further remediation is needed at the former Speedway and the property is for sale. This would be an excellent location for a fast food restaurant. The oil and lube space is owned by the land bank. The Village will seek to acquire Central Court Plaza through the no cash bid process with the Board's approval. Some of the current tenants are interested in ownership.

By the end of 2016, the UDO project will be completed resulting in changes to the zoning map. Public workshops will be held in different neighborhoods and businesses to review and understand the proposed changes.

Seven schools are lined up for a robotics showcase on April 15 at the Maker Lab. The goal is to gain enough revenue from use for the Lab to self-sustain after the grant expires. In May the SSMMA will meet in Park Forest. It would be nice to have the maker's lab available for a tour prior to the meeting. Staff is working with nine municipalities for a booth at the shopping center conference. Letters of intent are anticipated for the sale of 3250 Lincoln Highway. This morning, contractors and a potential buyer were at 80 North Street. An offer is anticipated for 3200 Lincoln Highway. The Village has the deed for Illini Apartments. Staff is working with the Keeling Foundation to show the property to veterans and other investors. The new director of Economic Development in Matteson will be appointed as the Zone Administrator for the Will/Cook Enterprise Zone.

Department of Public Works Financial Update

Director Ysaguirre reported the Village has received MFT allotments from the State. DPW was able to purchase a minimum amount of salt which is stored in the dome. The contract will be re-bid this year with an anticipated lower cost per ton. Saving should be seen due to the relatively mild winter. There is a bid opening next Friday for the bicycle plan project. The traffic and street name sign replacement project is underway. The sewer fund was reviewed.

DPW continues to work with Economic Development to introduce sustainable storm water infrastructure into the Village's development codes. DPW will include anti-icing equipment with the purchase of new snow fighting equipment. Storm sewer issues and projects were discussed. Rehabilitation of drainage ways were discussed with Baxter and Woodman. It may be beneficial to upsize the drainage ways as opposed to rehabbing them.

There has been a reduction of calls regarding rusty water due to the addition of phosphates. This year there have been 41 main breaks through yesterday. Last year there were 43 at this time. Hydrant flushing will begin in May. An on-line map will be available to residents to see the daily progress and anticipate when flushing will occur in their area. There will be a bid opening on March 30 regarding replacing four miles of water mains. As of January 1, 2016 the Village no longer maintains the two inch water lines within private property of any multi-family areas.

DPW will continue to monitor the usages and revenue trends at the municipal parking lot. DPW plans to address roadway needs on the Village's smaller roads while the MFT funds will be used on larger roads.

Recreation and Parks Six Month Update

There are 11 ash trees left on Village property. Trees have been ordered through the Morton Arboretum grant. Twenty residents have asked for trees to be on their property with the understanding they will maintain the trees for three years. The other trees from the grant will be in parkways and parks

The R&P Board will recommend putting a small natural themed park at Murphy Park to replace the removed equipment with a \$50,000 budget. The R&P Board is developing a new five year plan. Plans will be submitted for bid within the next two weeks for the Village Green enhancement.

Attendance at Friday night TeenZone is expected to increase following basketball season. There will be a Teen Job Fair with workshops on job readiness, interview skills, and resume building prior to the event. Trustee Brown would like to volunteer to assist in this event. A college tour with University Park is being planned for the spring. At this time it is unknown how the new SD163 building will change the current occupancy at the Rec Center. Jimmie Bowen, Cristina Baines and Randall White are to be commended for their work with Bitty Ball and Youth Basketball. R&P is looking at what programs cost vs. what is being charged and how to best meet the needs of the people within the Village. Aqua Center will have resident/non-resident rates this year.

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN FISCAL YEAR 2016/2017

Health Department

Director Ervin reviewed Health Department needs for 2016/2017.

Department of Public Works

Director Ysaguirre reviewed DPW needs. Staff will investigate if additional cut-throughs can be installed for the bike/pedestrian plan. Dump trucks will be modified to include anti-ice equipment. Items in the water fund are mostly maintenance related. Staff will look into a maintenance contract for replacing b-boxes, some of which are getting old and cannot be shut off. Right now there are 400 that need to be dug. Homes without water service are posted “uninhabitable”. Community Development will work with the attorneys to see what else can be done. By law, residents are given a 15 day notice. The courts try to do everything they can for a resident to be able to come back to their property. Residents should be made aware of places that can offer assistance. The gate has been replaced at the municipal parking lot.

Recreation and Parks

R&P is in a maintenance mode to catch up with tree pruning. OSLAD grants are not currently being funded for park renovations. A skid steer attachment is needed to plant the trees obtained through the grant. A Department of Health Report lists fence repairs that are needed at the Aqua Center. Patrons continually ask for new deck chairs which are being replaced on a continuing basis.

Building and Grounds

At the library, the sidewalk needs to be replaced and be made ADA compliant. Ideally the entrance/exit onto Orchard would be enlarged. The Village Hall lobby doors need to be replaced. Upgrades are needed at the police station firing range along with heating and wiring upgrades. If SD 163 abandons the Rec Center, the entrance would need to be changed. The Village only owns the Rec Center’s building footprint, the school district must afford entrance and egress.

Police Department

Chief Green states the Police received great cooperation from citizens and the Major Crimes Task force to bring a recent homicide case to a swift conclusion. The responsible person is in jail. Public safety is their goal.

The current in-car video computer recording system is 10 years old. If the system malfunctions it could jeopardize cases. The new system would be installed in all vehicles and is wireless and digital.

The biggest concern is the lock-up area where there is no secured structure to hold criminals. The plan would be to encapsulate the center area of the Police Department. A suspect would be brought into the secured area and would never have the ability to have the run of the Police Department. Renovations would turn an under-used washroom area into another holding cell to keep juveniles and females away

from the jail cell. The area should be sight and sound separated to keep civilians and staff safe. For physical line-ups, a citizen would never be inside of the secured lock-up area.

There is a planned replacement of three vehicles per year. The older vehicles are passed on to the Building Department, R&P, or are auctioned off if passed their usable years. A 2005 pickup will be replaced with a 12 passenger van which can be used for community service as well as shared with other departments.

Fire Department

Fifteen of the 30 radios still need to be replaced. A grant has been applied for to replace the SCBA air bottles. To date, about half have been replaced. The copy machine is two years past its life span and will need replacement.

DownTown

The basement in Building 1 is experiencing sewer smells and needs to be cleaned out. Four way-finding signs will be installed: two on Founders Way, one on Victory and one on Liberty. A gutter/downspout repair will go building by building. DownTown will partner with DPW on sidewalk replacement to maximize cost savings. Streetscaping is continued. Four to five flower beds will be replaced per year, similar to what the library has.

Other Capital Projects

Economic Development continues with land acquisition. Funding is mostly used for legal fees for the no cash bid or abandonment process. The Village is maintaining (mowing) close to 100 parcels. Economic Development is working with Community Development to lien properties for the cost of demolition. Kiosks are part of the bike/pedestrian plan and should be up by the end of the year. Staff is reaching out to business owners to see what interest there would be in a monument sign at Sauk Trail and Indianwood.

Recreation and Parks is proposing to add public washrooms and storage at 361 Artists Walk.

Future sustainability projects were discussed.

Trustee Brandon thanked Stephanie Masson for all she has given to the Board. The Board wishes Ms. Masson the best in her new endeavors. Budget reviews begin in April with meetings to be held on May 2, 3, 9, 10, 17, and 18.

Trustee McCray moved to adjourn at 1:55 p.m. Second by Trustee Brandon.

Respectfully submitted, Dolores DuBois, Recorder