

MINUTES OF THE OPEN LANDS PLANNING AD HOC PANEL OF THE VILLAGE OF METTAWA, ILLINOIS, HELD AT THE HOUR OF 7:30 P.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2014, IN THE MAPLE BOARDROOM OF THE HILTON GARDEN INN HOTEL, 26225 N. RIVERWOODS BOULEVARD, METTAWA, ILLINOIS.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bohm called the meeting to order at approximately 7:31 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Upon a call of the roll, the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Bohm and Members Cohn, Johnson, Lys, Sheldon, Stephenson and Weiland

Absent: None

Also present: Mayor Urlacher; Bob Irvin, Village Administrator; Tom Hines and Jeanna Thomas, residents; Colleen Liberacki, Deputy Village Clerk. Chairman Bohm declared a quorum present.

C. Review and approval of minutes.

First meeting of new panel, no prior minutes.

D. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

Chairman Bohm reviewed the Resolution No. 14-6 that established the panel, which included seven volunteer members, one of which was the chairman and two of which could be non-residents. He also detailed the panel's resources to draw upon and asked for further clarification regarding the propriety and standard protocol of meeting at property locations and email distributions.

Bob Irvin advised Chairman Bohm that any more than two people gathered from the panel constitutes a meeting and proper posting and notifications must be followed. Member Lys inquired about email restrictions and Bob Irvin advised that bcc distribution to all members would be necessary for panel communication, but to avoid choosing "reply all" option when responding to email.

Chairman Bohm noted that the panel term ended 12/31/2015, but Mayor Urlacher stated that the duration of the panel could be extended, should there be more work to do. Mayor Urlacher thanked those present for volunteering to be on the panel and thought that their contributions would be very insightful to the Village Board. Chairman Bohm noted that the panel had two jobs: 1) work with consultant proposals submitted and village trustees to select an open space planning consultant and 2) Develop open space plans for the Village.

Members introduced themselves and shared any professional or personal expertise that might lend itself to the panel.

E. REVIEW INVENTORY OF VILLAGE-OWNED PROPERTIES

Chairman Bohm distributed a village map that charted the village-owned properties and noted that there were 13 village properties, four of which were rather large and took priority attention ahead of the others.

F. DISCUSS OPEN SPACE ZONING PROPOSAL

Chairman Bohm presented the idea of supporting the Village Board in their attempt to reclassify numerous open lands by the Zoning Committee as a measure of protection by using a new Open Spaces zoning district. Bob Irvin explained that in the past few years, the village had acquired a number of large properties, which prompted this action. It would be the goal of the Zoning Committee to rezone the properties in question from residential/commercial to open lands space for their protection and at the very least, to discourage calls from developers who are frequently inquiring about the land.

Member Sheldon inquired if the tax base was affected by such a zoning activity, to which Bob Irvin replied no, it is just the intention not to develop made known. Mayor Urlacher stated that the property on Riverwoods Road across from the HSBC complex would not be rezoned open land, in order to maintain a future hedge, should additional village income be needed, as the property is now zoned commercial. Member Johnson inquired about the Riverwoods Blvd shared ownership status. Bob Irvin replied that it is not really shared, but the village owns a conservation easement. Member Johnson inquired if a future board could change the status of such, to which Bob Irvin replied that it could be done, but would be difficult to achieve.

Chairman Bohm inquired about consensus for a letter to the village supporting the open lands rezoning activity. Member Lys asked if the zoning was permanent, to which Bob Irvin replied that a property could be rezoned again, but an interested party would have to petition the village, and go through the zoning process to do so. Member Lys asked if there was a more permanent status to affix to the property, to which Bob Irvin replied that the property could be dedicated to the Illinois Nature Preserves and that could not be revoked. Chairman Bohm added that the higher level of protection also would require restoration activities on the owner's behalf. Member Weiland inquired about tax liability, to which Bob Irvin stated that the property would become tax-exempt. Tom Hines suggested a conservation easement on the property, referencing Deerpath Farms. Both Members Sheldon and Johnson elaborated further the difference between conservation easement and rezoning property.

Chairman Bohm inquired again about consensus for a letter to the village supporting the open lands rezoning activity, which six members were in agreement and Member Cohn abstained.

Tom Hines urged those present to consult the village attorney before offering support of the open space zoning approval, since no one was aware of the details. Member Weiland saw no downside, since the Village Board was going to approve it anyway and the panel was not making a decision, and Member Sheldon agreed. Member Stephenson wanted a copy of the open space zoning proposal and chose to abstain from the vote, as well as Member Cohn. At that point, Chairman Bohm withdrew the letter of support to the Village Board.

G. DEVELOP PROCEDURES OF COMMUNICATION TO PARKS & REC COMMITTEE, MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman Bohm outlined the four proposals that were previously distributed to the panel members. Member Sheldon noted that the proposals were not in any way consistent and suggested that Parks & Recreation Committee create a list of standard items to be included in the proposals as a comparison basis. She also inquired if the vendors had any idea as to the job scope. Bob Irvin replied that initially, the call was put out to many vendors and the focus was on qualifications and noted that in the collection of who responded that there were similar, yet different backgrounds. It was decided by the Parks & Recreation Committee to set a date and time for the vendors to present what they could do for the village and select a vendor with the concept plan that was closest to the vision of the Village residents. Member Sheldon inquired if it was possible to have two vendors, to which Bob Irvin replied that it was. He furthermore described the three largest village properties: Oasis Park, Whippoorwill Farm and the farm at 701 Riverwoods Drive and reflected on the process and research that was executed for a similar project and proceeded in stages during his tenure in Lincolnshire. He felt that at this stage the bidding would be difficult to do. It was decided that a consultant would be selected then the details of cost, contract, etc. developed.

Chairman Bohm felt that for vendor vetting, that the most important factor would be the past projects and some sort of questionnaire should be submitted to each vendor (and completed) prior to the vendor presentation. Member Weiland felt that they should pick one vendor that they felt confident with and that they liked. Member Johnson described the difference between each of the vendors: Tall Grass was experienced at working the land and managing the project; Christy was a landscape architect; Teska was good at gathering the bids and draws together the vendors and Conserve Lake County had a lot of expertise with open land management. He felt that the village would find a comfort level with one of the vendors.

Chairman Bohm wanted to avoid the residential survey that was suggested by some of the vendors, since the village had accomplished that already. Member Stephenson asked if the vendors were aware of where the village was in this process. Mayor Urlacher replied that Teska know the village the best, since the village has a history of working with them.

Chairman Bohm described three phases of restoration projects: 1) Analyze the property and develop a usage recommendation to the Village Board, 2) Execution and bidding of the final plan and 3) Ongoing management of property after project completion.

Member Lys suggested that the firms to do the planning should focus on the village as a whole and not by project. Mayor Urlacher stated that each vendor will have 12 – 15 minutes to describe their past projects at the Committee of the Whole meeting. Member Weiland suggested that they review the proposals before the meeting. Member Johnson felt that it will become clear at the meeting the different flavors of each vendor and the skill set they will bring. Chairman Bohm noted that of the 13 properties, only four or five would be considered for restoration. Member Stephenson suggested a list of four or five questions to be submitted to each vendor prior to the meeting.

Member Cohn stated that he was unclear why the panel was created and its purpose and he was concerned about expenses and spending money. Mayor Urlacher stated that as a result of the last Committee of the Whole meeting, it was communicated by the residents that they wanted input into the development of the open lands. Member Cohn had suggested that one option was to do nothing with the open lands. Member Sheldon stated that to do nothing

would result in encroaching invasives, which is destructive and there must be other options to protect the open lands. Member Weiland stated the previous alternative was to let the Parks & Recreation Committee make all the decisions, but the purpose of the panel was to let the residents have input into the development of the open lands. Bob Irvin noted that with the acquisition of 80 acres due to the recent purchases, they were in a position to consider open land management.

Member Lys stated that to do nothing was not an option, and she referenced her own property where the invasive buckthorns crowded out and killed the oak trees. She felt that the open lands needed a plan before making a decision about what to manage and what to leave alone. Member Johnson, who attends the Parks & Recreation Committee regularly, noted that the committee is aware of the invasive buckthorns strangling the oaks in the Whippoorwill Preserve. He furthermore stated that the cost of doing nothing is greater than the cost of doing something. Member Stephenson felt that there was a need to find a balance between the two opinions.

Member Sheldon stated that she had not visited all the village-owned properties. Mayor Urlacher stated that the panel needed to focus on the four or five largest properties, and the panel was set up so the residents could have input on the open land management. Chairman Bohm felt that the residents should have input on the planning phase, to which Mayor Urlacher agreed. Member Lys felt that the more detailed questions should be kept in the background and wondered if more proposals were needed. Member Johnson added that each planning consultant would have different ideas and also the unincorporated areas should be under consideration as well.

Chairman Bohm made inquires of those present when the vendor meeting should take place and the minimal topics to be covered by the vendors during the 12-15 minute presentations. Chairman Bohm asked Member Lys to compile a list of questions to be submitted to the presenting vendors at the Committee of the Whole meeting and she agreed to do so and would circulate via email for input and feedback. Member Cohn suggested that Conserve Lake County talk to the panel about what would be needed, to which Member Sheldon stated that this would be putting the cart before the horse. Member Johnson reminded those present that they are planning for the future and would need to hear the vendors with the community present. Tom Hines noted that Chairman Towne of the Parks & Recreation Committee put out many calls to invite vendors to submit a proposal, but only four responded.

Member Sheldon felt it was important that the selected vendor be familiar with their village. Member Cohn suggested Larry McCotter of Native Restoration Service could be added to the list of vendors to be invited to the Committee of the Whole meeting. Mayor Urlacher stated that he would ask Chairman Towne of the Parks & Recreation Committee to follow up with that suggestion and Chairman Bohm asked Member Cohn to inquire with McCotter if he was even interested in such a project and pass along the contact information.

H. DEVELOP PROCEDURES OF COMMUNICATION TO PARKS & REC COMMITTEE, MAYOR AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman Bohm was looking for guidance on this topic. Bob Irvin advised that the unapproved minutes produced from each meeting would be one tool of communication if shared with the Village Board. It was agreed that the recording secretary would submit the

minutes to Chairman Bohm, who would pass them to the Village Board. Bob Irvin further advised that email to Chairman Towne of the Parks & Recreation Committee would suffice for Committee of the Whole meeting dates and proposed support for the zoning change.

I. DEVELOP PLANNING PRIORITIES

Member Weiland suggested tabling this topic until the next meeting, to which all agreed. Chairman Bohm shared that it was a long-term goal to have properties #10, 11 & 12 east of Riverwoods Road and the two Granger properties, west of the tollway and north of Everett Road grouped into a conservation easement and restored as one large parcel..

J. DETERMINE FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Bohm polled those present for the best possible meeting date of each month. It was decided that the last Tuesday of each month would be the most feasible day that would work for everyone's schedule and ahead of the scheduled monthly meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee. The next scheduled meeting would be Tuesday, 7:30pm on June 24th, followed by July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28, November 25 and December 30.

K. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD.

Member Cohn suggested instead of choosing an open space planner, that the Parks & Recreation Committee should be assigned to the task and if that was not agreeable, then the panel should assume the duty. All members present objected, some repeating the history that led to the decision of an open lands ad hoc panel and stressed that the lack of collective expertise was paramount to the decision to create such a panel to select a vendor who would take on the task. Member Johnson further elaborated on the details.

L. ADJOURNMENT

With no further items discussed, it was moved by Chairman Bohm to adjourn the meeting at 9:24pm, seconded by Member Sheldon. The motion was carried.

Colleen Liberacki, Deputy Clerk

This document is subject to correction as noted on next meeting's minutes.