

**MINUTES OF THE OPEN LANDS PLANNING AD HOC PANEL OF THE VILLAGE OF METTAWA, ILLINOIS, HELD AT THE HOUR OF 7:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 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 7:10 p.m.

**B. ROLL CALL**

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

Present: Chairman Bohm and Members Cohn (7:30pm), Johnson (7:17pm), and Lys, Sheldon and Stephenson

Absent: Member Weiland

Also present: Tom Hines, resident; Bob Irvin, Village Administrator; Colleen Liberacki, Deputy Village Clerk. Chairman Bohm declared there was a quorum.

**C. Review and approval of minutes from the July 29, 2014 meeting.**

Member Stephenson moved to accept the minutes of July 29, 2014 as presented and Member Sheldon seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

**D. REVIEW WRD PROPOSAL**

Chairman Bohm presented the three-page WRD draft proposal for creation of an Open Space Master Plan for \$25,800, with a \$750 expense allowance, if necessary. The draft proposal was created by Jay Womak of WRD and addressed to Casey Urlacher, Mayor of Mettawa. Chairman Bohm advised those present that he and Womak visited 12 of the 13 Mettawa open land sites, the direction of which the panel was charged to oversee. The only exception was the residential property located in Riverside Preserve, which was locked and gated.

Chairman Bohm described the deliverable of the planning proposal as a multiple step process of: information gathering from the stakeholders via interviews (Mayor Urlacher, village trustees, Open Lands Panel, etc.), assessing each property individually, and developing a master plan that would accomplish many things. Of the numerous goals, they are expected to provide an inventory sheet per property, a sustainable strategy, connect the residents with the outdoors, and provide stewardship for the present and future as well as recommend and initiate conservation easements where appropriate.

Chairman Bohm recognized that some properties would not be appropriate for the attention or resources of the village due to the size of the property or potential residential/commercial (village hall) development, to which Bob Irvin agreed, citing property #2, the strip of land next to Oasis Park. Chairman Bohm stated that he did not want to waste aerial photography or contour planning on a piece of property that would not be appropriate.

Member Sheldon cautioned that if the panel was charged with the direction of 13 open land properties, why would they not evaluate all 13 properties, and that WRD should determine if some of these sites would not be appropriate for village resources. Bob Irvin replied that he would be hesitant to waste village resources on a road ditch (property #2) or the berm next to Costco. Member Sheldon thought that the initial elimination should come from WRD and be documented so. She inquired how many properties might be eliminated from this assessment. Bob Irvin listed properties #1, 13, 4, 8 and the restaurant site as consideration as low priority and possible elimination from the Open Space Master Plan.

Member Sheldon then questioned if certain properties were eliminated by the input of the stakeholders, then possibly the \$25K fee could be negotiated down if not all the properties would need evaluation by WRD. Member Johnson inquired about the right-of-way areas that are not addressed and if this could be included in the comprehensive natural areas planning concept. He felt that it should be addressed by Parks & Recreation Committee, but that they were not listening to his suggestions. Also, he noted that there were valuable oaks and hickory trees that were in danger of dying due to the overcrowding of invasive buckthorn trees that needed to be removed.

Chairman Bohm stated that the right-of-ways were not mentioned in the Open Lands Panel resolution and the Parks & Recreation Committee should develop a detailed plan to address this. Member Sheldon thought that if the right-of-ways were in need of attention, that they could be included in the open lands management plan. Member Lys agreed, but thought that this task falls under the panel's purview. Chairman Bohm said their focus should be on the 13 village owned properties and not the trail extensions or maintenance thereof. Tom Hines thought the right-of-ways should be included in the village maintenance responsibility.

Member Lys requested clarification if the open space master plan should include the right-of-ways. Bob Irvin noted that some state and village roads are included in the right-of-ways and some HOs might want the existing buckthorn for privacy screening. Member Johnson thought there should be some definition about how the right-of-ways should look and Bob Irvin added that there were some existing uses already: recreational, residential, etc. as desired. Chairman Bohm thought that WRD would take feedback from the panel and HO input to formulate a plan. Bob Irvin thought that the master plan would offer ideas from which to choose and the resulting project would be accomplished in phases.

Chairman Bohm noted that the right-of-ways were important to many people and asked if there was any further input about the content of the WRD proposal. He further suggested that the detailed plan for all 13 properties was likely not necessary, but that all 13 properties should be mentioned in the Open Space Master Plan. Tom Hines thought he might borrow some of the ideas to be implemented for his own property.

Chairman Bohm further described the process of formulating the plan as taking inventory, walking the site, interviewing stakeholders, the panel, Park & Recreation Committee, MOLA and other key residents. He thought this would result in the overall plan, with estimated costs and suggestions on how to phase in the work. He noted that WRD furnished two proposals for their work done in Kankakee regarding gully erosion and Liberty Elementary School in Chicago for education and gardens, which also included their cost estimate. Chairman Bohm polled the members for additional input, and members

Stephenson, Lys, Sheldon and Johnson were all in agreement with the potential cost and process.

Member Cohn was amazed that for \$25K that not one weed would be pulled or flower planted, and after the money was spent, the land would look the same. Member Sheldon explained that for the money proposed, WRD would spend much time evaluating the property, inventorying it, interviewing people and come up with a blueprint on how to proceed along with projected costs. Chairman Bohm attempted to explain to Member Cohn that WRD's services for this proposal was similar to what an architect would provide to someone wishing to build a house, and an estimated costs associated with the project. Member Cohn was still not convinced of the value of the proposal. Bob Irvin used the analogy that in order to build a house, you needed a plan to proceed, and doing the work with the plan is much more cost effective than to proceed without one. Member Sheldon stated that simply WRD was being paid for their expertise, since no one was volunteering or possessed the knowledge on how to lead the planning of the open lands. She further noted that it was already expensive that the village was revisiting some of its earlier choices and redoing the work previously done. Member Stephenson added that the plan would last for years to come, and for the life of the project. Bob Irvin further added that this plan would help prioritize certain projects, i.e. putting in a water line before, not after, a road would be paved. Irvin noted that three significant properties were purchased in two years and the village now needed a long-range plan and the associated expertise.

Both Member Johnson and Bob Irvin felt that the proposal price of the plan (\$25,800 + \$750 for expenses) was very fair in comparison to past projects both of them were involved in. Member Johnson cited Teska & Associates fee for \$3500 for one site plan alone and he was confident that Steve Christy would add value and look out for village priorities. Member Johnson felt that it was appropriate that money was spent upfront to conceive an open lands management plan for the village. Member Sheldon noted that the village paid an architect to design and create a village hall plan. Chairman Bohm noted that WRD would also be helping them put some lands into a conservation easement. Member Sheldon felt that this was a good plan and reasonable approach and wanted to proceed with it.

Bob Irvin inquired about the village maintaining the right-of-ways, such as Mettawa Lane and Twin Drive, to which Chairman Bohm added Bradley Road, Old School Road and St. Mary's Road. Member Sheldon questioned what the beginning and the end of this project should be and was uneasy that the inclusion of the right-of-ways would delay the start of the open lands management plan implementation. Chairman Bohm suggested that they go with the plan as is, and address the right-of-ways later. Bob Irvin questioned what WRD would visualize for the right-of-ways, and what effort would be needed. He also added that the village hall location was not yet determined and that would impact the decision on how some of the properties would be addressed and could impact the proposal price. Chairman Bohm agreed, citing property #12, being considered for the village hall location. Bob Irvin also cited the Riverside Preserve residential property, which was acquired as part of a real estate transaction, that might be exempt from the open lands management plan, as it could be sold to a potential HO later. Both Chairman Bohm and Member Stephen agreed.

**It was moved by Member Sheldon, and seconded by Member Lys to recommend to the Village Board that they accept the WRD Environmental draft proposal for creating the**

**Open Space Master Plan, not to exceed \$25,800, in addition to a \$750 expense allowance. The motion was carried.**

Chairman Bohm inquired if he should advise the Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Committee, Tim Towne as to what had been decided. Bob Irvin advised him to let Tim Town know, and as this is a professional services agreement, it does not require bidding. Member Johnson noted that property #5 is part of a HOA and is very attractive, but not mentioned much for open lands management. Chairman Bohm agreed, further stating that the buckthorn should be removed, and this would encourage more wildlife.

**E. UPDATE ON OASIS PARK DESIGN AND STATUS**

Chairman Bohm reported that all the dirt has been dumped and they are moving around the topsoil and ready for planting. He inquired if Teska submitted a planting plan, to which Member Johnson replied that there was only a preliminary plan for the trees on the berm. Member Stephenson stated that the rest of the plan would be up to the panel to address. Bob Irvin noted that the purpose of the “park” designation was to prevent a neighboring suburb from annexing Mettawa land for the purposes of increasing their own park district. Member Johnson also noted that there was concern of the state of Illinois expanding the oasis on the tollway and acquiring the property as well. He believed the wildflower seeding for the cover crop was planned as the extent of the activity. Member Sheldon noted that the rain had made things difficult and increased erosion.

**F. UPDATE ON LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE 100 YEAR VISION PLAN**

Chairman Bohm shared a copy of the plan and noted that the Lake County Forest Preserve website has a link for it as well.

**G. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT MAY APPEAR BEFORE THE AD HOC PANEL FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE BOARD.**

Chairman Bohm noted that the WRD proposal examples of the Liberty School and Kankakee projects would be emailed to those interested as requested.

Chairman Bohm polled all members present to see if the future meetings could be changed from 7:30pm to 7:00pm on the last Tuesday of the month, and all were in agreement.

Member Cohn inquired about the possibility of zoning open land and how to go about doing so, should WRD suggest certain sites. Chairman Bohm outlined the process as appealing to the Zoning Board, who in turn submitted the request to the village board. Chairman Bohm inquired if a private HO could put their property into a conservation easement, to which Bob Irvin replied that “spot” zoning was not likely, but a property like Kurtis’ 65+ acres is partly in conservation. It was also noted that the Lake County Forest Preserve has land that is zoned office, and the village wanted it zoned residential. In the end LCFP preferred the open space designation.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further items discussed, Member Sheldon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28pm, and Member Lys seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

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Colleen Liberacki, Deputy Clerk

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