

**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2015 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING OF THE VILLAGE OF METTAWA, ILLINOIS, HELD IN THE
SAVANNAH ROOM OF THE HILTON GARDEN INN HOTEL, 26225 N.
RIVERWOODS BOULEVARD, METTAWA, ILLINOIS**

- A. CALL TO ORDER:** 9:30am
B. Roll Call - present: Trustees: Armstrong, Brennan, Clark, Maier, Pink, Towne and Mayor Urlacher

Also present: Jim Ferolo, village attorney; Bob Irvin, village administrator; and Cathy Nelson, village clerk

C. DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL VILLAGE HALL SITES AND POTENTIAL DESIGNS.

Mayor Urlacher thanked the 45-plus residents for coming to this meeting which is being held for discussion regarding a potential village hall. He informed the audience that the agenda distributed will be followed, nothing will be voted on today but that ideas will be presented and discussed. He will make some opening comments to be discussed and then there will be presentations from Rick Phillips and Tom Heinz which will then be discussed.

- The village Hall has been under consideration for several years
- Currently the Village rents meeting rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn for all Board and Committee/Commission meetings
- Village records are stored at several locations, including the village clerk's residence, a storage place at LifeStorage in Libertyville, former Trustee Tindall's home and the Lake Forest College Library.
- All village officials, including the Mayor, Village Clerk and Village Administrator work out of their homes
- A majority of residents in a 2014 survey supported building or converting a structure into a village hall or leasing in the village.. 58.3% This is an increase from 50.6% who supported a village hall in the 2012 survey
- The long-term viability of using resident's homes for storage and office space is not sustainable
- While we are not a full service municipality like Libertyville or Lake Forest, we are subject to the same rules and regulations under state law
- We are no longer a small budget municipality. The general fund now exceeding 3 million with our SSAs. There are an estimated 80 lots in the village that are residential. There are no plans for any future commercial development
- Population in 2000 was 373 people. As of 2013 we have 553 residents

Mayor Urlacher then spoke regarding the financial aspect of building a village hall.

- The Village has been fiscally conservative and thoughtful in its use of village revenue and resources. With nearly 4 million in the general fund reserves even after purchasing four key properties in the village for a total of over 4.5 million dollars in the last four year. Two of the properties were purchased specifically for the preservation of open space.
- More than 2.25 million dollars has been shared with residents over the past 10 years as tax rebates.
- Status-quo estimate is \$24,000.00 per year, while building maintenance will cost an estimated \$26-27,000.00 per year.

Discussion ensued with questions regarding finances and costs. Administrator Irvin detailed maintenance cost projections and Trustees Armstrong and Towne detailed building cost projections and what they include:

- Building cost comparison over 20 years: Rental: \$1,642, 000.00
Build: \$1,499,000.00
Status Quo: \$522,000.00

Questions from residents were taken and discussed regarding parking space requirements, activities handled by the village hall

Renting versus building was discussed. Mayor Urlacher stated that in consideration of rental vs. build space the board did not want to go outside the village and that options in the village were thoroughly investigated with no positive results.

Trustee Maier discussed the nightmare of getting mail without a facility and how difficult it is to change the village mailing address. It takes years for the county and state to implement address changes.

Clerk Nelson shared the problems encountered in having to run a municipality out of a private home including security of resident information, records, and mail issues.

Resident Bill Kurtis asked if taxes would go up and Mayor Urlacher said “no” That as long as he is Mayor the village will not allow commercials development except in the Oasis business park zone east of the Tollway.

Resident Pat Cork stated that a modest village hall would solve many problems facing the village, protection of records, security, and privacy, an opportunity to meet privately and ease of doing day-to-day business. If something happens to the Village Clerk, there may be no way to retrieve records from her home for an extended period of time.

After further discussion, Mayor Urlacher asked resident architect Rick Phillips presented a concept plan for a village hall.

Rick Phillips presented his concept drawings (attached) for a 2250 square foot building and discussed the layout and space requirements. Discussion on location, requirements and costs ensued.

Mr. Phillips stated that the design shape is simple and that adding additional square footage if necessary would not be a problem.

Potential hours of operation were discussed and use for meetings. The clerk felt that at this time the village does not need 9 to 5 seven days a week service.

Upon inquiry from resident Bill Kurtis, Trustee and finance chair John Maier and administrator Irvin detailed the financial status of the village. Mr. Irvin stated that the village is in good shape in regards to capital improvements and that it has approximately \$4million dollars in general fun reserves on top of the \$600,000.00 in reserves after the budget. Discussion ensued.

Administrator Irvin discussed government operational requirements for the village that will not change in the near future. Further, in 5 years the village will have 100% sales tax from the two hotels. The village as a home rule municipality does have the ability to have our own home rule sales tax. Of the 19 communities in Lake County, Mettawa is one of four who does not have that tax.

Mayor Urlacher stated that the village owns approximately 90 acres and does not see any site available for commercial development.

The village police and fire setup and costs were discussed along with the current Costco revenue.

Mayor Urlacher then introduced residents Lilly von Hodowanic-Romanov and Tom Heinz who presented a second village hall option.

Ms. Romanov gave opening remarks sharing with the audience her vision and feels strongly that we should not destroy the rural and private atmosphere of Mettawa. She feels that we did not find Mettawa, Mettawa found us.

She had asked architect Tom Heinz to work up plans for a log cabin style structure. The longevity and old rural feel of the structure are very important to her.

Tom Heinz then presented his plan which uses the same basic specifications as Mr. Phillips plan but incorporates a larger meeting room and is designed to use the Whippoorwill Farm grounds, for all to share the open space. Smaller meetings could be held and there is space for all village records. He showed the placement and traffic entrance on the property and remarked that the traffic is light and quiet. He also described the idea for a counsel ring. His design incorporates natural building materials and the parking could be on a new cement base/grass covered surface. The old Korhumel patio could also be used for functions.

Discussion ensued regarding the structure, costs and locations.

Resident Andy Cohn stated that he is part of this project. He is not for a village hall but if we do need one he feels that we should not hold back. Structure and environment effect decision making. This village is about rural open space and the structure should not be a typical government building but should keep with the rural history of the village.

Resident Mike Connelly agreed that it should done right. It is an opportunity to do something incredibly unique.

Trustee Jan Pink agreed and felt that just because a building is unique, it does not have to cost more. We will be living with it forever, so let's make it what the village stands for.

Trustee Clark stated that social gatherings do not happen in this village and that we need to be realistic in what we plan for. The vast majority of comments are in favor of a village hall but let's be realistic and modest.

Resident Bill Kurtis noted that the visitor's center at Independence Grove suited our village vision.

Resident Michael Pelech suggested that we look into other potential solutions. Also the financial implications if Costco goes away. Look at it from a financial and environmental standpoint. Mayor Urlacher described the efforts of the last four years to find the best option. Discussion ensued and it was noted that both Korhumel and Driekosen homes were looked into as potential space but they did not meet the village needs and the costs to bring those old structures up to code were prohibitive. This study has been ongoing for four years.

Resident Deb Pelech felt it should be kept low key. Keep it the best kept secret and putting it on Route 60 does not do that.

Carol Armstrong questioned if an all-inclusive survey could go out based on information from this meeting.

Landscape architect Drew Johnson noted that the suggested sites are high traffic sights and that the Oasis Park site has been overlooked.

Resident Ginny Bartholomay felt that the Heinz building looked too much like a church and that we should consider using re-claimed materials where practical.

Resident Adrienne Tindall emphasized how important preserving records and plans intact are to the business of the village and offered her assistance in designing file space.

Resident Adam Lyons talked to the importance of using ecologically smart architectural, environmentally conscience practice; minimizing ones impact on the environment and going back to the fundamentals of Mettawa, preserving our trees, preserve our open lands. Make it a smart design that does not suck the natural resources out of the world. Build it so that when it is finished, it is not a constant drain.

Tom Heinz stated that the Tindall house is the closed example of what their design would look like.

Resident Ron Pink said that from what he has heard from the crowd that there is a need for a Village Hall and a want to move forward.

Administrator Irvin cautioned not to let rooms get too big as they become nonfunctional for village purposes

The possibility of another survey was then discussed and Mayor Urlacher stated that he would like feedback from today's meeting and that today's meeting could not be put into survey form.

Resident Jess Ray stated that the first Committee of the Whole meeting on this subject was held in 2012 and the village has been working on options ever since.

Mayor Urlacher stated that the next step will be selecting a location at the March Board meeting and then going out for bid for an architect. He thanked everyone for attending and offering such valuable input.

Mayor Urlacher reminded the audience that the next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on March 14, 2014 and will have a presentation on village open space plans by Jay Womack of WRD environmental.

- D. EXECUTIVE SESSION: NONE HELD**
- E. CALL TO RECONVENE: NOT NECESSARY**
- F. ROLL CALL: NOT NECESSARY**
- G. MATTERS REQUIRING ACTION ARISING AS A RESULT OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION: NONE**
- H. ITEMS TO BE REFERRED: NONE**

I. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, it was moved by Trustee Towne, seconded by Trustee Maier to adjourn the meeting

The following voted:

Aye: All

Nay: None

Mayor Urlacher declared the meeting adjourned at 11:38PM

Cathy Nelson, Village Clerk