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VILLAGE MANAGER

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**NOTICE OF MEETING  
ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF WILMETTE**

**Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 2:00 P.M.  
Village Hall Council Chamber- Broadcast Only  
Village Hall is Closed Due to the Village President's Declaration of Local Disaster and  
Public Health Emergency Order**

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Minutes**  
Minutes of the Administration Committee meeting of July 6, 2020
- III. Continued Discussion of Boards & Commissions**
  - 1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Housing Commission**
  - 2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission**
  - 3. Composition of Boards and Commissions**
- IV. New Business**
- V. Public Comment**
- VI. Adjournment**

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IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY AND NEED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN AND/OR ATTEND A VILLAGE OF WILMETTE PUBLIC MEETING, PLEASE NOTIFY THE VILLAGE MANAGER'S OFFICE AT (847) 853-7509 OR TDD (847) 853-7634 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

This meeting will be held remotely by the Village Board Administration Committee. The meeting will be broadcast live at <https://www.youtube.com/user/villageofwilmette/live> and on Channel 6 and then published on the Village's website. Members of the public may make public comment in advance of the meeting by emailing their comments to [publiccomment@wilmette.com](mailto:publiccomment@wilmette.com) or comment may be made during the meeting through YouTube live which will be provided to the Village Board. To join by teleconference (audio only), please dial (872) 239-8225 and use Conference ID 619 171 195# (audio only). There is also the option to participate in the meeting via a PC, mobile device or phone. For complete details and instructions on joining or participating in the meeting, please [click here](#).



**MEETING MINUTES**

**ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE VILLAGE BOARD**

**BROADCAST ONLY (VILLAGE HALL CLOSED DUE TO THE VILLAGE PRESIDENT’S DELCARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ORDER) ON MONDAY, JULY 6, 2020 AT 2 P.M.**

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**Members Present:** Trustee Kathy Dodd, Chair  
Trustee Peter Barrow  
Trustee Daniel Sullivan

**Staff Present:** Michael Braiman, Village Manager  
John Adler, Director of Community Development

**Guests:**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kathy Dodd called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m. Committee members Daniel Sullivan and Peter Barrow were present.

Trustee Dodd explained the remote meeting procedures and options to participate.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2018.**

Trustee Dodd directed the Committee’s attention to the draft minutes of the Administration Committee meeting of February 13, 2018.

Trustee Barrow moved that the Committee approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Trustee Sullivan. No further discussion occurred on the motion. Voting yes: Trustees Dodd, Barrow and Sullivan. Voting no: none. **The motion carried.**

### **III. DISCUSSION OF BOARDS & COMMISSIONS**

Trustee Dodd said she was excited about starting the process of reviewing the Boards and Commissions, particularly the Housing Commission and Human Relations Commission. She thanked the residents for all their feedback and staff for their hard work in preparing for the meeting. She went on to say in light of current events, the attention and focus has been on racial and social inequity and what the community can do to address these issues. She apologized for not addressing the issues sooner and said she hopes the Board and community members can work together to reinvigorate the Housing and Human Relations Commissions and to review the selection and appointment process for all Boards and Commissions.

Trustee Dodd then gave an overview of the process the Administration Committee will follow in preparing their recommendations to the Village Board who will then make the final decision on how to proceed.

Village Manager Mike Braiman gave a presentation (PowerPoint attached) on the Boards and Commissions review that was conducted by staff. He said the scope was determined by feedback from the Board, community members and staff. He said the main focus of the review is based around the Housing and Human Relations Commissions and defining their roles going forward. He said staff also has looked at the training, orientation, recruitment and recognition of all commission members as well as the composition of board and commission membership.

Mr. Braiman discussed the training component of commission members. He said that the current process can be improved upon to include on the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act, the Village email policy and training in the roles and responsibilities of a commissioner. He said that training and overviews of existing policy documents would also be helpful for the land use commissions.

Mr. Braiman then discussed consolidation opportunities. He said in 2010 some consolidations were made where the Community Relations Commission, Youth Commission, Fine Arts Commission, Board of Health and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities were consolidated into the Human Relations Commission. He said the Bicycle Task Force was also combined with the Environmental & Energy Commission. He said the Human Relations Commission in particular never quite took off and this is a good opportunity to review that commission. He said at this point, no further consolidations are advised.

Mr. Braiman then discussed the roles and responsibilities of the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. He said the primary focus of the

Housing Commission was to administer the now privately funded Housing Assistance Program (HAP). He said the Emergency Assistance program continues to be funded by the Village and administered through the Community Development Department.

Mr. Braiman said the primary focus of the Human Relations Commission has historically been to administer the Black History Month poster contest and the Wilmette Person of the Year award. He said other than that, after the consolidations, the commission struggled to find a path forward once the youth grant program funds were depleted.

Mr. Braiman said staff will be reviewing boards and commissions in nearby communities to help inform the Committee's process. Trustee Dodd said that looking at some of the projects those commissions (Housing and Human Relations) have worked on and the corresponding results would be helpful. Mr. Braiman said they would review agenda packets and minutes and reach out to the staff liaisons as well to get some good feedback for what they are doing and report back at a future committee meeting. Trustee Dodd then asked if the communities with no Housing Commission have an affordable housing plan. She also asked where the work that needs to be done for an affordable housing plan was being done in those communities.

Mr. Braiman discussed reviewing the appropriate numbers for commission membership and term limits. Mr. Braiman went through how many members each Commission or Board maintains. He also discussed term limits and maximum number of terms.

Trustee Barrow asked about quorum issues for the Zoning Board, specifically if they were related to 2017. Community Development Director John Adler said that those quorum issues are not recent but will verify the exact time period. Trustee Dodd said for the Zoning Board there is a difference between having a quorum and full membership. She asked if it would be helpful to know how often all members are present, as when not all are present, it can be an issue for the applicants who are applying for a variance. Mr. Braiman said it's appropriate to answer the question and research would be done and staff would come back to the committee for direction. Trustee Sullivan said even if there isn't a quorum in a Zoning Board meeting, it's the job of the commissioners to do the leg work for the Village Board and it only becomes a problem when there are five Board members at a meeting.

Mr. Braiman talked about recruitment and selection of new members. He said Corporation Counsel Stein will prepare a memo on the appointment process for review a future Committee meeting. Trustee Dodd said she

thought President Bielinski was preparing a memo regarding his process to appoint members as well.

Mr. Braiman discussed recommendations on increasing the number of residents volunteering to serve. He said that staff is going to create an online form to submit Talent Bank Questionnaires (TBQ) in order to update the current PDF process. He said it may be helpful to refresh the Talent Bank each year by reaching out to applicants to review their interest and keep the Talent Bank up-to-date. Mr. Braiman also said a more robust communication strategy is under review with Metro Strategies to encourage more residents to volunteer.

Trustee Barrow asked when someone submits a TBQ, what is the response the person receives and from whom. Mr. Braiman said the TBQ is shared with the Village Board and a letter is sent on behalf of the Village President acknowledging the receipt and follow-up as appropriate. Trustee Barrow said there is a perception in the community that there is a lack of communication from the Village when a TBQ is submitted. He said he wanted to be sure there was a process in place to acknowledge the receipt of TBQs.

Trustee Dodd asked how the vacancies are communicated. Mr. Braiman said he doesn't believe that the communication of open vacancies has been very effective to date. He said focusing on this component would be prudent to provide the opportunity for more residents to apply, and this would be reviewed.

Mr. Braiman discussed the selection process and showed some tables with information on the total number of TBQs received, appointments, reappointments and outstanding TBQs. Trustee Dodd asked how reappointments are handled. Mr. Braiman said anytime a commissioner's term is expiring and they are eligible for reappointment, President Bielinski asks the staff liaison to reach out to see if the commissioner wishes to be reappointed. If they are interested, their recommendation for reappointment is placed on the Village Board agenda. At the next meeting, the reappointment is placed on the agenda. Mr. Braiman said in his time in Wilmette, he cannot recall a time when a commissioner interested in serving another term did not get reappointed.

Trustee Sullivan said using the ZBA as an example, if someone serves their initial appointment of five years and wishes to serve another term, that's the reappointment. Mr. Braiman concurred. Trustee Sullivan said if a commissioner's two terms are up, President Bielinski does not have the power to reappoint them if they have no waiting applicants. Mr. Braiman concurred. Trustee Sullivan then said once they fulfill all their terms, they cannot go back a year later and serve another term. Mr. Braiman said he

believes the Code says “consecutive terms” but would clarify this point. He said he does believe that if there becomes a vacancy with no one to appoint, that person may continue to serve until an appointment can be made in order to continue the commission’s business at hand.

Trustee Dodd asked if there is anything that the Administration Committee would need to look at for the reappointment process. She asked if a person is done serving their allowable terms, are they eligible to serve on another commission. Mr. Braiman said yes. She then asked if that happens very often. Mr. Braiman said that usually happens with someone with specialized training such as someone with an architectural or engineering background who can provide value on more than one commission such as the Appearance Review Commission and Plan Commission. He said finding volunteers with those specialized backgrounds proved difficult in the past.

Trustee Dodd said that speaks to the need to identify vacancies to allow as many members of the community to serve on the commissions as possible.

Mr. Braiman discussed the importance of recognizing members who devote significant time and energy to serving.

Trustee Dodd talked about the next steps in the process. She said a review of the Housing and Human Relations Commission in other communities will take place. She also said the memos from Mr. Stein and President Bielinski on the process for recruitment would also be forthcoming. She went on to say looking at other communities and their term limits and membership guidelines would also be reviewed.

Trustee Barrow asked for a sense of surrounding communities and how their Housing and Human Relations Commissions are composed. He said he would like to see what types of backgrounds are being utilized.

Trustee Sullivan said he agreed and said the key is see what similar commissions are established in neighboring communities. He said he thinks it’s important to determine where the commissions help the Board and staff. He said the purpose of the commissions is to aid in the Board’s decision making responsibilities.

Trustee Dodd concurred and said in addition to looking at the Housing and Human Relations Commissions in surrounding communities, a review of those communities’ recruitment and selection process would also be helpful.

Trustee Sullivan said he thinks that more than seven members on most commissions is too many. He said exploring membership numbers and the mixed use of term limits would be helpful. He said that he understands the long terms (five years) for ZBA makes sense, as there is much information to sift through and it takes a while to learn.

Trustee Dodd said at the next meeting, she thinks the focus should be the Housing and Human Relations Commissions to determine their mission and objectives. She said discussing the selection/appointment process should take place at the following meeting. She said a fourth meeting could be convened to prepare the recommendation for the Village Board. Trustees Sullivan and Barrow concurred with the timeline. Trustee Sullivan said good information has been presented and the time should be taken to investigate and review it. Trustee Dodd said she hoped to get a second meeting scheduled at the end of July, another meeting in August and then wrapping up sometime after that. Mr. Braiman said he believes having a meeting in late July will allow enough time for staff to review and prepare recommendations.

There was no further discussion on the topic.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were public comments emailed prior to the Administration Committee meeting and Mr. Braiman read them aloud:

Dan O'Brien wrote to request the Board re-establish the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. He said recent protests and marches have demonstrated the community's desire for change and a need to promote a welcoming, inclusive and livable community. He said we need a robust and active Housing Commission to assess housing needs and to develop an affordable housing plan. He said this commission must represent the diverse interests and expertise of our residents and must be accountable to the Trustees and community at large for setting and attaining growth targets for affordable housing in the Village. He said it's been disappointing to see vacancies go unfilled despite talented members of the community submitting applications to volunteer their time, and he would like an explanation as to why they haven't been filled. He also said there needs to be a transparent process for how the Village makes appointments. He thanked the Board and staff for their work on behalf of the community and requested the Board take the necessary steps to ensure the commissions fulfill their mandates.

Paul Traynor said he strongly supports the immediate staffing of the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. He said the lack of racial diversity in Wilmette is due in part to federally-sanctioned programs that barred black Americans from purchasing homes in Wilmette for decades. He said while those laws have been rescinded, the rise in property values now restricts entry into the community from an economic perspective, which by and large affects minority populations. He said he knows Trustees have much on their plates and deserve our thanks and assistance, but broader involvement from community members can assist in addressing these issues and challenges. He said he hopes the Board will delegate responsibility and oversight of this work to other members of the community and asked the Board to utilize the Talent Bank to find potential appointees.

Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg said she and her family moved to Wilmette five years ago, and she immediately wanted to get involved. She said she submitted a TBQ for the Human Services and Housing Commissions, but did not receive a response. She said she has gone on to become a New Trier Township Trustee, which has given her an opportunity to see the process to which committee vacancies are filled. She said they advertise for openings and present all the applications to their Board for consideration. She said through this process, they have maintained active, passionate full committees. She also said she hopes Wilmette will rejuvenate their committee program. She went on to say she is lucky to live in an engaged community, but it's a shame not to take advantage of its expertise to better the Village.

Lorelei McClure said she believes the Housing Commission and the Human Relations Commission are essential to the effectiveness and success of putting an affordable housing plan into action. She asked the Board to reactivate these commissions. She said while she is appreciative of all the work the Board does, she feels there is more to do to be more inviting and inclusive. She said we need the Housing Commission to promote housing for low and moderate income families, people with disabilities, low income seniors, a rental and mortgage subsidy program and periodic studies of needs. She said now more than ever we need the Housing Commission to develop an affordable housing plan based on resulting evidence and broad-based community input. She said the Human Relations Commission stands as the welcoming hosts to the community and should actively engage in carrying out their mandate of supporting all segments of the population, planning and supporting community events, promoting the arts and multi-cultural events, promoting justice and equality and encouraging and facilitating solutions to social issues, as well as addressing emergent community needs and serving as an advocate educator, communicator and point of contact for all Wilmette residents.

Gail Schechter wrote that she is mystified as to how the Human Relations Commission's role was reduced to merely recognizing various cultures and the Black History Month poster contest. She said Human Relations Commissions have a specific purpose in supporting diverse and inclusive communities, education and conflict resolution and is the central government body overseeing race relations in policy and practice. She referenced the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service, "Guidelines for Effective Human Relations Commissions," which she said should be Wilmette's road map. She said that too many African American residents and low-income residents and people with disabilities have left Wilmette because they felt unwelcome. She said having a Human Relations Commission ensures Wilmette is paying attention.

Ms. Schechter followed up with an additional email that stated she is in full support of re-establishing the Housing Commission to promote housing for low- and moderate-income families and people with disabilities. She said Wilmette needs this commission to promote equity and growth.

Laura Smith said she appreciates the Board's commitment to providing affordable housing and their June 4 message of fostering an inclusive environment where people of all racial, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds feel safe and welcomed. She said she feels the Village can continue to work toward the collective responsibility to be more inclusive and diverse by fully staffing and empowering both the Housing Commission and Human Relations Commission.

Gina Speckman and John Boex requested the Board to reinstate the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. Ms. Speckman said if we are a tolerant and caring community, let's act like it. She said allowing these commissions to dissolve is unacceptable and Wilmette is better than this. She asked for the commissions to be reinstated and for involved citizens to work on actionable results in a timely manner.

Lisa Braganca said the African American population in Wilmette is less than 1%, which she feels is due to affordability and systemic racism in federal mortgage lending. She said in order to be inclusive and welcoming, Wilmette must make room for African American residents who may not have been able to accumulate the wealth necessary to pay market rates for housing. She said limiting our welcome to only wealthy African Americans fails to address centuries of slavery and Jim Crow laws and restrictive covenants, redlining and discriminatory federal home loan practices. Ms. Braganca went on to say that Wilmette needs a robust active Housing Commission, to which there are many residents who have applied to serve to no avail. She said that eliminating the Housing Commission would be a mistake. She said the Administration Committee

must reform the process of appointments and eliminate the long standing practice of having the Village President hold complete discretion in appointments. She also said the Board should ensure the Housing Commission is authorized and encouraged to recommend ways Wilmette can become an inclusive and welcoming community, including mandating all developers include affordable units in their buildings and affirmatively reaching out to encourage African Americans to move to Wilmette.

Eve Williams, who said she served two terms on the Village's Youth Commission, implored the Board to reactivate the Human Relations Commission and Housing Commission. She said she thinks those commissions should be filled with interested citizens, including high school students. She said that nationally we have seen that these students have interest in many topics, including human rights and the environment. She said in light of the events following the death of George Floyd, it makes sense to devote attention to this topic and re-energize the Human Relations Commission. She said similarly given Wilmette's commitment to affordable housing and making Wilmette an inclusive and welcoming community, the Housing Commission should reconvene. She discussed the process to which she was appointed to the Youth Commission saying that it was not very organized or intentional. She said she thinks a process where applications of all people, including black, brown, white, young, old, gay, and straight would ensure equally diverse representation on every commission.

Van Gilmer wrote that he is African American and has been a resident for 13 years. He said there was not enough paper or time to express what he internally has felt through the years he has made Wilmette his home. He said that during these unusual times, it seems strange to have to request to re-establish a commission to actually deal with Wilmette becoming more inclusive instead of remaining as exclusive as many of its residents have enjoyed for so long. He said that making affordable housing is not enough; the Village needs to make people of color feel welcome beyond smiles and patronizing behavior. He said a well-thought out strategy for stepping up inclusion over exclusive behavior and signs of welcome over threats of exclusion must become the watchword of the Village of Wilmette. He said he looks forward to hearing great things about the plans for reviving both the House and Human Relations Commissions.

Caryn Summer, a 28-year resident and 2-term member of the Appearance Review Commission, urged the Board to activate the Housing and Human Relations Commissions in order to ensure the Board's stated commitment to fairness and justice is more than a statement of words. She said she believes the public sentiment within the community is to support the activation of these commissions and it is incumbent upon the Village government to represent the diversities of all Wilmette residents. She said

she also recommended the Talent Bank be utilized in a fair and democratic way. She thanked the Board for their service to the Village.

Mr. Braiman then read comments that were received via YouTube Chat:

Jon Marshall referenced the mandates for the Housing and Human Relations Commissions and questioned what happened to those and why they weren't used anymore. He said he hopes Wilmette will not just look to neighboring communities for examples but will also try to be a leader in the realms of housing and human relations. He asked how many people who applied to the Talent Bank in the last two years have actually been appointed.

Stefanie Boles thanked the committee and urged them to reactivate the Housing and Human Relations Commission, which are very important to her and her family. She said considering neither commission has been active since 2016, the appointment process is obviously flawed.

Jessie Dienstag said thank you in advance for rejuvenating the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. He begged the Village Board to fast track the process. He said we need immediate, transparent, intentional and accountable action.

Cindy Fey said she had a question from Malaika Myers. She asked if all appointments are made from individuals that have submitted TBQs.

Trustee Dodd asked if there were any citizens on the call and Microsoft Teams meeting that would like to speak.

Peter Sung Ohr thanked the Trustees for their hard work. He said he supported all the comments about revitalizing the Human Relations and Housing Commissions. He said that it's important to expand the review of neighboring communities to a statewide and countrywide review. He said while he appreciates the current discussion, the topic is something that should be discussed regularly to keep relevant with the times.

Isaac Hatchett said he has lived in Wilmette since he was five. He said he is a member of HEROES, Healing Everyday Racism in our Schools, which is a working group of students, parents and community members who organized in 2018. He said the group feels affordable housing is necessary to eradicate the long-term structural racism that feeds the everyday racism that exists in our schools. He said going in school in Wilmette has had damaging effects on him and his schoolmates. He said this mainly because of the racism they see daily. He said while he was not the victim of racism, he was damaged because he has been corrupted by the bias and racism he sees daily. He said when you only meet 12 kids

of color after nine years of school, you create damaging biases and instant thoughts. He said this is not okay or normal. It damages you to never interact with people of color or lower incomes. He said in a society that systematically pushes down people of color, making it harder for them to buy houses in rich areas or feel welcome to do so, it's our job to stand up against injustice and break down these barriers to equality. If we truly believe everyone is truly equal and that our school systems are good, then you should be able to attend them, no matter what color or socio-economic background you come from.

Van Gilmer said that after seven decades he is surprised there can be nothing that will make us any better. He said we need to start thinking about something we can do that is extraordinary; not just building affordable housing that looks like crap or making a place for a few people to live so that we can say we are integrated. He said we need a commission that by heart thinks about how to begin including people. He said it is not right for people in this day and age to just be meeting a black person for the first time or making their first friend that is black. He said it is damaging to us all to live a lifetime separated but act as though we are together. He said Wilmette needs to think about how to attract people who are missing. He said he goes a lot of places around the North Shore and he is usually the only black person. He said it's not easy. He said he doesn't want children to graduate and just be meeting people of color for the first time. He said he is happy the Board is thinking about housing and human relations.

Cindy Fey said she just wanted to applaud the previous speakers.

Trustee Dodd asked Mr. Braiman if there was anyone else waiting. Mr. Braiman said there was one more YouTube chat comment from Leslie Rayrich that simply said, "Yes, Isaac."

Laurie Goldstein thanked the Trustees for their service to the community. She said she is an enthusiastic supporter of a well utilized Talent Bank, a fully functioning Housing Commission charged with creating a substantial affordable housing plan and a full functioning Human Relations Commission. She said in the June 4 letter to the community, the Board stated their wish to become a welcoming community, which is a lovely and no doubt authentic sentiment; however, she asked what it means when in the past Wilmette sadly was not welcoming to all. She said historically Wilmette residents have a widespread history of excluding black people and other people of color residing in our Village. She said she feels it's difficult to describe ourselves as a welcoming community until we uncover this painful history and grapple with it in some way. She used an analogy, of imagining a member of our community who hosted large parties and all were invited except you. It was known to all, including you, that you were

intentionally excluded from these terrific gatherings. This went on for many years with residents participating in your exclusion. One day out of the blue, the host decided they wanted you to come and gave no explanation for their earlier exclusion. Would you want to go to the party? Probably not. She said I'm sure you understand the gist of the analogy. An understanding and acknowledgement of our past is the ground work that must be laid to in order to truly create a welcoming Wilmette. The Human Relations Commission seems to be the appropriate body to compile this history, research ideas for acknowledgement and make recommendations on that basis. She said that former Village President John Jacoby wrote two articles for the Wilmette Beacon related to this topic. Ms. Goldstein said Mr. Jacoby made a fine start, and she hopes the Human Relations Commission can build upon this. She said she knows Wilmette is not unique in this history of racial exclusion; neighboring towns also have histories of exclusion based on race, as do other parts of our country. She said she doesn't single Wilmette out. She said she agrees this era of racial residential exclusion is long past and no one currently living in Wilmette participated. That merely means the responsibility has been handed down to our generation. She said she hopes this responsibility is not left to the next generation. She said we have the opportunity to take the lead and become a leader to other communities.

Trustee Dodd thanked everyone for their comments and said the information will be utilized in staff's review of the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. There was no further public comment.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

At 3:40 p.m., Trustee Sullivan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Barrow. No further discussion occurred on the motion. Voting yes: Trustees Barrow, Sullivan and Chair Trustee Dodd. Voting no: none. **The Motion carried.** The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Norwood  
Deputy Village Clerk



**Meeting Date:** July 30, 2020

**To:** Village Board Administration Committee

**From:** Michael Braiman, Village Manager

**Subject:** Boards and Commissions Review #2- Cover Memo

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The Administration Committee is scheduled to meet remotely on Thursday, July 30 at 2:00pm to continue its review of boards and commissions. The following is attached for the Committee's reference:

- Memo from the Village Manager
- Housing Commission purposes in other municipalities
- Human Relations Commission purposes in other municipalities
- Spreadsheet of comparable communities- number of members, length of terms, term limits
- PowerPoint presentation for July 30, 2020 meeting
- Communication from Trustee Joel Kurzman; communication from residents that were received for the July 6, 2020 Committee meeting but not included in the packets due to timing.



**Meeting Date:** July 30, 2020  
**To:** Village Board Administration Committee  
**From:** Michael Braiman, Village Manager  
**Subject:** Boards and Commissions Review- Meeting #2

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On July 6, 2020, the Administration Committee held its first meeting to review the Village's boards and commissions. At that meeting, the Administration Committee was provided a presentation in regards to the history and background of the Village's various boards and commissions. The Committee also determined a work plan moving forward that would consist of multiple meetings.

The July 30, 2020 Administration Committee meeting will focus on the following:

- Roles and responsibilities of the Housing Commission
- Roles and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission
- Composition of boards and commissions
  - Membership diversity/qualification of members, length of terms and term limits, number of members

A subsequent meeting will focus on the selection and appointment process for board and commission members. Additional meetings regarding various aspects of the Village's boards and commissions will be scheduled as necessary prior to bringing a final report to the Village Board for consideration.

### **Housing Commission- Roles and Responsibilities**

Per the Village Code, the purpose of the Housing Commission is:

*to present to the President and Board of Trustees recommendations for the alleviation of the shortage of decent, safe and reasonably affordable housing for the elderly and low and moderate income persons, including, but not limited to, the study and development of housing alternatives and housing requirements in the village. Thereafter, the commission shall periodically review and update its recommendations with respect to any recommendations made to the President and Board of*

### *Trustees.*

In reviewing the purposes of Housing Commissions in nearby communities (see Attachment #1), the Village's identified purpose is generally consistent with those such as Highland Park and Evanston.

For more than a decade, the primary responsibility of the Village's Housing Commission was to administer the Housing Assistance Program (HAP). Following the transition of HAP from the Village to the privately funded not-for-profit Housing Our Own- Wilmette, the Commission did not have any active projects.

To ensure a Housing Commission that supports staff's ongoing efforts related to affordable housing and provides continuous value to the Village Board's deliberations and to the community at-large, it would be beneficial to identify set responsibilities for the Commission. Responsibilities, such as those enumerated below, may be referenced in the Village Code as functions of the Housing Commission. Recognizing that there are limits in how much work the Housing Commission and Village staff can manage at any given time, it should be understood that not all of the functions listed below can be taken up by the Commission immediately. As such, staff has listed the suggested functions in the order we recommend the Commission begin its work:

- Work with and monitor Community Partners for Affordable Housing's (CPAH) community land trust related to the Optima development (and any future land trust related projects)
- Assist in the review of the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent review of the Village's Affordable Housing Plan as directed by the Village Board
- Conduct a housing needs assessment as directed by the Village Board
- Coordinate with Housing Our Own- Wilmette regarding the housing assistance rental and property tax subsidy programs
- Monitor sales at the Village Green Atrium to ensure units remain affordable; make recommendations to the Village Board should units sell at prices deemed not affordable
- Research methods to preserve existing affordable housing units
- Research methods on how to increase the number of affordable housing units in concert with the Village's Affordable Housing Plan
- Research methods and policies to encourage developers to include affordable units in new multi-family buildings in concert with the Village's Affordable Housing Plan
- Review with Village staff IHDA's publication of updated affordable housing statistics in Wilmette
- Conduct public education regarding the Village's Fair Housing requirements
- Submit an annual report to the Village Board Administration Committee regarding the Commissions goals, accomplishments, activities, etc.

During the last Committee meeting, there was a question as to how municipalities without a Housing Commission create and/or update their affordable housing plans. Our research found the following:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Housing Plan</b>	<b>Oversight Body</b>
Deerfield	No	N/A
Glencoe	Yes	Village Board
Glenview	Yes	Village Board
Lake Bluff	Yes	Village Board/ Plan Commission
Northbrook	Yes	Village Board/ Plan Commission
Winnetka	No	N/A

### **Human Relations Commission- Roles and Responsibilities**

In 2010, the HRC was created from the consolidation of several boards and commissions which included: Board of Health, Community Relations, Fine Arts, Persons with Disabilities and Youth Commissions. At that time, the purpose of the Commission was identified as follows:

- (1) To promote the well-being of all members of the community;
- (2) To support all segments of the population including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, minorities, and low income groups;
- (3) To support, address and make recommendations concerning emerging community needs;
- (4) To serve as an advocate, educator, communicator, and a point of contact for all segments of the population in the community;
- (5) To promote justice and equality;
- (6) To encourage and facilitate solutions to social issues;
- (7) To promote the arts and multi-cultural events;
- (8) To plan or support community events and programs that bring together and support diverse members of the community; and
- (9) To provide recommendations to the Village Board on matters pertaining to community welfare.

In reviewing the purposes of similar commissions in nearby communities (see Attachment #2), the Village's purpose, other than promotion of the arts, is generally consistent with those in Deerfield, Glencoe, Highland Park and Northbrook.

A review of Wilmette's HRC's minutes and agendas from 2014 to 2016 found that the two primary projects for the HRC were the Wilmette Person of the Year Award and the Black History Month contest. Prior to 2014, the Commission was also responsible for administering the Village's youth grants program. However, those grants were funded by a dedicated charitable contribution made by the Clampitt Estate and when the funds were exhausted in

2013-14, the grant program was discontinued.

Similar to the Housing Commission, it would be helpful to identify a number of ongoing functions for the HRC to be responsible for moving forward. A review of nearby Human Relations Commissions found the following projects:

- Value statements such as welcoming and inclusive pledges, stances on hate and intolerance
- Community engagement initiatives and discussions on racism, social equity and community building
- Meetings with community organizations to better understand community needs
- Community events (i.e. celebration of cultures) and days of service
- Humanitarian and character awards
- Service agency grants
- Resource programs and review of services for teens, young adults, persons with disabilities, etc.

A common theme in reviewing the agendas and minutes was the challenge in identifying projects for the commissions to work on each year. Given that, and the challenge the Village's own HRC had in this regard, it may be appropriate for the HRC, once filled by members, to initially review similar commissions in other communities, identify the needs of Wilmette and create a proposed two-year work plan. Such a plan may then be presented to the Village Board Administration Committee for review and discussion.

### **Composition of Boards and Commissions**

Based on discussions at the July 6, 2020 Committee meeting, the following is to be discussed:

- Membership diversity/qualifications
- Length of term and term limits
- Number of members

To aid the Committee in its deliberations, staff reviewed how nearby comparable communities address each of the above topics. While summaries of the survey are below, detailed results can be found in Attachment #3.

#### Membership Diversity/Qualifications

While some of the Village's boards and commissions have required or desired background/experience/expertise for members, others do not. The following table identifies boards and commissions with such requirements or qualifications as stated in the Village Code:

<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Requirements/Qualifications per Village Code</b>
Appearance Review	Preferred education or experience in architecture, landscape architecture, graphic design, interior design, urban planning, real estate development and transactions, construction, engineering
Building Code Board of Appeals	Required: Structural engineer, civil engineer, architects (2), builder/construction superintendent
Electrical	Required: Professional engineer, electrical contractor, journeyman electrician, Fire Chief, representative of electric supply company (ComEd)
Human Relations	Preferred training or experience in public health/medical professional, creation/promotion of the arts, promotion of diversity and cultural understanding, fostering youth-oriented services, person with a disability or an immediate family member of a person with a disability <u>Possible additions: Senior Citizens, Veterans (following closure of the Wilmette American Legion facility)</u>
Environment & Energy	Preferred training or experience in environmental matters, energy conservation, transportation, pollution control, engineering, science and public health, environmental health/medical field, and cycling as a green mode of transportation

The following boards and commissions do not currently have any such requirements or qualifications, but may benefit by identifying desired backgrounds and experience (note that such backgrounds and experience would not be mandatory nor are the lists necessarily all encompassing):

<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Examples of Desired Qualifications</b>
Board of Fire & Police	Human resources, diversity, public safety, legal
Housing	Affordable housing expertise, real estate, development/construction, financing, legal, urban planning
Historic Preservation	Historic preservation, architecture, history, landscape architecture, urban planning
Fire/Police Pension	Financial investments, human resources
Transportation	Transportation-related industries including, civil engineering, site plan development, traffic and parking studies, public transportation systems, bike and pedestrian studies
Plan Commission	Architectural, real estate, legal, finance, landscape, urban planning, development, construction, housing
Zoning Board of Appeals	Architecture, real estate, legal, finance, urban planning, construction

Given the Administration Committee’s focus on the Housing Commission and HRC, staff

reviewed preferred backgrounds for these commissions in nearby communities. The communities with identified backgrounds are listed below:

### *Housing Commissions*

Evanston:

*In appointing new members to the Commission, the Mayor will consider knowledge, familiarity, and/or experience with local housing issues, homelessness and affordable housing issues, different housing population in Evanston including seniors, the different types of housing stock in Evanston, renter and homeowner housing issues, and housing development and financing for public and private sectors. At least one (1) member of the Commission must be an alderman.*

Lake Forest:

*The Housing Trust Fund Board shall consist of three members, each of whom shall have demonstrated interest, knowledge, ability, experience or expertise in one or more of the following areas: housing related issues, the needs and interests of senior citizens, financing mechanisms for affordable and moderately priced housing units, employer assisted housing, legal aspects of establishing and maintaining units as affordable, development review and approval processes and the character of the city.*

### *Human Relations Commissions*

Deerfield:

*The Community Relations Commission shall consist of members broadly representative from the community at large.*

Glencoe:

*The village president and board of trustees, in appointing members to the forum, shall take into account benefits to the village and its residents of having members who reflect the diversity of the village community and whose training, interest, background or experience will aid the forum in its work.*

### Length of Term and Term Limits

The table below summarizes the length of terms and term limits in the Village compared to nearby communities. In our review of nearby communities, some had term limits and others did not. For those with term limits, they were generally consistent with those already established by the Village (see Attachment #3 for more detail).

<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Length of Term- Wilmette</b>	<b>Length of Term- Avg. of Comps.</b>	<b>Term Limits- Wilmette</b>
Fire/Police Pension	3/2 years	*	None
Board of Fire & Police	3 years	*	3 terms
Environment & Energy	3 years	3.0 years	2 terms
Housing	3 years	3.5 years	2 terms
Human Relations	3 years	3.0 years	2 terms
Electrical	4 years	*	None
Historic Preservation	4 years	3.6 years	2 terms
Plan	4 years	3.4 years	2 terms
Transportation	4 years	2.5 years	2 terms
Appearance Review	5 years	3.2 years	2 terms
Bldg. Code Bd. Appeals	5 years	*	None
Zoning	5 years	4.25 years	2 terms

*\*Staff did not review these bodies in other communities.*

Staff does not recommend any changes to term length or term limits for the Village's various boards and commissions.

#### Number of Members

The Village's boards and commissions membership is as follows:

<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Number of Members- Wilmette</b>	<b>Number of Members - Avg. of Comps.</b>
Fire/Police Pension Boards	2/2	*
Board of Fire & Police	3	*
Bldg. Code Bd. of Appeals	5	*
Electrical	5	*
Housing	5	6.3
Plan	7	7
Transportation	7	7
Zoning	7	8
Appearance Review	7	7
Environment & Energy (EEC)	9	8.8
Historic Preservation	9	7.3
Human Relations	9	8.5

*\*Staff did not review these bodies in other communities.*

In December 2018, the Historic Preservation Commission discussed and supported a reduction in the number of members from nine to seven. Given the HPC's position, the comparable analysis above, the fact that historic preservation is a highly specialized field, and for consistency with other land use bodies, staff recommends reducing the HPC membership from nine to seven.

In regards to the HRC and EEC, membership totaling nine residents appears to be appropriate given these are working commissions that require significant time commitments from the members to help implement their initiatives (example: Greenest Region Compact).

### **Next Steps**

As discussed above, the purpose of the July 30, 2020 Administration Committee meeting is to further review the topics of this memorandum. Additional meetings may be scheduled to continue any necessary discussions.

In addition to potential meetings needed to be scheduled, a future meeting will be scheduled for the Committee to review the appointment and selection process of board and commission members.

### **Documents Attached**

1. Housing Commission purposes in other municipalities
2. Human Relations Commission purposes in other municipalities
3. Spreadsheet of comparable communities- number of members, term length, term limits
4. PowerPoint presentation

## Comparable Housing Commission Purposes and Functions

### **Evanston- Housing and Homelessness Commission (Source: Evanston City Code)**

Purpose: In order to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents, the City Council establishes a Housing and Homelessness Commission ("Commission") to provide for the planning, expansion, maintenance, conservation and rehabilitation of Evanston's housing stock. The Commission shall also work to maintain and expand affordable housing for Evanston's low, moderate, and middle income residents. The Commission will be responsive to needs for change in housing related matters to maintain a diverse residential environment throughout the community and to combat homelessness. The Commission will provide recommendations on funding and policies to carry out City Council priorities related to housing and homelessness.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission must:

Evaluate and recommend tools to expand or maintain affordable housing to the Planning and Development Committee;

Evaluate and recommend tools to expand or maintain housing programs and services for people experiencing homelessness to the Human Services Committee;

Provide recommendations on the use of the City's Affordable Housing Fund dollars to the Planning and Development Committee;

Provide recommendations on the use of the City's HOME Investment Partnerships Program ("HOME") funds to the Planning and Development Committee;

Provide recommendations on the use of the City's Emergency Shelter Grant Program ("ESG") funds to the Human Services Committee;

Provide guidance on the implementation of the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance;

Submit an annual report to City Council on the goals, activities and accomplishments of the Commission; and

Create subcommittees, as necessary, in furtherance of the Commission's purpose.

### **Highland Park- Housing Commission (Source: Highland Park website)**

The Highland Park Housing Commission was created to encourage and engage in the development of low-and moderate-income housing. Currently, the commission operates rental housing in four affordable developments, maintains a waiting list for condominium units in an affordable senior development and works closely with Community Partners for

Affordable Housing, which offers affordable home ownership opportunities.

The commission works to assemble land and generate revenue in order to develop affordable senior and family housing, administers the City's Housing Trust Fund to provide financial resources for affordable housing activities, oversees the City's Inclusionary Housing Program and other housing initiatives and makes recommendations to the City Council on policy matters and programs related to affordable housing.

### **Lake Forest- Housing Trust Fund Board (Source: Lake Forest City Code)**

The Board shall make recommendations to the City Council regarding the programs and operations of the Housing Trust Fund, including, without limitation:

- (1) The goals for the Housing Trust Fund;
- (2) The Housing Trust Fund's operating budget and projected expenditures and revenue;
- (3) The Housing Trust Fund's funding and award policies and priorities;
- (4) The development of the Housing Trust Fund's programs;
- (5) The Housing Trust Fund's program requirements;
- (6) The Housing Trust Fund's procedures for disbursing Fund resources;
- (7) The review of applications for Housing Trust Fund awards;
- (8) The granting of awards;
- (9) The monitoring of eligible activities funded by the Housing Trust Fund; and
- (10) The evaluation of Housing Trust Fund activities.

## Comparable Human Relations Commission Purposes and Functions

### Deerfield- Community Relations Commission (Source: Deerfield website)

The Community Relations Commission is established to foster and promote understanding, mutual respect, cooperation, and positive relations in a diverse inclusive community. The Community Relations Commission is also to promote increased participation in all aspects of community life and a sense of shared community among all residents. The Community Relations Commission shall act in an advisory capacity to Village President and Board of Trustees. The Community Relations Commission shall have the following functions and duties:

- Study and recommend means of developing better relationships among all residents in a diverse and inclusive community of Deerfield.
- Encourage residents to be "service-oriented" in the opportunities to assist one another in the community and the neighborhood.
- Promote and support initiatives with federal, state and local governmental agencies, commissions, businesses, schools, civic and religious organizations, neighborhood and community events aimed at increasing goodwill and civil engagement among the residents and the global community at large.
- Recognize and approve honors or awards for persons, firms, or entities that serve or advance understanding, mutual respect, cooperation and positive relations between and among residents of Deerfield.

### Glencoe- Community Relations Forum (Source: Glencoe website)

The Forum will promote and encourage mutual respect, cooperation and understanding between all people who live or desire to live, work, visit or do business in the Village; and promote the lawful preservation of human rights of all citizens as guaranteed by ordinance, statutes and laws so as to maintain and foster a positive atmosphere that provides all individuals with an equal opportunity to grow, participate and share to the best of their ability in our economic educational, political, social and judicial system.

The Forum encourages understanding and respect, acknowledges the value of diversity in the community and encourages openness in the Village to all persons, regardless of race, color, gender, age, religion, disability, natural origin, sexual orientation, marital status, personal status, military discharge status, socioeconomic or housing status.

This diverse body plans and supports community events, promotes justice and equality, encourages and facilitates solutions to social issues, addresses emerging community needs and serves as an advocate, educator, communicator and point of contact for all Glencoe residents.

The function and duties of the forum are to engage in the following activities when so directed by the Village Board or as the Forum otherwise believes such activities are appropriate:

- Act in an advisory capacity to the Village President and Board of Trustees on human relations issues within the Village and upon specific matters as may be requested by the President or Board of Trustees;
- Provide a public forum for community relations issues;
- Enlist the aid of and consult with schools, religious institutions, service organizations, civic groups and public agencies to promote good will and understanding among people of the Village and to further human relations; and,
- Provide educational programs on human relations issues or practices of unlawful discrimination, conduct public meetings to aid in alleviating discrimination or bias and as means of fostering positive human relations within the Village; and issuing such publications that may assist in the performance of its functions.

#### **Highland Park- Human Relations Advisory Group (Source: Highland Park website)**

The Human Relations Advisory Group has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Supports community programs to improve the quality of life; and
- Provides advisory recommendations related to developing effective solutions to social problems and opportunities related to equality and social justice.

#### **Northbrook- Community Relations Commission (Source: Northbrook Village Code)**

To foster and promote understanding, mutual respect, cooperation and positive relations between and among all residents of Northbrook to the end that a sense of shared community among residents is strengthened, the value of each individual is affirmed and the constitutional rights of all are realized.

The Community Relations commission shall act in an advisory capacity to the president and the board of trustees and in furtherance thereof shall:

- Assist residents to discover opportunities to gather, contribute, volunteer and participate in neighborhood and community events and services.
- Cooperate with and enlist the aid of other commissions, organizations, schools, religious institutions and neighborhood and civic groups in actively promoting goodwill and understanding among the people of the community.
- Receive, hear and investigate noncriminal complaints of tensions, practices of discrimination and acts of prejudice and intolerance against any person or group because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability and seek to resolve such matters.
- Initiate or conduct any education or information programs which it believes will further the purpose for which it was established.
- Receive, investigate and hear complaints of unlawful real estate practices.
- Promote amicable settlement of disputes between residents through mediation and conciliation services.
- Adopt such rules and procedures as may be necessary in order to fulfill the commission's mission.
- Render an annual written report to the village president and board of trustees and issue such special reports concerning its work and investigations as it and the board of trustees may consider desirable.

## Comparable Analysis- Boards and Commissions

### Number of Members

	Appearance Review	Environmental	Historic Preservation	Housing	Human Relations	Plan	Transportation	Zoning
Deerfield	7	9	N/A	N/A	9	7	N/A	7
Evanston	N/A <sup>1</sup>	11	11	9	N/A <sup>2</sup>	9	7	7
Glencoe	N/A <sup>3</sup>	12	5	N/A	9	10	N/A <sup>4</sup>	7
Glenview	7	7	7	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	7
Highland Park	N/A <sup>3</sup>	10	7	7	7	7	7	7
Lake Bluff	7	7	7	N/A	N/A	7	N/A	N/A <sup>5</sup>
Lake Forest	7	4 <sup>6</sup>	7	3	N/A	7	N/A	7
Northbrook	7	7	N/A	N/A	9	9	N/A <sup>7</sup>	7
Winnetka	7	7	7	N/A	N/A	9	N/A	7
<b>Average</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.0</b>
Wilmette	7	9	9	5	9	7	7	7

### Term Limits

	Appearance Review	Environmental	Historic Preservation	Housing	Human Relations	Plan	Transportation	Zoning
Deerfield	None	None	N/A	N/A	None	None	N/A	None
Evanston	N/A	2	2	2	N/A <sup>2</sup>	2	2	2
Glencoe	N/A	None	None	N/A	2	None	N/A	None
Glenview	None	None	None	N/A	None	None	N/A	None
Highland Park	N/A	None	2	2	3	2	None	2
Lake Bluff	None	None	None	N/A	N/A	None	N/A	None
Lake Forest	3	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	2
Northbrook	None	None	N/A	N/A	None	None	N/A	None
Winnetka	None	None	None	N/A	N/A	None	N/A	None
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>
Wilmette	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

### Years per Term

	Appearance Review	Environmental	Historic Preservation	Housing	Human Relations	Plan	Transportation	Zoning
Deerfield	3	3	N/A	N/A	3	3	N/A	5
Evanston	N/A	3	3	3	N/A	3	3	5
Glencoe	N/A	3	5	N/A	4	5	N/A	5
Glenview	4	4	4	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	4
Highland Park	N/A	2	4	4	2	4	2	4
Lake Bluff	2	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A
Lake Forest	2	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2
Northbrook	3	3	N/A	N/A	3	4	N/A	4
Winnetka	5	3	3	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Wilmette	5	3	4	3	3	4	4	5

### Footnotes:

- 1: Evanston has an internal Design and Project Review Committee who handles this function.
- 2: Evanston consolidated the Human Relations and Housing Commissions into the Housing & Homelessness Commission, membership info under "Housing" above.
- 3: Glencoe and Highland Park handle the ARC functions through Plan Commission.
- 4: Glencoe has certain transportation activities performed through the Sustainability Commission
- 5: Lake Bluff has a combined Plan Commission and ZBA
- 6: Lake Forest utilizes an internal Environmental Sustainable Committee for this function.
- 7: Northbrook utilizes a Transportation Advisory Committee, no membership information available.

# Boards & Commissions Review

Administration Committee Meeting

July 30, 2020

# Scope of Meeting

- Roles and responsibilities of the Housing Commission
- Role and responsibilities of the Human Relations Commission
- Composition of boards and commissions
  - Membership diversity/qualifications
  - Term limits and length of terms
  - Number of members

# Housing Commission Purpose

*To present to the President and Board of Trustees recommendations for the alleviation of the shortage of decent, safe and reasonably affordable housing for the elderly and low and moderate income persons, including, but not limited to, the study and development of housing alternatives and housing requirements in the village. Thereafter, the commission shall periodically review and update its recommendations with respect to any recommendations made to the President and Board of Trustees.*

# Housing Commission Suggested Functions

- Work with and monitor Community Partners for Affordable Housing's (CPAH) community land trust related to the Optima development (and any future land trust related projects)
- Assist in the review of the Housing Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and subsequent review of the Village's Affordable Housing Plan as directed by the Village Board
- Conduct a housing needs assessment as directed by the Village Board
- Coordinate with Housing Our Own- Wilmette regarding the housing assistance rental and property tax subsidy programs
- Monitor sales at the Village Green Atrium to ensure units remain affordable; make recommendations to the Village Board should units sell at prices deemed not affordable
- Research methods to preserve existing affordable housing units
- Research methods on how to increase the number of affordable housing units in concert with the Village's Affordable Housing Plan
- Research methods and policies to encourage developers to include affordable units in new multi-family buildings in concert with the Village's Affordable Housing Plan
- Review with Village staff IHDA's publication of updated affordable housing statistics in Wilmette
- Conduct public education regarding the Village's Fair Housing requirements
- Submit an annual report to the Village Board Administration Committee regarding the Commission's goals, accomplishments, activities, etc.

# Human Relations Commission Purpose

- (1) To promote the well-being of all members of the community;
- (2) To support all segments of the population including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, minorities, and low income groups;
- (3) To support, address and make recommendations concerning emerging community needs;
- (4) To serve as an advocate, educator, communicator, and a point of contact for all segments of the population in the community;
- (5) To promote justice and equality;
- (6) To encourage and facilitate solutions to social issues;
- (7) To promote the arts and multi-cultural events;
- (8) To plan or support community events and programs that bring together and support diverse members of the community; and
- (9) To provide recommendations to the Village Board on matters pertaining to community welfare.

# Human Relations Commission Functions in Other Communities

- Value statements such as welcoming and inclusive pledges, stances on hate and intolerance
- Community engagement initiatives and discussions on racism, social equity and community building
- Meetings with community organizations to better understand community needs
- Community events (i.e. celebration of cultures) and days of service
- Humanitarian and character awards
- Service agency grants
- Resource programs and review of services for teens, young adults, persons with disabilities, etc.

# Composition- Diversity of Membership

## Existing Requirements/Preferred Backgrounds in the Village Code

<b>Appearance Review</b>	Preferred education or experience in architecture, landscape architecture, graphic design, interior design, urban planning, real estate development and transactions, construction, engineering
<b>Building Code Board of Appeals</b>	Required: Structural engineer, civil engineer, architects (2), builder/construction superintendent
<b>Electrical</b>	Required: Professional engineer, electrical contractor, journeyman electrician, Fire Chief, representative of electric supply company (ComEd)
<b>Human Relations</b>	Preferred training or experience in public health/medical professional, creation/promotion of the arts, promotion of diversity and cultural understanding, fostering youth-oriented services, person with a disability or an immediate family member of a person with a disability <u>Possible Additions: Senior Citizens, Veterans</u>
<b>Environment &amp; Energy</b>	Preferred training or experience in environmental matters, energy conservation, transportation, pollution control, engineering, science and public health, environmental health/medical field, and cycling as a green mode of transportation

# Composition- Diversity of Membership

<b>Suggested Backgrounds/Experience</b>	
<b>Board of Fire &amp; Police</b>	Human resources, diversity, public safety, legal
<b>Housing</b>	Affordable housing expertise, real estate, development/construction, financing, legal, urban planning
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	Historic preservation, architecture, history, landscape architecture, urban planning
<b>Fire/Police Pension</b>	Financial investments, human resources
<b>Transportation</b>	Transportation-related industries including, civil engineering, site plan development, traffic and parking studies, public transportation systems, bike and pedestrian studies
<b>Plan Commission</b>	Architectural, real estate, legal, finance, landscape, urban planning, development, construction, housing
<b>Zoning Board of Appeals</b>	Architecture, real estate, legal, finance, urban planning, construction

# Composition- Term Limits & Length of Term

<b>Board/Commission</b>	<b>Length of Term- Wilmette</b>	<b>Length of Term- Avg. of Comps.</b>	<b>Term Limits- Wilmette</b>
<b>Fire/Police Pension Boards</b>	3/2 years	*	None
<b>Board of Fire &amp; Police Comm.</b>	3 years	*	3 terms
<b>Environment &amp; Energy</b>	3 years	3.0 years	2 terms
<b>Housing</b>	3 years	3.5 years	2 terms
<b>Human Relations</b>	3 years	3.0 years	2 terms
<b>Electrical</b>	4 years	*	None
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	4 years	3.6 years	2 terms
<b>Plan</b>	4 years	3.4 years	2 terms
<b>Transportation</b>	4 years	2.5 years	2 terms
<b>Appearance Review</b>	5 years	3.2 years	2 terms
<b>Bldg. Code Board Appeals</b>	5 years	*	None
<b>Zoning</b>	5 years	4.3 years	2 terms

# Composition- Number of Members

Board/Commission	Number of Members- Wilmette	Number of Members - Avg. of Comps.
Fire/Police Pension Boards	2/2	*
Board of Fire & Police Comm.	3	*
Bldg. Code Board of Appeals	5	*
Electrical	5	*
Housing	5	6.3
Plan	7	7.0
Transportation	7	7.0
Zoning	7	8.0
Appearance Review	7	7.0
Environment & Energy	9	8.8
Historic Preservation	9	7.3
Human Relations	9	8.5

**Recommendation: Reduce Historic Preservation membership from nine to seven**

# Next Steps

- Continue discussions on roles/responsibilities of the Housing and Human Relations Commissions and board/commission composition as needed
- Schedule Committee meeting to review the appointment and selection process
  - Receive memorandum from Corporation Counsel on the appointment process

Joel Kurzman  
Village Trustee

July 20, 2020

Re: Administration Committee Process to Reformulate Boards and Commissions

Dear Chair Dodd, Colleagues of the Administration Committee, and Residents of the Village of Wilmette:

Thank you for receiving my comments and suggestions pertaining to our potentially reformulated Boards and Commissions. I appreciate that the Administration Committee is taking up this important subject matter. I am offering perspective through the lens of making the Village of Wilmette more open and inviting to diverse populations, including people of color. Should some of these suggestions merit consideration, I look forward to you incorporating them into the purviews of the reformulated Boards and Commissions.

I offer a series of strategies for reformulated Boards and Commissions that can 1) create more touch points for diverse populations, including people of color, to spend time in the Village of Wilmette; 2) recruit women and minority owned business; 3) market our Village to target audiences who are currently underrepresented in our community; 4) address affordable housing; 5) foster a brother-sister relationship with another Chicago area municipality with contrasting demographics to our own.

**Creating more touch points for diverse populations, including people of color, to spend time in the Village of Wilmette.** By opening up our Village in a welcoming fashion, we increase the opportunity for a wide range of people to spend time with us. We have an opportunity to bring diverse populations who visit our Lakefront attractions, such as Gillson Park and the Baha'i Temple, to visit our downtown. These additional touchpoints create opportunities for people to connect with our Village while also bringing new patrons to our downtown businesses. There is also an opportunity to bring people to Wilmette by being a member of the North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau. As the only nearby municipality not currently a member, we lose not just economic opportunity for our local businesses, but we also lose additional touch points and exposure of our Village to diverse populations, including people of color. Reformulated Boards/Commissions could advise this bridging of economic development and human relations activity.

**Recruiting women and minority owned business.** Further bridging economic development and human relations, reformulated Boards/Commissions could research and recommend strategies for attracting and/or recruiting women and minority owned business. The potential benefits of a successful program include: the economic opportunity afforded to the business

owner; the potential for the business owner to live in the Village of Wilmette; community building that creates interest and feels welcoming to diverse populations; and potentially diversifies our sales tax base.

**Market our Village to target audiences who are currently underrepresented in our community.** Using Illinois State Board of Education demographics as illustration, I suspect the public at large (outside of Wilmette) might be somewhat surprised by the 39% and 44% non-White composition of Romona and Avoca West Elementary Schools. To spend time at these schools' respective International Festival and Intercultural Night would be revealing to many. Schools aside, tactful marketing of the diversity we currently enjoy could be an effective means of attracting diverse populations, including people of color, to the Village of Wilmette. A reformulated Board/Commission, in conjunction with staff and consultants, could respectfully seek assistance from underrepresented groups of residents for their input about appropriate and tactful marketing strategies.

**Affordable Housing.** Reformulated Boards/Commissions could potentially work on the following topics related to affordable housing: pull-through of the Optima commitment; recommend elements for a new affordable housing plan; provide perspective on an inclusionary housing ordinance; liaison with nonprofit organizations; and collaborate with Housing Our Own. They could also review and evaluate our housing supply to identify other gaps (housing for seniors, for example), opportunities, and issues of potential concern (tear-downs, for example), perhaps recommending elements of a broader housing plan as well.

**Foster a brother/sister relationship with another Chicago area municipality with contrasting demographics.** If such a relationship would be considered desirable by a municipality with contrasting demographics to our own, the concept is to connect and build mutual understanding with a Chicago area community whose experience is different than our own. I envision potential collaboration between municipal staff, elected leadership, and members of our reformulated Boards/Commissions (who could be tasked with recommending other means of fostering this relationship). Another thought is whether there is opportunity for our service-based and faith-based communities to engage their brethren in similar fashion.

Thank you again for receiving my perspective about how we might engage reformulated Boards and Commissions through the lens of making the Village of Wilmette more open and inviting to diverse populations, including people of color. I wish you all the best in your upcoming process and I look forward to working with you when the subject matter returns to the full Village Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Kurzman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joel Kurzman

**From:** [Braiman, Michael](#)  
**To:** [Arteaga, Alexander](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Village of Wilmette Commissions  
**Date:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:06:00 PM

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**From:** Dodd, Kathy <doddk@wilmette.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 12:55 PM  
**To:** Braiman, Michael <braimanm@wilmette.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Village of Wilmette Commissions

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** KRISTYN FRISKE <[kfriske1@mac.com](mailto:kfriske1@mac.com)>  
**Date:** July 6, 2020 at 12:48:04 PM CDT  
**To:** "Dodd, Kathy" <[doddk@wilmette.com](mailto:doddk@wilmette.com)>, "Barrow, Peter" <[barrowp@wilmette.com](mailto:barrowp@wilmette.com)>, "Sullivan, Dan" <[sullivand@wilmette.com](mailto:sullivand@wilmette.com)>  
**Subject:** Village of Wilmette Commissions

Dear Trustees Barrow, Dodd, and Sullivan

I have lived in Wilmette for over 23 years and having served on boards, appreciate the work and effort for those who volunteer to help make our community strong and better. So thank you for taking the time to volunteer, I know from experience that it sometimes seems like a thankless job.

It is my understanding that the first step in serving on a commission is to complete a Talent Bank form in which the Village Board President and Trustees make the decision. However, after talking with several community members who have submitted forms, it seems that there has been minimal response, or acceptance on the commissions - despite vacancies. This does not make sense to me and it seems like it is time for an overhaul to revisit how commission appointments are made, especially given people are interested in volunteering.

While I have enjoyed living in Wilmette, appreciating all that our community offers, one thing that has disturbed me is the lack of ethnic diversity, especially black and LatinX people. It disturbed my family to such a degree that we opted to send our children to an independent high school that better represented the real world in terms of racial, religious and socio-economic diversity. My kids had an incredibly enriching experience

and had a broad spectrum of friends representing every background imaginable. They are better equipped to function in a diverse and global world. We live in a bubble in Wilmette. It is not the most welcoming or comfortable environment for people of color. We can and should do better. We need to foster a community that will enrich the lives of all who live here. The reality is that we don't have many black and brown families living here because of redlining and other antiquated policies and laws that did not treat everyone equally.

It is time for Wilmette to stand up to the systemic racism in which all of its residents have benefited from. I am sure this is unsettling, but we have the opportunity to chart new territory and that makes us all vulnerable. This is an opportunity for us to be better humans towards other humans. This can all start with the Housing and Human Relations Commissions. These commissions need to be active, robust and have a diverse set of viewpoints on them.

The time is now. Let's do the right thing and move our village forward.

Thank you,

Kristyn Friske

Sent from my iPad

Dear Members of the Administration Committee and Board of Trustees,

I am a 23-year resident of Wilmette. Given this time in our collective history, I ask you to take this opportunity to reestablish and reinvigorate the Housing and Human Relations Commissions.

This commission can and should be a mechanism to promote and advance our collective work to make Wilmette a more inclusive, and livable community. We are a great Village with the ability to make these changes.

Stunning facts about Wilmette:

- The average worker in Wilmette earns \$50,000 - \$70,000 per year, yet only 4.5% of Wilmette's housing stock is affordable to households in this range.
- Nearly half of Wilmette renters (48%) are considered housing cost burdened by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

The work of the Housing Commission and the Human Relations Commission is central to developing and implementing programs, policies, and practices to reverse the effects of more than a century of discriminatory public and private housing policy and other actions that created and sustain inequity. The commissions are needed to be revitalized, to ensure Wilmette is a welcoming, diverse, inclusive, and fair community.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,

Brenda Schumaker

**From:** [Braithman, Michael](#)  
**To:** [Arteaga, Alexander](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Reestablish Housing & Human Relations Commissions  
**Date:** Thursday, July 16, 2020 3:06:00 PM

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**From:** Dodd, Kathy <doddk@wilmette.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 12:56 PM  
**To:** Braithman, Michael <braithmanm@wilmette.com>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Reestablish Housing & Human Relations Commissions

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Leanne Star <[leannestar@gmail.com](mailto:leannestar@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** July 6, 2020 at 11:12:42 AM CDT  
**To:** "Dodd, Kathy" <[doddk@wilmette.com](mailto:doddk@wilmette.com)>, "Barrow, Peter" <[barrowp@wilmette.com](mailto:barrowp@wilmette.com)>, "Sullivan, Dan" <[sullivanand@wilmette.com](mailto:sullivanand@wilmette.com)>  
**Subject: Reestablish Housing & Human Relations Commissions**

Dear members of the Administration Committee and Board of Trustees,

I am a nine-year resident of Wilmette and have been following the effort to evaluate Village boards and commissions. Given this pivotal time in our collective history, I ask you to take this opportunity to reestablish and reinvigorate the Housing and Human Relations Commissions.

These bodies can and should be a mechanism to promote and advance our collective work to make Wilmette a more welcoming, inclusive, and livable community. We still have much work to do, and now's the time to double down on our commitment to that work.

The Housing Commission was originally established in 1977 to promote the "provision" of housing for low- and moderate-income families, and later encompassed people with disabilities. Under the Housing Commission's leadership, the Village added low-income senior housing, a rental and mortgage subsidy program, and periodic studies of needs.

More than ever, we need the Housing Commission to conduct a comprehensive and current assessment of housing needs in the Village, and to develop an affordable housing plan based on evidence and broad-based community input. The Housing Commission should represent the diverse interests and expertise of our residents in

making these decisions and should be accountable to the Trustees and community at large for setting and attaining growth targets for affordable housing in the Village.

The need for a robust Housing Commission has never been greater, not only because of the racial disparities highlighted by the Black Lives Matter rallies, but also because few of the workers who serve our communities are invited to live here:

African Americans make up less than 1% of Wilmette's residents.

The average worker in Wilmette earns \$50,000 - \$70,000 per year, yet only 4.5% of Wilmette's housing stock is affordable to households in this range.

Nearly half of Wilmette renters (48%) are considered housing cost-burdened by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

A Human Relations Commission is equally essential in ensuring that Wilmette upholds its commitment to diversity by

Affirmatively marketing Wilmette to Black and other underrepresented people;

Resolving neighbor-to-neighbor disputes through nonviolent and restorative means without resorting to police – indeed is *a great use of redeployed police department resources* and

Organizing events that bring the community together. Wilmette's Human Relations Commission is an essential arm of the inclusive community.

The hallmark of a welcoming community is an inclusive culture accompanied by intentional programs, policies, and practices that breathe life into that culture. The work of the Housing Commission and the Human Relations Commission is central to developing and implementing those programs, policies, and practices to reverse the effects of more than a century of discriminatory public and private housing policy and other actions that created and sustain inequity. The revitalized commissions are needed to ensure Wilmette is a welcoming, diverse, inclusive and fair community.

Thank you for your work on behalf of our community. And please take the necessary steps to ensure these commissions can fulfill their mandates set out over forty years ago.

Sincerely,

Leanne Star

314 Park Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091

(847) 814-5811

[leannestar@gmail.com](mailto:leannestar@gmail.com)