



VILLAGE OF WILMETTE

1200 Wilmette Avenue
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-0040

MEETING MINUTES

MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE VILLAGE BOARD

TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 2008

5:30 P.M.

FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL

Members Present: Trustee Mari Terman, Chair
Trustee Alan Swanson
Trustee Karen Spillers (5:36 p.m.)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services
Jorge Cruz, P.E., Assistant Director of Engineering Services
Linda Reilley, Engineering Assistant

Guests Present: Tim Gustafson, TY Lin International
Camille Stauber, Sustainable Places, Inc.

I. CALL TO ORDER.

Chairperson Terman called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. Committee members Terman, Swanson and Spillers (5:36 p.m.) were present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES; MUNICIPAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF MAY 1, 2008.

Chairperson Terman directed the Committee's attention to the draft minutes of the Municipal Services Committee meeting of May 1, 2008.

Trustee Swanson moved that the Committee approve the minutes as drafted. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Terman. No further discussion occurred on the motion. Voting yes: Chairperson Terman and Trustee Swanson **The motion carried.**

III. DISCUSSION OF THE SKOKIE VALLEY TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY AND REQUEST FOR THE VILLAGE TO PURSUE RAILBANKING WITH THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY.

Chairperson Terman introduced this item of business and asked Ms. Mayerhofer to provide a brief summary of the Skokie Valley Trail project. She indicated the feasibility study prepared by the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation is close to final and the next step is to pursue land rights to build the trail. After much research, the Skokie Valley Trail Committee's recommendation is to pursue railbanking as an economically feasible alternative to purchasing the right-of-way. The Committee's goal is to have each of the four participating communities (Wilmette, Glenview, Northfield and Northbrook) endorse a letter of interest in railbanking to the Union Pacific Railroad Company by the end of July.

Trustee Spillers asked if the other communities were interested in pursuing the project to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated they have been supportive of the project so far, so we have every reason to believe the support will continue.

Trustee Swanson asked what grant opportunities were available to which Mr. Gustafson of T. Y Lin International (sub consultant to the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation) indicated there are many different types of grants including some that are fully funded and others that have a local match. He indicated the total project cost, not including land costs, is \$8 million.

Trustee Swanson asked who could use the path and if the path would be paved. Mr. Gustafson indicated the path would be paved with gravel shoulders on either side. All non-motorized forms of transportation would be allowed. Trustee Swanson suggested that there can be an issue with several different users competing for the same limited space.

Mr. Gustafson explained that the northernmost section of the proposed trail has active rail, but the southern portion through Wilmette is discontinued. The parcel in question is wide enough for an adequately sized trail. ComEd owns the property adjacent to the Union Pacific parcel. Chairperson Terman asked if the overhead electrical wires could pose a problem. Mr. Gustafson indicated some residents may have concerns with the close vicinity to the overhead lines.

Chairperson Terman asked about the mid-block crossing on Lake Avenue. Mr. Gustafson indicated the mid-block crossing is the most direct crossing possible, but given the traffic volume on Lake Avenue a pedestrian underpass/overpass is recommended. The alternative is to use the existing traffic signal on Laramie Avenue to cross Lake Avenue. Trustee Swanson noted there is an existing pedestrian crossing just west of the Wilmette golf course, so it would be difficult to build another one in such close

proximity.

Chairperson Terman asked what the Committee's role is related to the discussion. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated staff would like the Committee to endorse President Canning's signature on a letter to the Union Pacific Railroad requesting the UPRR work with the four Villages on railbanking. Ms. Mayerhofer also asked the Committee if they would like the project presented to the full Board at a Committee of the Whole meeting or Village Board meeting. The Committee agreed that something in Manager's Notes was preferred at this time.

Trustee Spillers asked how the project would be paid for to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated federal and state grants. Ms. Mayerhofer noted that two additional grants from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in the combined amount of \$110,000 were received by Northbrook and Wilmette.

Trustee Swanson made a motion endorsing President Canning's signature on a letter of interest to the Union Pacific Railroad regarding railbanking. Trustee Spillers seconded the motion.

In the discussion of the motion, Mr. Gustafson noted that rail banking prevents the seven mile stretch of railroad from being sold. Trustee Spillers asked if anyone has ever asked for the land back, to which Mr. Gustafson noted only on rare occasion.

Chairperson Terman noted the importance of having all of the segments built simultaneously and of the same cross-section and material. Trustee Swanson indicated he thinks the project is a good idea and does not require a large commitment of funds. Voting yes: Chairperson Terman, Trustee Swanson, Trustee Spillers. Voting no: none. **The motion carried.**

Chairperson Terman noted a correction in the feasibility study. She stated two sets of individuals (Steiner and Powell) were listed twice in the report.

The Committee thereafter concluded its discussion of this item.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THE ILLINOIS ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD DRAINAGE PROBLEM PILOT PROJECT AND A PROPOSAL FROM SUSTAINABLE PLACES, INC.

Chairperson Terman asked Ms. Mayerhofer to review the materials in the agenda supplement. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated there were several follow up items that the Committee requested at the last meeting in April. She referred to the memorandum which referenced a resolution used in Barrington that supports public participation in neighborhood drainage problems on private property. The second question was related to

Ms. Stauber's ability to contract with the Village in light of her husband's role with the Urban Land Institute. Ms. Mayerhofer noted that staff confirmed this was not a conflict of interest. Lastly, the Committee asked staff to provide a range of costs to implement "green landscaping" as proposed by Sustainable Places Inc.

The Committee began the discussion by asking questions about the resolution used in the Village of Barrington. It was noted that the Barrington resolution requires the use of staff time and resources to define and put together a plan to solve the private property drainage problems. In the case of Wilmette, Ms. Mayerhofer suggested that outside resources be used to assist in planning and designing a solution. This is especially necessary because Engineering Staff does not have the expertise to implement a "green landscaping" plan. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated the Barrington ordinance is written such that the Village will contribute 50-percent up to a maximum of \$10,000 of the "hard" or out-of-pocket costs.

Ms. Mayerhofer noted the Northwest Municipal Conference was undertaking a Village survey on whether or not local governments participate in solving neighborhood drainage problems.

Trustee Swanson noted that he did not have any particular issues with the Barrington resolution but noted that properties contribute to the drainage problem in varying degrees. He suggested that the neighbors could implement changes on their own to improve the problem without Village involvement. He noted concern that this would open the door for the Village being asked to pay for other private property problems.

Ms. Mayerhofer provided an example of public participation to solve a private matter by referencing the Village Ordinance in which the Village contributes toward sanitary service repairs that are greater than 12-feet deep, even though such services are the home owner's responsibility to repair.

Trustee Spillers stated there are drainage problems all over the Village including on Park Avenue. She noted this program would be great if the Village had the money, but is afraid of adding new services when there is a difficult time funding the services currently being offered.

Trustee Swanson noted a subdivision along Romona Road that has privately owned storm sewers. He suggested this is another opportunity for residents to request Village financial assistance.

Chairperson Terman asked about the liability of tributary neighbors, noting that the water is coming from everyone else's property. She stated the importance of educating the neighbors so they are aware that they are contributing to the problem. Chairperson Terman asked if the contributory lots were in violation of an ordinance. Ms. Mayerhofer stated her understanding

is that neither the property hosting the runoff nor the contributing properties were in violation of the Village Code. A standing water citation could be issued if the water source was artificially placed (to which the situation is question is not.) Illinois drainage law states that if you are downstream, you must accept upstream water.

Chairperson Terman asked if the remediation can be partially installed. Ms. Stauber stated that residents can absolutely implement the improvements on an incremental basis. She noted that modifying some maintenance techniques can have a positive impact. She suggested that educating the neighbors is the key to a successful project. They need to understand where the water is coming from and why the problem is getting worse.

Trustee Spillers asked why the Village has to pay to solve a private property problem. She suggested Ms. Stauber should market her business directly to the residents. Ms. Stauber suggested that this pilot project could be part of a larger program. Many residents have concerns with storm water, which makes this a community problem.

Chairperson Terman asked the Committee if the Village should fund Phase I of the pilot program. She suggested this could be an opportunity to perform an analysis and set up a model for the future.

Trustee Spillers noted she has had a rear yard drainage problem for years, which she solved on her own. People should be responsible for fixing their own problems, rather than using taxpayer resources. Ms. Mayerhofer reminded the Committee that the Village is involved because the neighbors presented a petition to the Village Board at a Board meeting last fall. Trustee Swanson suggested that staff should be able to review the issue and offer some suggestions to help solve the problem. He supports spending soft costs (staff time) on solving drainage problems, but does not support financially supporting any consulting or construction services.

The Committee briefly discussed the resolution in Barrington. Trustee Terman asked how much the solution cost in 1986, to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated \$20,000 to build a storm sewer. Trustee Swanson questioned how everyone agreed to pay their prorated share. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated the topographic data showed the percentage of tributary area on each property. Trustee Swanson expressed concern with forcing the home owners to contribute.

Trustee Swanson indicated the Barrington ordinance is based on the premise of spending money to solve the problem, which is more than he supports. Chairperson Terman expressed concern that the standing water could be a public danger. Trustee Spillers suggested the Village already has too many ordinances.

Chairperson Terman asked if there were any other situations that this ordinance would affect besides low back yards. Ms. Mayerhofer stated she did not think so. Trustee Swanson stated that the ordinance is only useful if the Village supports spending money to solve the problem.

Chairperson Terman asked if, in light of the public health concerns, there are more general ordinances that would allow the village to intervene. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the son of the owner pumps the standing water currently, but if he stops for some reason, there would be a problem. Ms. Mayerhofer noted she would check with Corporation Counsel Frenzer on whether or not the Village has some legal responsibility to address the standing water. Trustee Swanson stated the neighbors should talk to each other and suggested the Village could facilitate a meeting. He reiterated this is a bad precedent for funding, however. Trustees Swanson and Terman agreed that forcing individuals to spend money was not appropriate, but a permissive program was much preferred.

There was general consensus that the Village should not pursue a resolution similar to the Village of Barrington.

Chairperson Terman asked for the Committee's opinion on the second action which was to hire Ms. Stauber's company to assist with solving the problem. Trustees Spillers and Swanson noted they were not in favor of hiring the consultant.

Chairperson Terman asked if the Village has a knowledge bank of companies that we can make available to residents. Staff indicated there was but we cannot recommend any particular firm.

Ms. Mayerhofer offered that the primary obstacle is to convince neighboring properties they are contributing to the problem and convincing them to assist with the solution. A study might help residents understand.

Chairperson Terman asked if there was any old business to discuss.

Trustee Spillers asked about the Green Bay Road and Sheridan Road projects. Ms. Mayerhofer noted the Green Bay Road project is slated to begin shortly after the July 4th weekend. The Committee reviewed the scope of work which includes new barrier medians, new traffic signals, minor widening and new gates at the intersections of Green Bay Road with Lake, Central and Wilmette Avenues. She indicated that although the bid came in slightly higher than anticipated, the Village received additional grant money.

Trustee Spillers noted that there have been very few complaints about Sheridan Road. She stated that at Listening Post, a resident indicated the communication has been very good.

Trustee Swanson stated the site looks orderly and the contractor appears to be making progress.

Chairperson Terman asked when the color for the steel trees on the monument will be ready for review. Ms. Mayerhofer indicated she has not yet heard but will follow up with the consultant.

The Committee asked how Plaza del Lago was responding to the construction to which Ms. Mayerhofer indicated they seem to be very happy.

Trustee Swanson asked about complaints from those along the 4th Street detour. Ms. Mayerhofer stated the recent traffic studies show volume has increased as expected, but the speeds have been very reasonable.

Trustee Swanson asked about the ComEd breaker serving the storm water pump station, to which Ms. Mayerhofer said it was installed by end of April as was promised by ComEd.

OTHER BUSINESS.

There was no other business to come before the Committee.

V. AJDOURNMENT.

At 7:03 p.m., Trustee Spillers moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Swanson. No further discussion occurred on the motion. Voting yes: Chairperson Terman, Trustee Swanson and Trustee Spillers. Voting no: none. **The motion carried.**

The meeting was thereafter adjourned.

Minutes Respectfully Prepared by Brigitte Mayerhofer, P.E., Director of Engineering Services