

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, January 27, 2026**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Tracey Mendrek on Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 5:30 PM.

The Deputy Village Clerk called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

Trustee Charlie Orth
Trustee Tom Whittaker
Trustee Todd Fowler
Trustee Matt Galin
Trustee Andrew Juedes
Trustee Ed Elfmann
President Tracey Mendrek

Absent:

None

Others Present:

Village Manager Patrick Brennan
Village Attorney Greg Jones
Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett
Community Development Director Steve Guterrez
Deputy Clerk Holly Fabbri

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Approval of Regular and Closed Session Meeting Minutes - December 2, 2025

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to approve the Regular and Closed Session Minutes from the December 2, 2025, meeting. Upon a unanimous voice vote, President Mendrek declared that the motion had passed.

Consideration of a Request from Bloomfield Development for Architectural Revisions to the Approved Planned Unit Development at 405 Central Avenue

Jim Schueller from Bloomfield Development provided an overview of the proposed revisions from Space Architects + Planners for 405 Central Avenue, highlighting changes from the previously approved submission to the Plan & Zoning Commission. The architectural revisions included modifications to the window configurations on the north, south, and east elevations; the removal of three windows from the first floor; the addition of a new vestibule at the roof level; changes to window heights and the removal of select windows on the north elevation; elimination of exterior door access from the storage room; installation of a ventilation unit at the roof level above the trash chute; and the inclusion of balconies in the overall square footage calculation.

Village Manager Brennan stated that staff believed that the changes were significant enough to warrant review and approval from either the Village Board or the Architectural Commission. He noted that the Board could either approve all or some of the modifications as requested by the architects, refer the request to the Architectural Commission for final approval, or seek recommendations from the Commission and retain final decision-making authority.

The Board held a discussion, during which several trustees expressed that the proposed changes were not substantial or broad enough to warrant further review by the Architectural Commission. Other trustees preferred delegating the authority to the Architectural Commission to review and approve some or all of the proposed revisions.

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to have the Village Board approve the developer-requested architectural revisions to the Planned Unit Development at 405 Central Avenue.

After opening the floor to comments from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

Discussion of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/27 Goals and Objectives

Village Manager Brennan stated that each year, the Village Board sets strategic goals and objectives that serve as guideposts for the upcoming fiscal year's budget development process, ensuring sufficient funds are allocated to achieve them. He provided an overview of the proposed goals and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year 2026/27, which included the following: Centennial Celebration, Library Expansion, Enhanced Economic Development, Skokie Valley Trail Approval, Sustainability Initiatives, and the Orchard Public Parking Lot.

The trustees engaged in a discussion, were aligned with the proposed fiscal year 2026/27 goals and objectives, but agreed that, for safety reasons, additional crosswalks equipped with flashing light beacons should be installed. Village Manager Brennan said he would revisit the Sidewalk Committee's Plan along with Sunset Ridge Road, and the northern part of Happ Road to identify high-priority locations for crosswalks and try to incorporate them into the Capital Plan.

Consideration of a Request for a Car Wash to be an Allowed Use in the B-1 Zoning District

Steve Gutierrez, Director of Community Development, stated that the properties at 271 and 281 Waukegan Road were in the B-1 District and currently owned by Teddy Kossof, but were under contract with a local developer. He noted that the developer desires to construct a drive-through coffee shop on the south parcel. He remarked that while coffee shops are a permitted use in the B-1 Zone, a drive-through is a special use requiring review by the Plan & Zoning Commission. He detailed that the developer hopes to build an automatic car wash on the north parcel, which

will include an enclosed area for vehicle vacuums to help mitigate noise. He explained that car washes are a prohibited use within the B-1 Zone, so the developer is interested in pursuing a text amendment to classify automatic car washes as a permitted or special use within the zone. Brennan explained that while zoning text amendment requests can be submitted directly to the Plan & Zoning Commission, he wanted to gauge whether the Board had strong objections to the proposed use prior to the developer investing a significant amount of time and money in the process. He emphasized that he was not asking for a vote on the proposed use, rather a temperature check on automatic car washes in general.

The Board discussed the matter, and Trustee Fowler stated that while he was personally opposed, technology continues to evolve. He and Trustee Elfmann expressed openness to allowing the developer to submit the request to the Plan & Zoning Commission for their expert review. Trustee Orth said it would be good to witness a similar, existing car wash and he and Trustee Whittaker raised questions about whether the site could serve a more compelling purpose and emphasized the importance of listening to residents. Trustee Galin stressed the importance of gathering public input regarding the proposed car wash before forming any opinion. Trustee Whittaker and Trustee Juedes expressed strong opposition to the proposed use.

Resident Scott Samuelson expressed concern that the proposed car wash would create a traffic bottleneck in the area. He noted that the site is located within a flood zone and emphasized the need for a detention pond. He also raised questions about the feasibility of placing a coffee shop and car wash adjacent to each other, specifically regarding their layout, traffic flow, light screening, and the ongoing maintenance of drainage infrastructure.

Resident Tony Acuna stated that he, along with many of his neighbors, strongly opposed the proposed car wash, believing it would negatively affect the area's overall livability. He expressed concern about chemical contamination, pollution, and noise from a car wash. He said that he was pro-business, but believed there was a better use for the property with the B-1 Zone.

Resident Lindsay Swift opposed the proposed car wash, emphasizing her worry about the subsequent groundwater, air, and noise pollution. She was concerned about the safety risks posed by loitering in the parking lot, particularly its impact on nearby residents and adjacent schools.

President Mendrek queried the group on their openness to considering automatic car washes in the B-1 zoning district. The majority of the trustees expressed a willingness to consider a recommendation from the Plan & Zoning Commission.

Discussion of Minimum Road Standards for the Dedication of Private Lanes

Village Manager Brennan stated that last summer, several residents inquired with Village staff about the procedure for the dedication of a private roadway to the Village. He said that no formal policy currently exists, so staff was uncertain if dedication was an option or how to evaluate the requests. The Board discussed the pros and cons of private lanes and their prevalence within the Village at the Committee of the Whole meeting in October and then directed staff to prepare a list of potential minimum standards for roadways to be dedicated. Village Manager Brennan noted that a list of guidelines outlining the conditions for acquiring a private lane asset had been included in the packet; he asked for the Board's feedback.

The Board discussed the proposed standards and found them to be a reasonable basis for developing a formal policy for consideration at a future meeting. The Village Manager was directed to prepare a draft policy for review.

Resident Carol Ritchell inquired about the number of private lanes in the Village, and Village Manager Brennan replied that there were approximately 48-50. Ritchell expressed that individuals who choose to live on private lanes may hold differing views on the Village assuming responsibility for them. She questioned the benefit of the Village accepting responsibility for private roads. Village Manager Brennan stated that each constituted Board will have the authority to evaluate the pros and cons of each dedication request, noting that acceptance of the roadway would not be mandatory.

Adjourn

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Elfmann, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a unanimous voice vote, President Mendrek declared the motion passed. President Mendrek declared the meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.