

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, July 18, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Greg Lungmus on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

Trustee Todd Fowler
Trustee Barnaby Dinges
Trustee Tom Whittaker
Trustee Matt Galin
Trustee Tracey Mendrek
Trustee Charles Orth

Absent:

President Greg Lungmus

Others Present:

Village Manager Stacy Sigman and Village Attorney Buzz Hill

Approval of June 20, 2023 Report of Proceedings

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to approve the June 20, 2023 Report of Proceedings. Approval was unanimous.

Discussion on alternative concepts for the Happ Road roundabout

Village Manager Sigman noted that at the May 16, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting, the Board reviewed and provided direction on the proposed aesthetic enhancements for Happ Road. Along with the numerous vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle safety enhancements for the corridor, the plan was also to provide aesthetic upgrades, as was done on Willow Road, as well as some unique place-making features in the downtown. The Village secured the Federal Surface Transportation Program and matching County funds to cover almost 100% of the costs associated with the Phase I, II, and III work. However, that funding will not cover the more decorative project enhancements. The Happ Road project is currently scheduled, and funded, for a fall 2024 bid with construction starting in 2025. Under that timeline, it will not be possible to apply for another round of ITEP funding before going out to bid. As a result, the Village will have to fully fund the project enhancements. At the May meeting, the Board directed that all of the proposed project enhancements remain in the project, but asked that several additional options be proposed for the roundabout area.

Based on that direction, Teska Associates developed a high, medium, and low-cost alternative. See Attachment A. The high-level version consists of a terraced stone fountain with plantings with an estimated cost of \$779,031. The mid-level version consists of a simpler stone fountain with plantings with an estimated cost of \$645,720. The low-level version consists of a more naturalized terraced stone and plantings with an estimated cost of \$137,495.

The landscape architect Jodie Mariano from Teska Associates and the project engineer Jarrod Cebolski from Patrick Engineering, were at the meeting to review the revised designs and their anticipated costs.

President Lungmus preferred the larger fountain/high-cost alternative and said it was properly scaled for the space. He said the medium alternative is not that less expensive and the larger one makes a gateway statement.

Trustee Whittaker brought up the concern about the maintenance cost of the fountain. He loved the overall design of the largest one but just without a fountain feature.

Trustee Dinges liked the low-cost alternative because it was lighter and airier. He felt the high and medium alternatives had a big heavy fortress feel. He also liked the Northfield identity sign.

Village Manager Sigman noted that ITEP funding grant opportunities had not been awarded to Northfield and they are not doing a call for projects in 2024. There would not be another opportunity for this ITEP funding grant until 2025 but this is after the Happ Road project will be awarded by IDOT and retroactive funding is not possible. The fountain and/or structure would need to be constructed with the Happ Road project so would need to come from Village funds.

President Lungmus thanked Representative Jonathan Carroll for committing \$200,000 in Springfield money to this roundabout and associated seating project.

Trustee Fowler stated that he liked both the high and medium-cost alternatives. He stressed that this was more than generational in terms of the overall impact on the downtown. He thought the foundation with the fountain should be in place and if the maintenance of the fountain becomes too high, then landscaping could replace it. He believed that to miss an opportunity when doing a massive project like this would be a huge miss for the village. He felt this was the time to create something unique and iconic for the Village.

Trustee Galin preferred the medium-cost alternative but believed maintenance costs needed to be considered. He noted that if it was between the high or low-cost alternative, his choice would be the high-cost alternative.

Trustee Mendrek liked the medium-cost alternative because it was less ostentatious. She confirmed that in the winter when the water in the fountain is not running that holiday décor can be added to the platform.

Village Manager Sigman confirmed that the different cost alternatives could go out for bid in the fall of 2024 and start in 2025.

Trustee Orth preferred the medium-cost alternative and believed that fountain concepts have endured. He believed it would be a nice attraction to the downtown.

President Lungmus stated that the Board overall preferred the medium-cost alternative.

Discussion on interim and permanent Village Manager recruitment process

The Board discussed ideas and potential approaches for securing an interim and permanent Village Manager. Mike Earl, Senior Vice-President from GovHR/GovTemps, was at the meeting to answer any questions. The following is a link to his firm's website <https://www.govhrusa.com/> which has information on the services they provide.

Mike Earl noted that a seasoned manager had been requested and said that he had spoken to a couple of candidates. He thought he would have 2 individuals to present by the end of the week. He noted that interim Village Managers are typically required for 6-9 months until a permanent Village Manager can be placed.

President Lungmus asked if the entire Board typically reviews the candidates. Mike Earl replied that it is generally a smaller group but everyone could be present as well.

Trustee Galin asked if there was a chance that the interim Village Manager could become the permanent Village Manager. Mike Earl responded that the 2 individuals he was referencing were retirees so it was unlikely. He also noted that with retirees the hours would potentially need to be flexible.

Trustee Mendrek inquired about the full process, noting that he had 2 resumes and asked if those would be shared with the entire Board. Mike Earl replied that he would share them with his point person, the Village President, who could then share them with the decision-makers.

Trustee Orth asked if his firm would assist in the process of getting a permanent Village Manager. Mike Earl said that his firm would help in the process but this could take approximately 3-5 months.

Trustee Mendrek asked if the interim Village Manager's salary was based on expertise and experience. Mike Earl said that when the candidates are presented, the preferred salary range would be disclosed but noted they would be an employee of GovTemps so the Village would not cover health benefits or pension costs.

Review of the possible Zoning Code amendments

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that in 2020, the Village adopted the new 2040 Vision Plan to guide our community's future.

<https://www.northfieldil.org/DocumentCenter/View/1869/Vision-Plan-2040>

This document contains an Implementation Action Matrix with a comprehensive list of all of the strategies, policies, and recommendations contained within the plan. The Matrix provides the Village with specific action items to help move the plan forward and assigns each a priority level: First Priority – near-term/crucial; Second Priority – mid-term/essential; or Third Priority – long-term/desirable.

The majority of the First Priority items involve amendments to the Village's Zoning Code which was last done in 2003. At the January 17, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting, staff reviewed these items with the Board and got input into how best to approach some of the more

complex issues. Staff used that direction and the goals of the 2040 Vision Plan to draft specific zoning code amendment language. Steve Gutierrez noted that he had headed up this effort along with the Village Manager and Village Attorney Buzz Hill and walked the Board through the substantive proposed changes. He noted that staff was not seeking to completely overhaul the Zoning Code because it is solid but rather bring it up to date and be more relevant in today's real estate market. Staff recommended that the Board spend more time reviewing the 90-page ordinance to better understand the proposed changes and discuss them at an upcoming meeting. He noted that once the Board was satisfied with the proposed language and changes, a Public Hearing will be held by the Plan & Zoning Commission to review the changes as well. The Village Board has the final vote on all the Zoning Code revisions before they are codified and implemented.

Attendee Mike Nictar asked if there would be some sort of formal process defined for any changes that developers would need to know about in a PUD development. Community Development Director Gutierrez replied that the Zoning Code is a framework and overlying set of regulations. When an individual property is developed, the Zoning Code is applied to its specific set of circumstances but the developer might ask for relief from various Zoning Code requirements.

Community Development Director Gutierrez noted that staff was suggesting providing the Village Board more flexibility in granting relief to Zoning Code requirements for Special Uses but not retracting any processes. There is currently a supermajority vote required from the Village Board for additional changes to Special Uses and PUDs that were already approved. Staff is recommending eliminating this super-majority vote not for the initial Special Use or PUD but for any subsequent changes sought by an owner or developer. Trustee Mendrek confirmed that a supermajority is 5 trustees and felt that this should stay in place.

Trustee Galin noted that this was dense material and recommended the Board table it for a month or so after there was a better understanding of the information.

Trustee Whittaker agreed with Trustee Galin's recommendation to table it.

Trustee Dinges inquired when the Zoning map was last changed. Community Development Director Gutierrez replied the last time it was done was when a corridor study was done on Northfield Road when it was changed to a B2 district. Village Manager Sigman noted that a property is typically not rezoned except through an application with such as request due to legal implications.

President Lungmus remarked that the proposed changes made a lot of sense but he believed having the trustees better understand the nuances would be beneficial. Community Development Director Gutierrez stressed that he viewed this as the beginning of the overall discussion on the proposed amendments. Trustee Galin recommended reviewing it again at the September Committee of the Whole meeting.

Other Business

President Lungmus noted that at the next scheduled August meeting, there would not be a quorum of Board members. The meeting was rescheduled from August 15th to August 22nd.

Village Attorney Buzz Hill stated that one of the iconic institutions in Northfield, the Josselyn Clinic had asked the Board to consider some important changes. The Josselyn Center recently asked the Board about changes to their hours of operation. In reviewing this, staff concluded that the Josselyn Center has been expanding its campus and programming over the last decade. Some of these changes might have required amendments to the text of the Village's Zoning Ordinance which if dealt with individually would require a series of public hearings. To avoid this, the staff has had discussions with the Josselyn Center and their attorneys about the possibility of creating a Special Use zoning classification for the entirety of the Josselyn operation to consider them a community mental health campus. The creation of such a zoning classification category would allow the Josselyn Center to expand its programming and properties without the need for text amendments and Special Use hearings each time this presents itself. Staff believes that this would work for the Village and Josselyn's attorneys seem to be enthusiastic about this. There is a potential glitch due to the timing for Josselyn. For funding, state approval, and staffing purposes, Josselyn needs to have a zoning process completed by the end of the year. If the Josselyn Center is required to come before the Committee of the Whole as what is usually done, they would need to do this in August or September and they won't be able to meet their end-of-year deadline. Due to an anticipated win-win outcome for both sides, staff is asking that the Committee of the Whole waive its usual process of requiring a full presentation by the applicant. This is not required by the zoning ordinance but is just something that is normally done as a matter of policy. Staff was requesting that the Board approve the zoning changes that would be needed to create this community mental health campus. This would go directly to the Plan & Zoning Commission as soon as the proper public notices would allow. The Village Board will still have every opportunity to vet, approve, or disapprove this approach when it comes back to the Board after P& Z has made its recommendations. The public will have the full opportunity to make their opinions known during the P&Z public hearing and the ultimate discussions before the Village Board. Staff believes that it is important to address these expansions in a unitary Special Use that can encompass this growth. President Lungmus thought it made sense to accommodate the Josselyn Center and the other trustees did not have any objections to this. The plan is to have this back to present at the Village Board meeting in September or October.

Public Comment

Resident Amanda Albert Knight asked if the trustees had the chance to provide their feedback on what you are looking for in the interim and permanent Village Manager. President Lungmus noted that the Village had an understanding but was not in a contract with Mike Earl, Senior Vice-President from GovHR/GovTemps. Trustee Mendrek noted there had been discussions with the Board on who they would use to source Village Manager candidates but nothing had been contracted yet. She noted that tonight was the start of the procedure where the Board in a public session was just starting to understand the overall process. Knight stressed that because the current Board was fractured and the community was gravely concerned about the leadership of the Board, she felt the process of selecting the new Village Manager needed to be transparent and involve all stakeholders. She suggested the following be part of the process: 1) Before a job description is disseminated, a stakeholder survey should be conducted to understand what stakeholders are looking for in the next Village Manager. This survey should be done by

professionals independent of the Board to ensure the data received is from desired stakeholders and the questions asked apply to how a job description should be crafted. She recommended looking at surrounding communities to see what surveys had been done and who did them. 2) The Board should appoint a committee made up of residents, business leaders, other agency leaders, and staff to be a part of the evaluation process of the candidates. While being only advisory in nature, this committee would be essential in ensuring the community is represented in the process and this model is used in other agencies in the community. 3) The Board President should recuse himself from the process all together since the Board President has chosen to remain in office despite numerous calls for his resignation. He should turn the power of hiring an interim or permanent Village Manager over to the other trustees.

Harry Hoopis, property owner of 790 Frontage Road, noted that there is a unique zoning problem with three property owners between the Field's Volvo and the Lock-up who all have their properties up for sale. The current zoning is for business, office, development, or auto dealerships. He noted that auto dealerships are not interested in their properties. He remarked that there is a unique opportunity to bring senior housing to Northfield and there is a developer, operator, and a \$90 million program. This was presented to the Board over a year ago and there was a 0-7 vote on the project. He understands that the process is to bring an application forward but stated that this would cost a couple hundred thousand dollars to prepare. He noted that it was time for a change and many community members feel that senior housing should be a priority. He was asking for guidance and direction from the Board.

Village Attorney Hill asked when bringing a proposal back whether it would be similar to the one that was made before. Harry Hoopis replied that yes it would be approximately a 160-room facility on 3-4 floors. Attorney Hill stressed that a development of this scale needs to be done with a full-blown proposal. Harry Hoopis asked if there would be any favorable interest in such a project before asking someone to spend \$200,000. Attorney Hill responded that they have a right to file their application and go directly to the Plan & Zoning Commission.

Trustee Dinges thanked Harry Hoopis for coming back to the Board and asked based on the proposed changes to the Zoning amendments does it make the project easier or harder to do. Ryan Huddleson, Harry Hoopis' real estate agent, noted that the proposed changes would make it harder. He noted that one of his concerns with the proposed zoning amendment changes, it does not identify the pieces of land where senior housing might flourish. He noted that there was a housing crisis and seniors needed places to live.

Resident Kim Orth asked who oversees the Village Manager's performance and Village Manager Stacy Sigman replied that the Village Board did. Kim Orth believed that all of the trustees should be involved in whoever is contractually hired to look at candidates and there should be some kind of majority on who is hired as Village Manager. Kim Orth noted that President Lungmus should recuse himself because she thought no one trusted his judgment at this point.

Resident Ann Olk remarked that the acoustics were much worse than before the Boardroom renovation. She stated that it has been a turbulent time for the Board. She noted the following: 1) How is the Village going to pay for and budget for these additional expenses? 2) Will Stacy be required to be in the office daily with her new position? 3) How does Holly Fabbri not quit her

job? According to the email, she resigned due to the current environment. Ann Olk stressed that nothing had changed so it would be a great time for a fresh start to hire someone with no alliances to Stacy or Greg. 4) Ann Olk recommended that a confidential survey be distributed. 5) Residents want a full-time staff back, including a full-time building inspector, a full-time dedicated IT person, and a full-time Assistant Village Manager. She stressed that the Village needed to get back on course and transparency was critical.

Chaya Rubenstein, from the League of Women's Voters, invited everyone to join them on Tuesday, July 25th for a summer luncheon featuring Alex Kotlowitz.

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler to adjourn the meeting.

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| AYES: | Fowler | NAYS: 0 | ABSTAIN: 0 | ABSENT: |
| | Dinges | | | |
| | Whittaker | | | |
| | Galín | | | |
| | Mendrek | | | |
| | Orth | | | |

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 PM.