

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES
THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2009

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

President Nunamaker called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. in the Municipal Center. Present at roll call were Trustees Bowman, Figurski, Ireland and Menzel. Administrator Osten, Chief Lukasik, Acting Superintendent Jon Huizinga and Village Clerk Brouder were also present. Trustee Cramer entered at 6:40 and Trustee Tuman at 6:50. Evan Peterson from Dovetail was the facilitator.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

RESIDENTS COMMENTS

Suzanne Blohm entered at 8 p.m.

APPOINTMENT -- PEDC

President Nunamaker made a recommendation to appoint Rich Lauritsen to the Planning & Economic Development Commission (PEDC). **Trustee Menzel made a motion to concur with the appointment. Trustee Figurski seconded.** All were in favor.

OVERVIEW

President Nunamaker welcomed everyone and stated he would like to address different items that we normally do not have enough time to discuss at our monthly meetings. He has spoken with past Presidents and Consultants and all feel the Village has a problem of not generating enough revenues. We need to figure out how to increase revenues. President Nunamaker would like to focus on the downtown area. It desperately needs help. Most focus on the south side of town with the nice new buildings, although some are vacant. But, even though the buildings are empty, they still do generate property tax for the Village.

Mr. Evan Peterson from Dovetail, Inc. was introduced. He passed out a pamphlet "Effective Problem Solving". He went over a few of the points, and reminded everyone to keep their sense of humor. He suggested planning with optimism, resisting the urge to "fix everything" and focus on just one item.

President Nunamaker stated the Village has binding restraints ~ we can't grow horizontally and can't raise taxes, but we can grow vertically. A downtown TIF or Business District could be a possibility. He suggested a two-prong approach; the first, make Stone Hill Center, Eastgate and Foxmoor more viable and secondly, make something happen downtown.

Trustee Cramer agreed with President Nunamaker, but added additional considerations. They are community perception and pride, attracting more businesses to Fox River Grove and beautification

– add value now not over six months time, and she feels this is a good exercise, that the Board doesn't always work well to bring together ideas.

Trustee Tuman stated the Village does not own the property and can only do so much. He agrees perception is important.

Trustee Ireland feels Village Board should have a core purpose. His is to provide solutions and improve the quality of life for residents. The Board should agree on the purpose, have mutual respect for each other and build a consensus. We are representing the residents. In regards to economic development he feels the Village doesn't have enough money to pay our own expenses, how can we offer extras to bring developers/businesses to town. He could see a consolidation of departments or merging with another community. The Village needs mixed retail that the Village can support. People need to shop in town and businesses need to be competitive. We need to make Fox River Grove a destination place.

Administrator Osten suggests increasing the profitability of our existing businesses.

Trustee Figurski stated to promote our downtown businesses, we need to build a real destination point. It can be a vertical development, possibly a hotel or water park. Developers always want some kind of incentives, but how can the Village get money together for incentives and how do we convince our residents. The Village does not have money. Residents will look at their streets and parks and wonder what the Village is doing for them. We need to have good shopping areas, not tattoo and bridal shops. We need places that people will go to every week.

Trustee Cramer stated that developers do not want to deal with different property owners. They want it all grouped together.

Trustee Bowman pointed out there is no downtown parking. Mr. Peterson said a vertical parking garage would work.

Trustee Menzel stated the Board needs to carefully examine why the other developers did not work out. The Fire Department would not object to a seven-story building with concrete, steel and a sprinkler system. The Village can establish a TIF area and condemn property. There is much to do but you have to do it smartly. We need to get the right direction from experienced people. The school can be convinced, too. Cutting expenses and services is not good. Investments need to be raised. We need to contact new people for direction to deliver a successful project.

Assets to Fox River Grove are the existing businesses, parking, the river, the train and daily downtown traffic.

Trustee Tuman stated that everything can be done, but the Village has no money for this. Are we willing to condemn people's homes and businesses?

Chief Lukasik and Acting Superintendent Huizinga stated they are not in favor of cutting any Village services. The Police Department is already down one officer and has had to increase overtime. Cutting services makes residents angry. Trustee Tuman stated that for what residents pay, the Village does not offer much.

President Nunamaker stated that Chicago has 364 TIF Districts. TIF's are important for many reasons, some being lack of market demand, obsolete planning of streets, inadequate parking and utilities, stagnant property values and declining tax base. The downtown area matches all of these. Fox River Grove is a small Village at a crossroad ~ we either need to do something innovative or maybe combine with another community. He feels the Village should try to fix it. We should

seriously consider a TIF. Don't condemn property, but offer people fair market value or a little more. If the Village were to condemn more than ten houses, we would need to go to the state. Trustee Figurski stated his concern about taking homes.

It was also suggested to contact businesses to see if they would be interested in some of the vacant storefronts. Administrator Osten contacted McDonald's to see if there was a compatible business that may be able to move to the Blockbuster building. Administrator Osten talked with Moretti's and they need financing assistance and he told them he would contact our local banks.

Our goal should produce immediate, short term and long term results. President Nunamaker stated we need to start now on a TIF. We need to find a planner and attorney that are skilled in TIF's. Prepare a plan for a developer and have them tell us what will work. CMAP made a good presentation with a vision of the river, multi-story mixed use buildings along Route 14 including green space with walking paths to the river. President Nunamaker would like the Board's agreement and he will begin shopping around for an experienced planner and TIF attorney and the costs involved. Trustee Cramer added someone with a successful experience somewhere else. Mr. Peterson added that the Village should see what CMAP is able to do for free, as well.

Administrator Osten gave a short history of what past Boards had done with the TIF. Suzanne Blohm stated that she was a Trustee on the Village Board when the TIF started. The TIF was necessary because of the astronomical cost of the land development.

Administrator Osten stated that Metra will be replacing the depot building with shelters next year and they have a long-term plan for a parking garage. We should pursue our current downtown businesses to find out what/when they can work on their buildings. Administrator Osten will make a tracking list. President Nunamaker stated we will get input from other groups.

There are many things that can be tried and the Village can do to make enough things work. The Village should move forward in a fiscally responsible fashion. Trustees Ireland, Cramer and Menzel would like to accompany President Nunamaker to visit local businesses. We need to make Fox River Grove a destination place.

OTHER BUSINESS

Trustee Cramer invited all to the Parks Commission meeting where she is doing a presentation on "Leave No Child Inside".

NEXT MEETING

Monday, June 22nd at 6:30 p.m. at the Village Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Menzel made a motion to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Trustee Ireland seconded. All were in favor.

Robert J. Nunamaker, Village President

Date Approved

Donna M. Brouder, Village Clerk