

Village of Justice
Zoning & Planning Commission
Minutes of Monthly Meeting
August 20, 2012

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Chairman John Bruce.

ROLL CALL:

Roll call was taken. Present at meeting were: Henry Oszakiewski, Jack Kennedy, Jim Brock, Rich Berkowicz, Chairman John Bruce. Charlene Carter excused, Shirley Shilka excused.

No Attorney Present

Henry Oszakiewski will take notes.

John Bruce: I would like to welcome, Rich Berkowicz, to the Zoning and Planning Commission. Rich has extensive experience with the village in various capacities and will be a welcome asset to us.

FYI: We meet on the 3rd Monday of the month, every month and payday is the last day of the month.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM July 16, 2012 meeting.

Minutes were sent via e-mail and received from personal e-mail of John Bruce.

John Bruce to Trustee's: We have a serious problem with his e mail.

Minute's correction: We need to check with Trustee Sparr regarding the boundaries.

Corrections discussed.

Chairman John Bruce entertains a MOTION to approve the Minutes from the July 16, 2012 meeting.

MOTION: To accept Minutes from July 16, 2012 meeting.

Jack Kennedy: SO MOVED

SECOND: Jim Brock

VOTE: All Ayes.

John Bruce: Emergency contact sheets are given out for this year. They must be completed and returned.

John Bruce: Will now have discussion on what Jack Kennedy and Henry Oszakiewski did on touring the village.

Henry Oszakiewski: The comprehensive plan needs to be put together as one document.

John Bruce: I believe it is in the code book. You are referencing square footage, or widths and depths, specific square footage per unit on multi family that is incorporated in one section. That is next on the list to discuss, after your presentation.

Henry Oszakiewski: Jack and I went out Saturday, August 11, 2012 in the morning. We drove around the village and focused on 79th Street, Roberts Road and inward from the area towards Wesley Fields, then in the Lost 19 area, then the Industrial, then went down 81st Street.

Jack Kennedy: Our objective when we went out was to look at empty buildings, empty store fronts, and empty lots. How do you clean up empty store fronts, how do you improve that and make it more sellable and attractive for businesses to come in. These are some of the things we were looking at.

Henry Oszakiewski: Some parcels like the Marathon Gas Station and the empty lot behind it, including Gibby's lot. Maybe something could be done with these parcels if put together.

Jack Kennedy: We were asked to go look at 2 lots on 81st and 85th Streets. Someone had mentioned about possible 2 flats.

Henry Oszakiewski: Trustee Rusch had mentioned along 79th Street; it needs some work along sidewalks such as grass cuts. We were finished in an hour and 10 minutes, we felt that we really looked at the village like we haven't looked before, and to have someone from the outside, like the Lakota Group, tell us what we want, or what we need, we need to look at it ourselves and then make some recommendations to the Lakota Group.

Ed Shilka: Isn't it supposed to be the other way around?

Henry Oszakiewski: The next is 85th Street and 79th Street, the Panacarian Building; is there something that could be done associated with the driving range? Then Chief's Trailer Park, we were there for quite a while.

Jack Kennedy: They have a lot of empty trailers that are stored in there. I don't know if the village has a time limit on when they have to get these trailers out but they are basically lined up. We didn't know if there is a way to talk to them, to not put in single trailers anymore, more like double wide trailers.

Ed Shilka: The two trailers on Leona are gone. When they subdivided Chief's Trailer Park they subdivided them by the size of the trailer plus 10 feet on the back and 10 feet on the side. That is how they are set up as now. You cannot buy a small trailer such as that. There are some out there that are for sale in older trailer parks. They are trying to move forward on only bringing in old newer trailers or doing the doubles. I have already talked to Chiefs.

Jack Kennedy. If that's the way they want to go that is great, they are thinking like we are thinking.

Ed Shilka: There is a new manager there, she is sharp as a tack and stays on the people there.

Jack Kennedy. We had no issue on the cleanliness and upkeep. We were thinking; going in the direction of double wides. It would look like a better park, with newer bigger trailers and would be more of a home type setting.

John Bruce: Dave De Woskin was here about 4 meetings ago, and they were also looking at what options there were for that property in the future, from a developmental point of view.

Henry Oszakiewski: Justice Square – black top needs repair, and there is no stripping in there.

Jack Kennedy: If they do not stripe the parking lot then they don't have to have a certain amount of spaces marked off.

Ed Shilka: They can park where ever, but they still have to provide handicap parking. For every 50 spaces you have to have a handicap spot.

Henry Oszakiewski: If they were marked it would look better and look like a nice place to stop.

Jack Kennedy: Also, in that square, would it be beneficial to have one way in and one way out?

Ed Shilka: Not really, the parking lot is big enough for parking and traveling thru. As far as I know, we have not had any accidents in that lot. We have had more accidents in the J. J. Pepper lot.

Henry Oszakiewski: Do we have an ordinance about stripping the parking lot?

Ed Shilka: No.

Jim Lurquin: The other problem you have with that corner is that parkways are not wide enough. You have a bus stop and a street light. If you put a planter box there, or trees, you can't see what is coming around the corner. IDOT has a problem with those kinds of plans. If you are doing planters like they did on Harlem with trees down the center line, there is more space.

Some of our parkways that are not as busy, we may be able to find a way to do some tree work or planter boxes.

Jack Kennedy: We do not want to create a blind spot for anyone, but we can't stop looking at things like this because we are waiting for Cook County to get sidewalks. If we wait to get anything done then we are going to be just that much farther behind.

Henry Oszakiewski: We went into Thomas, there are some upgrade needs around the retention ponds on Thomas.

Jack Kennedy: Then we moved down to 88th Avenue and found the empty gas station.

Henry Oszakiewski: It would be great to have a chain restaurant in there. I know they would have to dig all that up, but it would draw a lot of people and also tax dollars.

Jack Kennedy: It's hard to put something there when you know that there is going to be probably \$500,000.00 worth of clean up, before anyone can use it.

Ed Shilka: More like over 1 Million. No one wants it.

Henry Oszakiewski: 8821 84th is an empty lot; do we know what is going on there?

John Bruce: 84th Street; that is a subdivided lot, we subdivided that some time ago.

Jim Lurquin: This was a double lot, they built a new house on one, and the corner lot where the house was located was recently taken down. They were trying to get a two flat, then he went to related living and then to a single family.

Henry Oszakiewski: We went to the Merry Maids Plaza, we liked 83rd Street. Everyone is saying what nice work the village has done on 83rd Street, it looks much better, so we say thank you to the village.

The Merry Maids Plaza black top needs repair and the dumpster area is not clean and looks bad.

Jack Kennedy: We had a couple issues with dumpsters also at the Trace. They are all over the parking lot, when they empty them, they are not fenced in they are over 3 or 4 parking spaces, some are crooked.

Trustee Sparr: We were talking about enclosures, and there for awhile, they did have them, it was even worse inside the enclosure.

Jack Kennedy: When we were there the dumpsters were full and stuff was just piled around it.

Jack Kennedy: We then went to the Lost 19 in the industrial area. There is an empty building; we felt there are some things we could put in there.

Jim Lurquin: They are trying to sell it for 1.2 Million. There are a couple lots there that are still gravel.

Henry Oszakiewski: Can we get some of those business owners to take those gravel lots and make them into asphalt?

Then we went down 83rd Street, the parkways need to be cut.

Jack Kennedy: The last place we went to was Forrest Medical. The parking lot needs repair

Henry Oszakiewski: As we go thru the town and we see these things, whether it's a village resident or a non-resident, it is about us about our town. Putting trees in and sprucing it up, it's what the Lakota Group is talking about.

Ed Shilka: We have paid the Lakota Group a ton of money, and what have they told us? They have told us what we already know. So let's get the money away from the Lakota Group and spend it where it should be spent using your ideas.

Henry Oszakiewski: Were they supposed to be here today?

Trustee Sparr: I called them and they did not respond.

Trustee Small: There is some action that can be taken while we fight the Lakota Group. I know they haven't done a whole lot for us but at the same time if they are not going to do anything, we are going to sue to get our money back.

John Bruce to Orley Betcher: What can the Chamber of Commerce offer us?

Orley Betcher: Some people have lived here for a long time, they now are shocked because they didn't notice this stuff, but a business comes into an area and they look at that stuff. First of all look at the "Welcome to Justice" signs and see the weeds growing. The Village asks Public Works to do that for nothing when they have time. They have sewers and other things to be concerned about and maybe it's raining when they have time. Now they can't cut the grass. First you see "Welcome to Justice" and then you see the weeds.

You go down 79th Street you see the businesses; they should make them cut the grass, not wait until the whole project is done on Roberts Road. Go in and tell the guy, you have five days to cut the grass.

Go to Bridgeview and Hickory Hills, see how that grass is all manicured, I went down those streets they are beautifully manicured. Make those business's clean it up.

At dandelion season, the business next to the Public Works Building looks like a tulip field of dandelions and nobody cuts it. They cut it after they all bloom and it spreads to everyone else.

Get the owners of some of these building to clean up the windows and make it look good?

So businesses drive thru and say "well I know where I don't want to locate, I don't want to locate in Justice".

They say if you have nice landscaping the value of your property goes up 17%.

We don't have much to offer to begin with, we have the cemeteries. As far as plants are concerned, I drove down 79th Street; you really don't have any decent place in a line. Like Oak Lawn has these big pots out in front, that's a designated area. You have businesses then apartment buildings. The only thing you could put for plants is something on a pole. Then you have to have somebody water them and that costs you money.

Trustee Small: Just from a Zoning Board stand point, I am sure you guys are all well aware that we are having issues with Public Works, as far as contracts and things like

that. We tried to hire summer help this summer to do lawns and things but we got squashed on that. So we as a board have to try and figure that out. We had Public Works on 83rd Street, they did a nice job but it took all of our Public Works guys. While they were doing that within our budget everything else went hay wire, that's what we are up against. Not to make excuses for the village but this is some of the things that we need to take a look at.

Jack Kennedy: When you are driving around you just say how do you get 79th Street to look appealing?

Trustee Small: The sidewalks certainly helped so we are starting to make some head way but now we have to be able to maintain it.

Orley Betcher: I think you have to put the arm out for those businesses, such as that shopping center, go over to the owner and tell him he has 10 days to get the place cleaned up and then follow thru.

I'm not blaming Public Works, I'm saying they have a very small crew and I know it is because of finances, but then you throw stuff on Public Works because you think your getting it done for nothing. Well you are not getting it done for nothing; their salary is what you are paying to get it done.

Trustee Sparr: You cannot find the owners on a lot of these properties; they are being sold from bank to bank. What Jim and Ed can do is try and research to find out who those owners are. Some we find, others all we can do is lien the property, so we have to take from our cophers to pay a company to come and cut the weeds. If the property doesn't get sold for 4 or 5 years we don't see our money. Then you have residents asking why are we out there spending \$400.00 or \$500.00 to cut this property. That's why we depend on Public Works.

Jim Lurquin: In 2011 we had about 15 properties that we Leined and had work done to the total of about \$26,000.00. That's coming out of our pocket till we collect those liens. As they are being sold, we have been lucky and collected ½ of them.

At the gas station, we have been putting liens on there since 2005.

Trustee Sparr: We had them cutting the ditches and cutting the corners using the smaller equipment and weed wackers. Otherwise we are paying \$22.00 an hour to cut lawns, plus equipment plus gas.

One thing I can say is I believe with the new store opening, this will be the first time in a long time that the whole plaza will be rented on 85th and Roberts Road.

The plaza with Munchies and All Parts is still full.

Jim Lurquin: As you mentioned the Lakota Group, they did the first part of the study of gathering information. They haven't gone to the second step to tell us what kind of ordinance we need to put together. So when the business's come to us we will be ready to go. The reason we got a professional group was because some of us don't have the expertise. All of us have some expertise but not enough to do the study. Problem being we are still waiting on the Lakota Group to do Phase 2 and Phase 3, but I can't get them off the dime. I got a notice from CMAP, which is, we had a grant from them that offered us staff time to assist in what Lakota Group is doing and what we are trying to achieve. They sent us a note back that said since The Lakota Group is doing this, they moved on to someone else.

Trustee Sparr: Where Bridges Sports Bar is, the new owner is going to see about turning the old laundromat into a small banquet hall and expand the kitchen area for catering.

Trustee Small: I was at the last meeting that The Lakota Group was at. They wanted a list of things that we thought we would like to see, like types of businesses we thought would round out the village. Once we gave them that list then they would place them in a 30 year plan. So if in fact you have the list of what we would like, then we can say here it is now give us our plan.

Jim Lurquin: What the Lakota Group is supposed to do is give us a road map that we can hand to a developer and say, here is what we have, take a look at it and see if you want to come to our village, and then for us to be ready for him to come to us. He was supposed to lay out all of the stuff; the in-depth study is what we don't have.

Trustee Sparr: DISCUSSED FRONTAGE ROAD

It was the wrong time to spend \$130,000.00 to The Lakota Group. This is not where you will build it and they will come right now.

Jim Brock: Bill Beahan said if the ramp was open he would be willing to invest money to buy homes behind him and would have gone after a franchise himself. If McDonald's was on one side he would have went to Burger King.

If we opened the ramp we may not have liked the truck stop, but the truck stop may have brought the Dairy Queen that brought the Burger King. Then you have a chance, but you have to start somewhere.

Jack Kennedy: You cannot put all your hopes on the ramp opening or something that may not happen for 16 years.

Trustee Small: That's the good thing about having the project on Frontage Road. If Frontage Road becomes very nice looking, (we start with landscaping), then the rest of the village we start to clean up. There are grants and things to get all of our signage in order. Just to get signage down Roberts Road is going to give us help. Those are things we can do while we work on the other stuff.

Trustee Sparr: Senator Landek would love to help us get the ramp open. People won't be happy with all the traffic, but without the traffic you are not going to get any franchise to come here. It would help our bars, our gas stations and the few little restaurants we have.

Jack Kennedy: It's a great wish list and we can't wait for the ramp to be opened to do something.

Rich and Jim will tour the town on Saturday, September 7, 2012 at 9:30am.

Jack and Henry will also tour the town on September 15, 2012

John Bruce: The next meeting is September 17, 2012 at 7:00pm.

Chair entertains motion to ADJOURN: 8:27pm.

Jack Kennedy: SO MOVED

SECOND: Rich Berkowicz

VOTE: All ayes

Respectfully submitted

SHIRLEY SHILKA, SECRETARY

John W. Bruce

John W. Bruce, Chairman