

Village of Justice
Zoning & Planning Commission
Minutes of Monthly Meeting
September 17, 2012

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Chairman John Bruce.

ROLL CALL:

Roll call was taken. Present at meeting were: Henry Oszakiewski, Rich Berkowicz, Jim Brock, Jack Kennedy, Bogdan Ogorek, Chairman John Bruce, Secretary Shirley Shilka, Charlene Carter arrived 7:10pm.

No Attorney Present

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM August 20, 2012 meeting.

Chairman John Bruce entertains a MOTION to approve the Minutes from the August 20, 2012 meeting as amended.

MOTION: To accept Minutes from August 20, 2012 meeting.

Jack Kennedy: SO MOVED

SECOND: Rich Berkowicz

VOTE: All Ayes.

Rich Berkowicz: September 7, 2012 Jim Brock and I went out to tour the village, we started in Roberts Park.

Reverend Miller's church; corner of 85th and Roberts Rd.; in the chain link fence area, small businesses could go in there.

North of Reverend Miller's church, they own but may be willing to sell.

Jim Lurquin: We had been told at one point in time that Reverend Miller is looking for a bigger place, if he can find something in town to replace what he has.

Rich Berkowicz: Slacks property; I have approached him twice, from what I understand he is willing to come in and submit his plans. His wife is willing to open up a dentist office. Told her once she has plans to come in and see Jim and pay for permits.

We then went to 8646 Roberts Rd.; there are at least 6 openings in there. Who owns that property?

Jim Lurquin: Joe David

Rich Berkowicz: North of Oil Deluxe there is a garage and old house. If that was cleared out, there could be a possibility of putting something in there.

Ed Shilka: The Starr Family will not sell they want to leave it as is. The house and the garage need to be torn down.

Rich Berkowicz: 86th St. & 79th Ct.; house on southeast corner, small business possible there.

John Bruce: That is residential.

Rich Berkowicz: Next we went to Compass Freight property where the old Doshier School property was located. Someone at one time put a bid in for townhomes there.

Ed Shilka: That was Danny Eftimoff.

John Bruce: That was definitely not retail.

Rich Berkowicz: Crosswalks; When you come out of the golf driving range onto 79th St., going south, that needs to be marked. Is that the State?

Jim Lurquin: 79th St. is state road. They would have to approve any cross walks that go in there.

Jim Brock: On Archer and 88th; at stop light, the stop lines are painted past the sidewalk. A young girl was almost hit by a truck.

Trustee Kuban: Will research Archer & 88th Ave., and bring it up at the next meeting.

Rich Berkowicz: Justice Town Square; has every parking spot marked. Forest Med Center parking lot is spotty but good.

Jim Brock: Possibility of ramp; there is enough room to put an on/off ramp on 88th Avenue, that would bring up the business in this area.

John Bruce: Isn't Senator Landek working on a full interchange?

Trustee Kuban: Yes, with the Southwest Conference of Mayors, the problem is the \$7,000,000.00 and 10 years.

Rich Berkowicz: One of the ideas when they opened the golf course was the possibility of a small banquet hall. Has anything further been discussed on that?

Jim Lurquin: The owner talked about putting in a restaurant and a 9-hole golf course, I don't see it happening.

Rich Berkowicz: At the last meeting it was mentioned that Bridges might want to open a small banquet hall on the west of the property, which would be good.

Jim Lurquin: They have come to us with a proposal for a banquet room and to extend the kitchen.

Jack Kennedy and Henry Oszakiewski reported on their 2nd tour of Village of Justice.

Jack Kennedy: We started on Frontage Rd.; Why Not Drive Ins lot is such a weird shape. We did get information from the Real Estate Agent and the phone number to possibly give the owner a call to see what kind of plans he has.

Took a ride to Amelia Court to see if there was some way to attach that piece with the condo's.; if they might be interested in buying it for parking.

Then we came to a large green building next to Firestone. Have never seen anything in that building, the number to call for information is 312-504-2765

Ed Shilka: This was a sheet metal shop; he has it up for sale.

Henry Oszakiewski: Once Frontage Rd. gets replaced, we can start looking at that part of town.

Trustee Sparr: Frontage Road is going to have a whole different look once it is done, it will be much more inviting then it is right now, that's down the road. That will probably be before the ramp opens and it will definitely have a different view coming down Archer.

Jack Kennedy: We went thru 86th Avenue, The Holy Cross Church; the lot next to the church.

Henry Oszakiewski to John Small: At Holy Cross Church, what are their plans for the empty lot?

John Small: There are no current plans for this property and they are not interested in selling.

Jack Kennedy: The Czarnik Memorial building is sitting on a nice lot.

Jim Lurquin: For \$1,200,000.00 someone can buy out all 8 parcels. They would settle for \$750,000.00 for 7. Part of the problem is it backs up against the residential development and has a 20 ft. drop off.

Trustee Kuban: We have had a discussion with Reverend Miller, there is a possibility of him joining with Summit Bible Church and taking that property.

John Bruce: On the triangle; that whole thing is owned by Marlene Lelko, it is for sale but no one is interested in buying it right now.

Jack Kennedy: Looking at the Justice Diner; that would be a wonderful place for a 9:00 to 5:00 business, like a Dentist or Doctor or Optometrist or somebody who doesn't have 500 people coming in and out that would be an ideal place.

John Bruce: I invited Orley Betcher and Ray Hodson to talk about what their feeling is from the area businesses and do they feel that the market is starting to move where they can expand. How many of them are comfortable staying and how many are thinking about moving?

Orley Betcher: There are some that are thinking of moving and there are some buildings that are vacant.

One of the big stumbling blocks is the tax base for industrial properties; they want to move out of Cook County completely. Every time I talk to somebody on the tax board they always say Cook County is the highest in the state and we are going to work on doing something and that's where it lies.

The only incentive businesses have is some type of a tax break.

John Bruce: How many of your business members actually own the property where their business is at?

Orley Betcher: At the industrial area everyone on the block owns the building.

The property next to the Oil Deluxe needs to be cleaned up.

Ed Sheila: The Starr property at 8440 Roberts Road has an old house in the middle that the lady lived in, which she has since passed away a couple years ago, but it is in the middle so it's not really an eye sore, you can't see it from the street. So we can't turn around and condemn it. I agree, though, let's turn it into some revenue but the owners want to keep it as a nature area.

John Bruce to Orley Betcher: What is your feeling as far as the business community? Are they in the market to expand or just sort of treading water?

Orley Betcher: I don't know of anyone trying to expand due to economy. Everybody is hanging on hoping it gets better; maybe next year.

John Bruce: If the businesses in our town are flat out against expanding because of economics now, and they don't see anything positive for 12 to 18 months. Any other businesses that are possibly thinking of expanding because they are sitting on a lot of cash who might want a foot in this area and looking at Justice as a nice community; they are going to go around and talk to the businesses, the businesses are going to relay that information and their feelings about what the market is doing.

Henry Oszakiewski to Orley Betcher: What are the businesses looking for from the village's perspective? What do they need help with from the Village of Justice?

Orley Betcher: I think of lot of businesses see some improvements going on, like the sidewalks. We also get good service from snow removal, the streets are clean and we never have any problems because streets are blocked. Even during ice conditions they are out there taking care of the streets.

The only problems they have are property taxes and the insurance they are paying. Which really have nothing to do with the Village? They are not complaining about the village tax but the total tax bill.

Ray Hodson: I don't know how you would do it but you could some how separate yourself from the school taxes.

John Bruce: If the economy was doing well what would you suggest from a business point of view that the village or the Zoning and Planning Board could recommend to the Village Board to attract business?

Orley Betcher: First of all I think you should let the businesses decide what they want to put in and just give them the property information that is available. Then be respective to their ideas, then when a business comes in, help them feel comfortable, try to help them out, give them suggestions and work with them. I am not saying that we already don't do that, but just some suggestions.

John Bruce: The businesses that we have in town, members or non-members, are the best advertisement for a business coming to Justice. In your conversation with friends, business associates, and at work shop seminars you got to, you can tell Jim

Lurquin and say "I was at this seminar and ran into a mechanic and he wants to open a small engine repair shop, why not give him a call".

Orley Betcher: That is what we try to do. If someone contacts us, or at various meetings I go to, if someone says "is there something available in Justice". I tell them, "I'll look into it and let them know." I then check with Jim.

Jim Lurquin: I think one of the things that might be helpful is thru Com-Ed, they have the number of parcels in town, the square footage of the buildings, the space, the utilities and the zoning, all that information is listed. If somebody comes to us and says "We need a place that is this size" we can go to that information and say, "Here it is."

Jack Kennedy: What if we had an idea to find out what the last business owner that came into the village, what made him come here? What was the last business that came in?

Trustee Kuban: That was Soup, Sandwiches and More.

Jim Lurquin: Soup and Sandwiches was the last one we approved. We have Sally Sandwiches coming in; they will be at 8350 Roberts Rd. That particular shopping center has a very astute manager who is making one year leases available at a very small price, so they can get them in the door and get them going.

Jack Kennedy: Maybe that is some information we need to share with other property managers.

John Bruce to Orley Betcher: When is your next meeting?

Orley Betcher: Normally it is the second Thursday of the month in the Library at 6:00pm.

Trustee Sparr: In all reality we have very few pieces of property vacant. When Corleones closed a new owner was in there within a few months. Duett opened their bar within the last couple years, now a sandwich shop is going in there. This completes the whole shopping center. We really don't have that many pieces of property for least or rent as compared to a lot of the other towns.

So we do have some movement going on in the village. I don't think we really have that many stagnant properties. The businesses we have are hanging on and they seem very happy. Bridges is looking to expand, Reverend Miller is looking to buy property and expand; we have some positive things going on.

We need the ramp open, with out a doubt, I think we have a better chance with a McDonalds once the ramp is opened up.

I don't think Jim or Ed really hold any businesses out of this town. My instructions, the Mayors instructions, and the Village Boards instructions are; help where ever we can.

We are working in the right direction, we need some growth. It goes back to quite a few Mayors; we tried to get the North side of 79th St. We would love to have that vacant property. We really don't have a downtown.

Bogdan Ogorek: Maybe we could encourage someone to put up a small strip mall.

John Bruce: Rather than look for a big box store that needs a ton of parking, if we can gear more towards in and out, mom and pop oriented.

We have to get something in the code about a multi use, in B-1, businesses on the ground floor.

Trustee Sparr: If we can get Reverend Miller to let that piece go, that is one of the most desirable pieces, because there is a shopping center right across the street.

Bogdan Ogorek: Maybe we could gear up to medical, there are clinics building up all over with these new government programs, the health care services are probably going to be a good business.

Ray Hodson: You are talking about smaller doctors' offices, like a bunch of smaller stores and offices which would be more conducive to medical offices.

Hickory Hills took 95th St, an ugly spot; there is a McDonalds there, that's always busy, they put in a Dunkin Donuts, it's always busy. A drive thru coffee shop would be great in an empty lot.

Orley Betcher: I talked to Randy of Bethania Cemetery. He said they are willing to talk. Maybe somebody should approach him and see if they would give up some of that property.

Jim Lurquin: Something you might want to start thinking about is developing; what do we need zoning wise to develop the area? The enterprise zone that we are working with Bedford Park on the other side of the rail road tracks; they are working on some bike trails to hook up to the Willow Springs bike trail, there is the rail road in there, water is in there, there is great transportation. Except we do not have any access from our side of the 71st St. Ditch. If we can work on something for that I have

a national company that wants to move their business here in town. They are looking for 15 acres for 100,000 sq ft office and repair shop, for a major truck company. He is putting that proposal together for us now, so we can get an idea of what he needs.

He is willing to demolish and re-build, which means he is willing to buy up property that has existing buildings already.

The problem we have is, the type of business that I think it is falls into our Industrial Zone and we don't have any property that big anywhere for industrial.

John Bruce: I would imagine the board would want to do some sort of enterprise zone, like we did with the comprehensive plan where the property was pre-zoned ahead of time no matter what the current zoning is.

Ed Shilka: We have already worked with Bedford Park, that's all part of the enterprise zone. So we could attach just over the tracks on our side.

John Bruce: We have already done 88th Ave., where you have single family homes and they are re-zoned B-1, 79th St.; anything that comes down that doesn't want to go back up has already been re-zoned B-1. Same with Roberts Rd, so the intent is there if someone wants to come in and tear something down, it's already zoned for business.

Jim Lurquin: The area behind the tracks and behind 71st St. that is still in the Village of Justice is not zoned.

John Bruce: Actually it would probably fall under R-1 from the original county subdivision back to 100 years ago.

Jim Lurquin: Isn't that a zoning classification that we want to entertain before we actually get somebody there that says, "Hey what's the zoning of this parcel."

John Bruce: All I needs is instruction from the Village board to put together a petition to zone or re-zone the property.

Jack Kennedy: You don't necessarily have to have anybody looking to buy it to re-zone it?

John Bruce: No.

Jim Lurquin: As a business owner I would like to see, "What do you have that's available for what I need".

John Bruce: At this point we could add to the comprehensive plan, after talking to the Village Attorney. We could just do a generalized legal description. from the Northeast boarder of the Village of Justice parallel to the rail road tracks, all the way to the other side of the center of the Des Plaines River; where ever our boarder ends and into La Grange Rd. where ever our boarder ends there. That entire section would be the legal description.

Jim Lurquin: That's just one part; second part is how much green space do I have, what kind of infrastructure do I need to create. Those are all the kind of questions they ask us. Now is it something we can have ready to go when the time comes, when they say, "I want to locate here."

John Bruce: That is something you would have to negotiate with the MWRD. Don't they have overall right of refusal or approval for the property?

Ed Shilka: That is our property.

Jim Lurquin: We have a lease from DNR. MWRD does not have anything to do with that property.

John Bruce: From a generalization point of view, would there be requirements from either the state or DNR as far as how much green space or type of use of the property.

Trustee Sparr: I am sure there would, at this time it is still in development. It is in the drawing stage and after it is past this then I guess we have to worry about where we get the money from. At this time we don't want to do anything to kill the movement.

John Bruce: Would stipulating zoning kill the movement?

Trustee Sparr: I think that what Jim meant was to get zoning more in place for that type of development.

John Bruce: Then the board needs to give me some kind of instruction on it and I will arrange a public hearing. Then we can figure out from there where we have to go as far as legal description for publication. We will try to keep it as brief as possible, add it on the comprehensive plan, phase 4.

Orley Betcher: I think it would be wise to do that. At least the person knows he already has the zoning taken care of.

Henry Oszakiewski: I have created a data base for what Jack and I covered last time, I will add these items. We will go one more time and then will add that information and start prioritizing some of this. This is all good information.

John Bruce: This is all part of the direction from the Village Board.

The next meeting is October 15, 2012 at 7:00pm

Chair entertains motion to ADJOURN: 8:30pm

Jack Kennedy: SO MOVED

SECOND: Rich Berkowicz

VOTE: All ayes

Respectfully submitted

SHIRLEY SHILKA, SECRETARY

John W. Bruce

John W. Bruce, Chairman