



MINUTES

President and Board of Trustees
Village of Arlington Heights
Committee-of-the-Whole

Forest View Educational Center Theater (enter through door #34)
Arlington Heights Village Hall
33 S. Arlington Heights Road
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
September 12, 2022
7:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

President Hayes and the following Trustees responded to roll: Bertucci, Tinaglia, Schwingbeck, Grasse, Scaletta, Baldino, Canty, LaBedz.

Also present were: Randy Recklaus, Charles Perkins, Nick Pecora, and Becky Hume.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Chicago Bears Discussion Process Overview

President Hayes began the meeting assuring residents that the Arlington Park property will be put to its highest and best use. This meeting will update the community on the Village process. The Village has been assisting the Bears in doing their due diligence. The public will have many opportunities to give public input as the process unfolds.

Mr. Recklaus said this is an early step on a long journey. Due to the community interest, staff wanted to recap where we have been and where we are headed. Staff was invited to a meeting by Arlington Park last fall and the Bears leadership was there. Since that meeting, The Village has been in regular communication to help them understand our process and values. The Bears have announced a preliminary concept which explores a stadium and a mixed-use property. The Village does not yet have enough information to formally review the project. The Bears have not purchased the property yet and we have been told that will occur in late 2022 or 2023. We still do not know what the final project will be. A project cannot be built without our

approval. The proposal is one of the largest and most significant in the State and unlike anything we have undertaken to date. Staff will be careful and thoughtful more so now than ever. Our values will not be compromised and we want what is good for the community and a project that will have positive results for the Village. Staff is working on a road map that will lay out a process for approval.

Mr. Perkins said the vision is to create a one-of-a-kind development and provide a highest and best use of the property. In June last year, the Board approved an overlay zone district for the property. This creates a vision for a development of comparable value as the historic racetrack. Currently the zoning is B-3 and wholesale. Rather than rezoning the whole property we created an overlay district which brings forward different standards and establishes additional guidelines. Without this, the property might have been divided, which was not the vision the Village had. The continuation of a racetrack was still allowed. There are multiple uses not allowed but some of these uses might be allowed in the future. The district calls for preservation of natural site features such as Salt Creek, a linear park along it and a central park amenity. Also encouraged are transit-oriented uses. Subdivision of the property is prohibited. Impact fees, land dedication, extension and provision of utilities and accommodation of services for the property shall be provided. Development should include sustainable features.

Mr. Recklaus added that after the overlay was developed, a meeting with the Bears occurred. In subsequent meetings with them and their consultants, we have made sure they understand our goals for the property.

Mr. Perkins explained to properly evaluate a project of this magnitude, the Village has contracted with two consultants. Hunden Strategic Partners was selected to provide Financial, Economic and market analysis. They are extremely experienced and will provide peer review, analysis independent of the Bear's submission. Hunden's review will look to ensure net positive fiscal impact, and make sure the projected revenues exceed any public costs.

The traffic consultant selected is Sam Schwartz. Their expertise is in studying traffic for arenas and special events. They will also offer peer review traffic study, independent traffic and parking research, and analysis. The funding for these two consultants is paid for out of an escrow fund provided by the Bears to the Village. The consultants answer to and work for the Village.

Mr. Recklaus explained that traffic and finance are two of the biggest concerns. We want to get the best possible advice on those items from experts. Staff is also trying to learn as much as we can. There are examples of stadium projects that have gone badly for host communities, but there are success stories too. Staff has met with our counterparts in Foxboro, California and Nevada. We are researching other districts to see what we can learn from their experiences. We want to know what went well, and what could have been done better. These community leaders have been very candid with us. We have also corresponded with academics on economics

and operations to understand the pitfalls. The Village brought some of the experts in for training. Additional training will occur in the fall. We appreciate the complexity of the project and want to learn from those who have gone before us.

Mr. Perkins described the proposed development with its direct access to Metra and two full interchanges with Route 53. Traffic will be studied and we will need to collaborate with IDOT to manage the traffic volume. Initial plans include enhancing the Euclid entrance to increase capacity and the creation of an underpass under Northwest Highway and railroad tracks with a comparable underpass west of 53. A lot of agencies will be involved, studies conducted and plans vetted for traffic. It appears signals will be added to additional intersections. Metra has a long-term lease on the surface parking at the train station, so we are looking at using that lot for game day and a long-term parking, which could accommodate commuters in the day time and evening/weekend event parking.

Mr. Recklaus said staff is creating a development roadmap for both parties. This should go to the Board in October for discussion. An amendment to the overlay district to allow a sports book as a Special Use will also be considered. A sports stadium is permitted as a special use, the Bears can't build it by right. These are the only two issues that will be discussed prior to their closing on the property.

We don't know the timeline on the development yet. Every step of the way there will be opportunities for community input at meetings and hearings. Information is on the website so residents can see what we have done to date. We don't yet know how the development will this be paid for so it is premature to discuss details. The Bears stated publicly are not planning on requesting funds for a stadium. They may ask for public improvements like roads and sewers but they have not requested anything yet. Staff will treat it like any other development. The developer must prove that the project would not be feasible without a public private partnership for us to consider helping with infrastructure. They will also have to prove that costs will be recovered by the Village. The Village must realize positive revenue above its expenses. This is our approach and we've used it over and over with success, our Downtown being a prime example.

President Hayes said he was proud of the work the Village team has done. He said the goal is to make sure we do it right for the benefit of the Northwest Suburban region and the residents of Arlington Heights. He is confident we have the team in place to do it right so it is a win/win for the Bears, or the contract purchaser, and our community.

Trustee Tinaglia reiterated that this fall the Board will only consider road map for an approval process for next year and a text amendment for sports wagering as a Special Use.

Trustee Scaletta said the most important issue is continuing the quality of life in the Village. For him, there has to be a significant increase in income to justify these changes. The project looks large and dense.

Trustee LaBedz asked how the consultants were found and how they will represent our interests. What makes them different? Mr. Perkins replied that they found the financial consultant at a conference specializing in sports and entertainment. Staff met a number of firms there, we did due diligence on them and sent the Request for Proposal (RFP) to 8 of those firms. These firms are different than typical municipal consultants but we need a firm that specializes in this kind of development. For traffic and parking, we wanted a firm with big project experience studying traffic peak demands for larger events. It's important to get on board early, so that when a proposal comes, we don't lose time in finding the appropriate resources. Mr. Recklaus highlighted these consultants can provide a peer review process. We wanted firms who understands professional sports team thinking and how they generate money.

Trustee LaBedz said she has heard concerns about taxes, financial impact, traffic and impact on Downtown. People want to preserve the specialness of Downtown and don't want it to become less well used. It is a jewel, and a reason that people move here. Mr. Recklaus said he has spoken to his peers in other communities and especially is seeking out the ones that are not in big cities. He is learning from them and their strategies.

Trustee Bertucci said he appreciated staff in realizing we did not have the expertise. He appreciates that we have a sense of awareness how it will affect our Downtown. He said no matter how long it takes; we all want to leave it better than we found it. The Board will carry the ball and pass it on effectively.

Resident Susan Skrudland asked if anything has been discussed regarding studies on how this sort of development could impact the Downtown. She worried it might be a strain for mom and pops to compete with a large entertainment district.

President Hayes said the Bears are fully committed to making sure what they do compliments our Downtown and the other shopping districts in our community. There should be a synergy between Downtown and the Arlington Park redevelopment and they could feed off each other. There is a loyal customer base that will stay with the Downtown and it might attract new people. Mr. Recklaus talked extensively about this with the consultants. We will be looking at this question. There has to be a differentiation between the two so they might not compete with each other. The project will take place over a long period of time. Will have time to adjust and evolve. We don't have all the answers, which is why we are hiring the consultants.

Trustee Canty said the retention of the experts and consultants means the Village is not relying on the Bears telling us what is so. We are seeking guidance and getting input from the experts and the community. Mr. Recklaus said staff has reached out to the Downtown business leaders and the Chamber of Commerce, this will be a collaborative process.

Resident Theresa Jordan, who is also a member of the Environmental Commission, said she was pleased to see one of the values put forward is sustainability. She said the language is a little vague, sustainability is complicated, and it's a complicated development. How will you approach including sustainable features? She cited some examples of sustainable activity in stadiums and manufacturing. President Hayes said he was pleased to see green space and water features included in preliminary plan. There are also walkable sidewalks and lanes for exercise and for residents and attendees of events. Mr. Perkins said sustainability is important which is why it is a specific item in the overlay district. It's a little premature to discuss because we don't have plan details. The site is the first step. Each building will be looked at individually. It also matters how is it being phased, are they using sustainable demolition practices and those kinds of issues. The team is aware that we will continue to look this issue.

Resident Tom Loch said he was impressed by what was presented tonight and the Bears presentation last week. What specific efforts will be made to prevent negative impacts to nearby neighborhoods? He noted traffic, noise, and safety. It may be good on the whole, but what about the nearby neighbors? He wants to make sure the quality of life is not altered. He asked about the impact on the school districts 15 and 214. He said he was in favor of it, and liked keeping the traffic over by 53, and increasing capacity on Euclid. He said we could use this opportunity to improve water systems and flood control.

President Hayes said quality of life is #1 to him. His goal that it does not change with this development. Since we are still in preliminary stage we don't know exactly where the traffic will go. We have to create a plan and then act on it. Same with the schools, we don't know how many residences there will be yet, so don't know the impact. We have been talking to all the stakeholders and adjacent municipalities. Our Police Department has already thought about how to prevent traffic going into the neighborhoods.

Trustee Scaletta said this Board takes every development seriously when it comes to quality of life. We live here too. We will talk about every single thing in a development, like we did with Block 425 in Downtown. He also wonders how people will park and how will people get there, but we need a plan first. Mr. Recklaus said we have met with the Bears, D214, D15, and D211. Any development has to pay impact fees to the schools. How many children are generated is still unknown. In regards to traffic; that is why we are hiring our own consultant who will create sophisticated modeling based on other stadium districts. Even so, you will probably notice there is a game on Sunday. But for the past 100 years we have had 35,000+ people attending events here, we have done work like this before. This site will be designed better for getting people in/out. The first question we will ask is what's it like on game day, how do you get in out? We will also actively manage intersections with police. There are now traffic counters and cameras so changes in traffic controls can be made quickly based on the number of cars.

Trustee Bertucci said if you have been to any sporting events recently, it's not uncommon to see controlled intersections directing traffic. Wilke going east might be blocked. We're not sure what the consultants will say, but this is a common occurrence and he expressed confidence we will control it.

Trustee Canty said this is the reason we retained consultants, the stadium will add people in restaurants, retail, and in homes. We need advice to make sure we are getting the right development here.

Renee Poore expressed concerns regarding traffic on Wilke as it is already hard to get out. Even if there is not a game, there will be residents and people going to the restaurants. How will you prevent people who don't want to pay for parking from using the neighborhood for parking? Chief Pecora said we might use permit signs which control non neighbors from parking on the streets. It will take an Ordinance to further restrict parking in certain neighborhoods. Staff will weigh the impacts and fines that will discourage people from parking.

Brenda Popovic said she feels better after hearing that you are taking all the steps. The plans look exciting, but her concern is economic, she said she hopes any development will be able to serve people of all income levels. She worries about property taxes and how that will impact people in the community. Some already struggle with affordable housing. As a Rolling Meadows High School teacher, she sees a lot of families that struggle, if property values go up, taxes might go up too as well as rent for apartments and businesses. She doesn't want to lose people. President Hayes said we have had a 0% tax levy over the past 4 years. Whether it's the Bears or anyone he's not going to do anything that will financially burden our residents. It has to be a win/win.

Trustee Scaletta said this Board has made decisions for the past 10-15 years that impacted your taxes today. There are affordable houses, we now have an Affordable Housing Ordinance. For him, there has to be a significant net revenue to help us offset our costs and any other possible disruptions. The development should not increase our taxes. He is committed to making sure this does not negatively impact property taxes.

Trustee LaBedz said the Board worked hard to pass the Affordable Housing Ordinance. She asked if it had been shared with the Bears. Mr. Recklaus said last year the Board passed an Affordable Housing Ordinance to help preserve and maintain housing for those who work and live in the community to keep people from being priced out. We are one of 7 communities in Chicagoland that has an ordinance like this. It's important to this Board and we have shared it with the Bears. Staff will look at the revenues to offset the costs we have. We will go in with open eyes and be transparent.

John Ropczynski said the Village will have to increase the number of municipal workers. How will we bear that before the taxes come? Also, there are 3 dog places in his neighborhood and his quality at life has suffered. If you can't address that, can you do this project?

Mr. Recklaus said the dog business has been cited, and has a date for Administrative Adjudication. The business is doing a study and the Village is in discussion with them. We want them to solve the problem themselves, but if they can't we may have to close their outdoor space.

Mr. Recklaus said we don't yet know impacts on Police and Fire. It is part of what we are going to be studying to determine if we will need permanent a presence or just game/event days. The increase in staff will need to be offset by revenues generated by the site.

Trustee Schwingbeck asked if Petsuites is still allowing animals in their outside area. The answer was yes. Staff has had Health and Building Inspectors there as well as Police officers. They were cited. We are looking to mitigate the noise and if they can't do it on their own, we will. Trustee Schwingbeck asked if we can bring the dogs inside until its decided?

Mr. Recklaus said the outdoor time is under contract with their costumers, we are hoping to resolve it so they don't have to break their contracts.

Natalia Pogrebna said she has a business in Rolling Meadows. She asked if there will be set asides for local businesses? Mr. Recklaus said he believed so, the Bears did talk about their DEI efforts and have a coordinator working on that to identify with whom they can partner.

Melissa Cayer asked if the Bears back out, will the escrow funds be reimbursed from the Village to the Bears. The answer was no, it is not uncommon for us to charge an applicant for these kinds of expenses.

Marie Bush said the Village is such a small part of our property taxes. Will this development decrease the school taxes? President Hayes noted the Village portion of residents' property tax bill is about 12%, most of which goes to the school districts. Mr. Recklaus said it is too soon to say, but the point is well taken. We are very sensitive to property taxes.

Trustee Bertucci noted the school districts are separate tax bodies. They make their own decisions in how they tax.

Trustee Grasse thanked the residents and businesses for their emails and comments. The Board is united in taking in the concerns and working for what best benefits our community and our neighbors. She expressed gratitude to be part of a Board which takes this seriously. She offered reassurance noting the impressive nature of staff and leadership who think about things we don't know about yet. She said we have professionals from which to get additional advice. The best interests of the Village are the core.

Trustee Tinaglia concurred saying we are so blessed to have the horsepower and education and the ability to make decisions. We have more resources available than many other communities. The goal is to take it one step at a time. We want to be proud of these decisions for generations. If it can't be that, he won't do it.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Bertucci moved to adjourn at 9:09 p.m., Trustee Scaletta seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

-Becky Hume
Village Clerk