

Village of Peoria Heights
Board of Trustees
November 17, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sherryl Carter, Diane Mariscal, Beth Khazzam, Jeff Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Trustee DeVore made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees Meeting held on October 20, 2020 and the motion was seconded by Trustee Wisenburg. The Board voted to approve the minutes 6-0.

Mayor Phelan announced that the Village will be working with the Chamber of Commerce to plan safe, socially distant events for the holidays. The Village is looking into a tree lighting event as well as a visit from Santa. Once details are finalized, the Village will post the events on its website and social media.

Mayor Phelan invited Mr. Paul Kouri, from Farnsworth Group, forward to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on the Village's meeting with IDOT regarding Galena Road improvements. Mayor Phelan commented that the road is not currently safe, and there's huge potential for ecotourism along the route. He explained the Village had been lobbying for changes to the road for years. Mayor Phelan expressed gratitude and appreciation for Senator Koehler and Representative Gordon-Booth's support and hard work in helping the Village advocate for the project. Trustee Khazzam complimented the effort of all who contributed. Mr. Kouri explained the Village met with IDOT in October to share its vision for the area. Mr. Kouri said that IDOT completes projects in three phases each of which can last up to a year. While the project is several years from beginning, it's important for the Village to meet with IDOT early in order to contribute to planning. Mr. Kouri stated the meeting with IDOT was a great meeting with open dialogue, and he hopes to continue the dialogues. Mr. Kouri explained that the improvements to Galena Road will include four lanes, two going each way, with a turn lane down the center. Curbs and gutters will be installed along the roadway. Additionally, there will be a 10 ft wide multi-use trail which will parallel the roadway. Mr. Kouri explained that the ecotourism has been a huge draw to communities along the river, and the Village has a lot of natural beauty to draw tourism. Mr. Kouri listed current and future projects, including bicycle paths and existing parks, which could create a tourism draw and also shared project ideas which would be appropriate for the Village's unique topography. Mr. Kouri expressed that the ideas were aspirational and designed to spark ideas for the types of businesses that might be created. He noted that the Village had identified two key locations for pedestrian crossings across Galena. IDOT had shared that, due to the speed on Galena, a pedestrian crossing can't be installed. Mr. Kouri explained that information had focused the Village's attention on creating justification for installation of a traffic signal and finding public and private funding for an overhead bridge so pedestrians can still cross the road. Mr. Kouri explained the overhead bridge was planned for the southern end of Galena near the proposed Al Fresco Park development. The bridge would link to the multi-use trail to the park and provide access between parking on one side and the park on the other side. The second crossing would be on the northern end near Galena Village. The intention is to create development on the western side and provide access from there to the river and

recreational development on the eastern side. Mr. Kouri noted the area on the east side was partially within the flood plan which created engineering challenges, but he believes there are opportunities to construct on stilts within the area. Mr. Kouri explained the area was also well suited to unique transportation methods. He shared that either a gondola linking the top of the bluff to the bottom or even a staircase between the two would be a great way to link the downtown district with new development below the bluff. Mr. Kouri briefly spoke about possible improvements to War Memorial Drive which could be tied into the improvements to Galena Road to create a cohesive feel throughout the Village. Senator Koehler complimented Mayor Phelan and the Board of Trustees on being unique in making development opportunities happen. He noted that people are working from home more and looking for different amenities than previous generations. He stated that the plans along Galena Road were old plans which have been revived and updated. Senator Koehler thanked the employees at IDOT in Region 4 who have been working with the Village in order to spend the funds efficiently while enhancing the Village's vision for development. Senator Koehler noted that he had worked closely with Representative Gordon-Booth and Representative Spain to bring funds back to the region, and the improvements to Galena Road would provide benefits to the entire community. Senator Koehler stated he was excited to be able to facilitate communication between IDOT and the Village. Mayor Phelan thanked Senator Koehler and opened the meeting to questions for Senator Koehler and Mr. Kouri. Mr. Birkland asked Mr. Kouri about the bicycle trail. Mr. Kouri clarified IDOT was labeling it a multi-use trail, and it was still part of the plans. Trustee Wisenburg stated residents are most concerned about safety. He asked if the center turn lane would extend the length of the road. Mr. Kouri stated it would. Trustee Wisenburg asked if there was a traffic signal planned. Mr. Kouri stated that currently the road didn't justify a traffic signal. He explained there are different conditions which will create justification for a traffic signal. Potential land development has been used to justify a traffic signal in the past so that might change. The next step will be for the Village to start speaking to land owners and developers about potential projects to see if there might be justification for a traffic signal based on future development plans. Trustee Wisenburg noted that center turn lanes will definitely improve safety on the road. Trustee Wisenburg asked if there were right and left hand turn lanes included in the plans. Mr. Kouri stated there were some planned. Senator Koehler explained that there had been discussion of a frontage road in order to improve safety at the access points. Senator Koehler noted that IDOT had very strict rules that must be followed in order to install a traffic signal, and he and the Village will continue the discussion with IDOT. Senator Koehler noted that there was a changing attitude toward traffic planning to move traffic safely while also considering the impact on the community. Trustee DeVore asked if IDOT would consider lowering the speed along Galena Road. Senator Koehler stated both he and Chief Sutton had advocated for that for years, and he believed it would be difficult to accomplish. He believed the Village would be more successful negotiating a traffic signal. Senator Koehler noted that the improvements, by making the road more obviously appear urban, would naturally introduce a reduction in speed from traffic. Mayor Phelan thanked Mr. Kouri and Senator Koehler for their time.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment. Hearing no public comment, Mayor Phelan closed public comments. Mayor Phelan moved on to the trustees' reports.

Trustee Carter had nothing to report for Public Works.

Trustee Mariscal had nothing to report for building maintenance.

Trustee Khazzam reiterated that the conversations with IDOT had heavily emphasized safety. She noted that IDOT intends to slow traffic along the road. She reported the Village had submitted an application

for granting funding to build a trailhead building. She thanked Mr. Ryan Harmes and Mr. Eric Miller from Tri-County Regional Planning for their work on the application. She also thanked Mr. Bruce Brown, Trustee Wisenburg, and Mr. Theo Hoerr who had worked on the committee for the trailhead building. Trustee Khazzam announced that the Peoria Riverfront Museum was planning a free attendance day for Peoria Heights residents. Trustee Khazzam stated that Chief Sutton would have an update later about the DCEO grant program which would bring \$250,000 in funding to the area. She praised Chief Sutton and his staff for getting the application together.

Trustee Goett had nothing to report. Chief Sutton stated that Village Hall will be closed to the public beginning on Friday. He stated that offices will be open, and residents can contact Village Hall for an appointment, questions, or service.

Trustee Wisenburg reported he's looking for feedback from the other trustees on a potential fire cadet program for the department.

Trustee DeVore announced officers will be participating in No Shave November to benefit the Peoria Heights School District for their annual food drive and Center for Prevention of Abuse. The Police Department has been working with Meals on Wheels for many years, and the officers typically work with the organization to provide meals on Thanksgiving Day. Due to COVID, the organization is not able to provide meals this year. She noted that the police officers had used their own funds to provide prepared bags with prepackaged food for those who typically receive a meal.

Mayor Phelan asked for old business. Hearing none, Mayor Phelan moved on to new business.

Trustee Mariscal made a motion to approve the electrical proposal for Village Hall generator circuits in the amount of \$5,300. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. Chief Sutton explained the Village had a generator at Village Hall, but portions of the building aren't connected to it. The Board voted 6-0 to approve the cost of the generator circuits.

Trustee Khazzam asked Attorney Walton to provide an updated on the site plan of 5619 N. Galena Road from August 15, 2015. Attorney Walton stated the Village had an active court case regarding the property. He explained the site plan required a 6 ft tall screen of bushes to be installed which hadn't been completed. The Village spoke to the business owner to seek voluntary compliance but has since opened a court case. As a result, the business owner has requested to build a privacy fence in place of the approved plan. Chief Sutton noted that there was an issue with traffic through the area, and Attorney Walton replied that could possibly explain the reluctance to comply. Trustee DeVore noted that a wooden fence required maintenance, and she was concerned approving a fence could create a future problem. Trustee Khazzam stated she didn't want to contradict the previous ZBA's conditions. Attorney Walton noted that the business had agreed to the condition, and the ZBA exists to balance the impact of a business on the community around it. Trustee DeVore expressed concern that the Village would undermine its future authority if it didn't enforce the condition. She considered it a dangerous precedent. Trustee Wisenburg explained that the business had initially planted some trees, which did not meet requirements, but the plantings were neglected and allowed to die. Mayor Phelan noted it was a Board decision, but his own opinion was that the Board should support the ZBA and ensure their rulings are enforced. Trustee Carter agreed that the business owner needed to comply in a timely manner with the ZBA's ruling.

Trustee Khazzam made a motion to approve the cancellation of the Board of Trustees Meeting on November 24, 2020. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. Mayor Phelan noted that there was no urgent business to appear before the Board of Trustees. Trustee Goett asked for more detail on why the Village was cancelling

the meeting, and Mayor Phelan stated it was a holiday week with no urgent business. He also added the pandemic had another layer. Trustee Wisenburg asked if public meetings would be restricted in the future with the closing of Village Hall. Mayor Phelan stated it had not been discussed, but he currently planned to continue meetings in person. He stated that anyone who was not comfortable attending could call into the meeting. Trustee DeVore expressed support for Mayor Phelan's plan. The Board voted 6-0 to approve cancelling the Board Meeting on November 24, 2020.

Trustee Khazzam made a motion to approve Resolution 2020-03: a Resolution of the Village of Peoria Heights Approving Application and Participation in DCEO Local Cure Economic Support Payments Grant Program and Approving Grant Documents for Eligible Local Businesses. Trustee Goett seconded the motion. Trustee Khazzam explained that the Village was approving the Village's application for possible grant funds. Chief Sutton explained that this was the next step in order to continue with the grant program. Attorney Walton thanked Clerk Turner for putting together all the program documentation which made his review more efficient. Mayor Phelan stated the Village has a very capable staff, and the Village is moving forward quickly to get funding in the hands of the businesses. Chief Sutton explained the grant funding and application are very different and much more involved than the Village's BDD grant program. He explained the program provides up to \$5,000 to businesses. Trustee DeVore asked if applications would be available online. Chief Sutton stated that the Village had to get final approval from DCEO. Trustee Khazzam asked what the timeline for the funding would be. Chief Sutton stated it would be within two weeks. Mayor Phelan asked residents to order out and support local businesses if they could afford to do so. Trustee DeVore abstained due to a potential conflict of interest. The Board voted 5-0 to approve Resolution 2020-03.

Mayor Phelan asked for miscellaneous business. Trustee Wisenburg asked if the Village would be suspending water shut offs with restrictions tightening again. Chief Sutton explained that the Water Company is working out arrangements for residents that are behind on bills, and he would speak to staff about possible solutions.

Trustee Goett made a motion to pay the bills. Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The Board voted 6-0 to approve the bills.

Clerk Turner read the Treasurer's Report. As of the end of October, there was \$3,691,618.51 in the Village controlled accounts and \$1,309,708.91 in the Water controlled accounts. Chief Sutton stated he was proud of the fund balances especially considering the Village's position not very long ago. He thanked staff for their hard work in reducing deficits. Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, and Trustee DeVore seconded. The Treasurer's report was approved 6-0.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded. The Board voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk