

Village Center Commission

Meeting Minutes

April 3, 2019

A meeting of the Village Center Commission was held on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. at the Village Hall, 850 Waukegan Road, Deerfield, Illinois. Chairman Jannes Zobus called the meeting to order at 7:3 p.m.

Present were:

Jennifer Holtz
Joan Reed
Janice Shaw
Victoria Street
Jannes Zobus, Chairperson

Absent was:

Kenneth Stolman

Also Present:

Dan Nakahara, Village Planner
Jeri Cotton, Secretary

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments on non-agenda items.

Document Approval

Ms. Shaw moved to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2019 VCC meeting. Ms. Reed seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Business:

1. Discussion on the Concept of Shared Work Space in the Village Center

Ch. Zobus noted Randy Horton was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Nakahara noted co-working or shared office space is becoming more common than in the past. The commission discussed the benefits and challenges of shared office space. Ms. Street noted shared office space can be rented by the hour, week, or month. Mr. Nakahara noted office space is a permitted use in the Village Center on the second floor. It was noted that there is a shared office space in Deerfield at 790 Estate Drive. Ms. Holtz believes a downtown location would work for some residents. Mr. Nakahara added that depending on the locations of the shared office space, the office address can also be an added incentive.

2. Downtown Resident Survey

Mr. Nakahara reported there were 1,540 responses to the Deerfield Resident Survey as of April 1, 2019. The survey appears to be successful in reaching residents. He suggested asking similar questions in future surveys, to track and compare responses over time. Discussion also ensued about the possibility of changing the order of the question answer choices. Some of the feedback from residents was that some of their responses did not fall into a general response option.

Mr. Nakahara noted the Commission will be presenting highlights of the survey at the May 6 2019 Board of Trustees meeting. Ms. Reed and Mr. Stolman will attend the meeting to address the Board. Mr. Nakahara is working on an infographic to summarize the responses as well.

Ms. Street questioned how the information would be used. Mr. Nakahara noted the questions were put together to be a tool for the Village. Ms. Reed was surprised by the responses that people were making in the survey, as they resembled the same type of responses she heard 25 years ago. She suggested some of the comments should be summarized and brought to downtown business owners. The Commissioners noted that there were a number of comments about the lack of full service restaurants; however, downtown property owners comment that fast casual restaurants is the current trend and due to a surge in online shopping, brick and mortar stores are struggling to survive. Ms. Reed went through the survey comments and highlighted those with concrete suggestions. One recommendation was to add signage that indicated “no right turn on a red light when pedestrians are present” at Waukegan and Deerfield Road intersection. She believes this is something the Village can do to make the intersection safe. Responding to a comment regarding a lack of parking in downtown Deerfield, Ms. Reed noted it is difficult to drive and park in downtown Highland Park, and questioned how that is so different than Deerfield. Ms. Holtz noted Highland Park benefits from being more urban and pedestrian friendly than Deerfield. Ms. Holtz questioned what the Commission can control, besides aesthetics. Ms. Reed suggested amending the parking requirements in Deerfield Square to allow angled parking.

Mr. Nakahara explained the Commission asked the residents, rather than merchants, to complete the survey. He is looking at the write-in responses to try to quantify the results. He noted one of the benefits of Deerfield, according to the write-in responses, was parking. Ch. Zobus suggested that the Commission hold off on discussing the responses until Mr. Nakahara quantifies the responses. Ch. Zobus would like a follow-up report in D-Tails, as well as the Deerfield Review. Ms. Reed asked whether the Commission should write a “thank you” letter for those that participated. Ms. Street suggested letting people know how the information is being used.

Ms. Reed indicated two respondents asked to be contacted about their responses. She suggested engaging those two people. Ms. Street noted the Chamber held focus groups and suggested inviting residents to a focus group.

Mr. Nakahara noted the Proclamation for Deerfield Cyclery would also be a May 2019 Board of Trustees meeting.

3. Village Center Update

Ms. Holtz is surprised there is no indication in Deerfield Square shopping where pedestrians should cross. She noted people want a pedestrian-friendly space and suggested asking Deerfield Square to lead the charge. Ms. Holtz suggested sending information to the Plan Commission asking them to consider pedestrian crosswalks to future developments.

After the last meeting, there was a suggestion the Village purchase 10 planters and give them to the first 10 merchants signed up for them. This was not allocated in the 2019 budget and will be requested for 2020. Ms. Reed suggested bringing it up ahead of time for the 2020 budget.

The Village sent out 80 letters to merchants regarding the flower planter program and did not receive any responses. Ms. Street also put it in the Chamber newsletter. She questioned how many businesses are actually eligible to add planters, as they are not free-standing businesses. Mr. Nakahara suggested revamping the program for next year. Ms. Shaw expressed concern about the winter plantings, because the snow plows spray salt causing the plantings to look awful.

Warwick House recently opened. Worldwide Liquors will be opening under new ownership. Nailed It Salon will also be opening in Marshall Mall. Kay Foot Spa has been approved to open in the former Baskin Robbins location. Bar Taco will open in a few weeks. Deerfield Bakery is under new ownership. Walgreen's in Deerfield Square will go before the ARC for new signage and awnings. Caldwell Banker is in the process of getting zoning approval to relocate to a satellite office in Deerfield Village Centre.

Ms. Street questioned why vacant stores still have signage. There is a lot of signage for stores that have been vacant for several years and still have their signage up. She suggested the Village should speak with the property owners.

The commissioners discussed and agreed to change the meeting start time from 7:30 PM to 7:00PM.

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Adjournment:

There being no further business or discussion, Commissioner Reed motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Street seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

The next meeting of the Village Center Commission is scheduled for June 5, 2019 but the meeting was rescheduled to June 19, 2019 due to schedule conflicts.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton
Secretary