

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, January 17, 2023**

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Greg Lungmus on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 5:30 PM. Village Clerk Stacy Sigman called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:	Absent:
Trustee Todd Fowler	
Trustee Barnaby Dinges	
Trustee Tom Whittaker	
Trustee Matt Galin	
Trustee Tracey Mendrek	
Trustee Charles Orth	

President Greg Lungmus

Others Present:
Village Attorney Buzz Hill

Approval of the December 6, 2022 Report of Proceedings

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to approve the December 6, 2022 Report of Proceedings. Approval was unanimous.

Review of Zoning Code Update

It was noted that Community Development Director Gutierrez had been heading up this effort but was ill and not able to attend. Village Manager Sigman and Village Attorney Hill used a PowerPoint (see attached) to walk the Board through the Comprehensive Plan/Zoning Code discussion. Village Manager Sigman noted that in 2020, the Village adopted the new 2040 Vision Plan to guide the community's future.

Village Attorney Hill noted the Comprehensive Plan was meant to guide the community's future and inform development decisions. It was to be used as a reference for staff and members of the Village's Boards and Commissions to use when considering development applications and zoning decisions. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan was to serve as a roadmap for land owners and developers to assist them in making educated decisions relative to potential development opportunities. He stressed that zoning codes are a set of rules that regulate what can and can't be done on a particular piece of property while a Comprehensive Plan helps guide policy decisions.

Four different discussion points were brought to the Board's attention.

- (1) There was a review and discussion on the Village's current residential housing mix to determine whether accessory dwelling units (ADUs) should be considered as an additional alternative. Northfield does not currently allow ADUs but does permit

accessory accommodations – without kitchens. The Board concluded there was not a sufficient need to allow ADUs within the Village.

- (2) There was a review and discussion of the minimum lot sizes in the R-4 and R-5 zoning districts to determine if the minimum lot sizes needed to be increased. A minimum 7,500 sf lot is currently required for R-4 lots and a minimum 6,000 sf lot is required for R-5 lots. The Board concluded that the current minimum lot sizes in the R-4 and R-5 districts remain appropriate.
- (3) There was a review and discussion on the current R-6 zoning district's density standard to determine if that ratio should be increased, in the hopes of encouraging more redevelopment. R-6 is the only zoning district approved for multi-family developments. However, there are other multi-family developments in other zoning districts that were approved through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process. The Board agreed that the Village should continue to rely on the Comprehensive Plan to guide development and use additional density as an incentive to get the highest quality developments possible.
- (4) There was a discussion on development incentive programs and whether a more formal system is appropriate for Northfield. Development incentives are codes through which developers are entitled to defined benefits, typically increased height or density, in exchange for providing certain amenities like enhanced landscaping, open space, plazas, green infrastructure, or art. These programs are typically done on a point system. The Board agreed that the Village should continue to rely on its development review process (PUD's or Special Uses) to handle the additional density requests. Through that process, as is, the quality of the development and proposed amenities can be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

The Village Manager stated that staff would be updating the entire Village's Zoning Code to make it consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations will then be brought back to the Committee of the Whole prior to proceeding through the more formal Plan and Zoning Commission and public hearing process. The Board also agreed that a refresh of the Comprehensive Plan should follow the Zoning Code update – so that we can assure that the market changes that resulted from COVID are reflected in that plan. The Board was asked if there were any items that staff should focus on with the update.

Trustees Mendrek and Dinges suggested that the density ratios associated with Senior Housing in the R-6 district be explored further – as the Comprehensive Plan specifically encouraged this use. The Board concurred. Village Manager Sigman noted that she anticipated a draft of the Zoning Code updates would be ready within six months. She stressed that the Board would be walked through all of the proposed changes and have an opportunity for input, prior to proceeding through the required public hearing process.

Other Business

Public Comment

Ryan Huddlestun, a representative of the property owner of 790 Frontage Road, asked how the four discussion items became the focus. Village Manager Sigman replied that the Village's 20-40 Plan was developed by an outside consultant over a two year period. That process included

extensive public outreach with a community wide survey; resident, business, and non-profit focus groups; several community wide workshops, and about 20 public meetings. These events were coordinated by a special 20-25 person Comprehensive Planning Committee. These four items were specifically listed in a final implementation matrix as ideas that merited further consideration. Huddlestun agreed that the PUD process works well, noting that he was partial to Senior Housing and that certainty for a developer was critical. President Lungmus stated that he was very open to Senior Housing within the Village and encouraged them to reach out through the Village Manager or Attorney Hill on ideas they had in this regard.

Harry Hoopis, a representative of the property owner of 790 Frontage Road, emphasized that the world has changed since COVID and the most impacted sector is office space. He stated that his building is less than 50% occupied. He stated that he and the two other adjacent property owners are ready to sell but they cannot find a car dealership that is interested in this location. He stressed how inflation has driven up the cost of construction along with high-interest rates so he is concerned they could lose the developer of the proposed Senior Housing complex that was presented to the Board in 2022. He stated that the Senior Housing complex would pay more in taxes to the Village and would be better than the existing deteriorating buildings. Attorney Hill replied that the Village has still not received an actual development application for the project or had any recent communications from the petitioner's attorney.

John Brice, a resident of Winnetka and owner of a commercial real estate company, noted that the office market has likely changed forever so some buildings will need to be repurposed. He noted that incentives could be used to obtain targeted uses such as breweries and wineries. He noted that TIF districts can also be helpful in spurring development. President Lungmus encouraged him to share any specific ideas he had with the Village's Community Development Director.

Trustee Mendrek made a motion, seconded by Trustee Orth to adjourn the meeting.

Upon the following roll call vote, the motion was approved.

AYES:	Fowler	NAYS: 0	ABSTAIN: 0	ABSENT:
	Dinges			
	Whittaker			
	Galín			
	Mendrek			
	Orth			

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 P.M.