

APPROVED MINUTES

VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Virtual Meeting – Call In (312)626-6799 Access Code: 592-598-564
January 27, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hanson called the January 27, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Mayor and Board of Trustees led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following Trustees were present virtually: Macek, Dominiak, Poulos and Johnson. Also present were Mayor Hanson, Attorney Long, Administrator Keim and Clerk Romine. Absent: Trustee Pierce.

IV. Approval of the November 25, 2020 Public Hearing and Special Meeting Minutes as presented.

Trustee Poulos moved, seconded by Trustee Johnson to approve the November 25, 2020 Public Hearing and Special Meeting minutes as presented. Upon roll call, the vote was:

YES: 4: Macek, Dominiak, Poulos and Johnson.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 1: Pierce.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

V. Regular Business

1. Chamber of Commerce Request – Chamber Director Barbara Porch presented their list of proposed events for the 2021 calendar year. She proposed a new event this year for a musical light show at the Antioch Bandshell during the Taste of Antioch and during Christmastime. Mr. Mark Tarkowski shared a sample of what the light show may look like. The Chamber is considering making a sizeable investment and would like permission to use the bandshell and sign a 2-year commitment for the new event.

Trustee Dominiak expressed concern with the potential for excessive traffic, and doesn't see it bringing people in to shop since it's a drive through event. Director Porch said during the Taste it would be during the event, and during Christmas it would be a drive through, and would still bring traffic into town.

Trustees Poulos, Macek and Johnson support the idea.

Director Porch clarified that this will be a 2-year commitment, and they would like to leave the light strands on the arches, which won't be visible except during the shows.

Trustee Dominiak asked about the urban fair and asked if other shops would be included that salvage. Trustee Poulos asked if the chamber worked with parks staff to make sure there are no conflicts with Village events.

This item will be placed on the next Village Board agenda for consideration.

2. Discussion regarding downtown beautification consultant – Director Garrigan presented the proposal for a downtown landscaping consultant and recommended vendor.

Mr. Kevin Clark of the Lakota Group presented their proposed plan for the beautification of downtown Antioch. He discussed the phased approach for new spaces, designs, land uses and programming. The firm will engage and discover, envision and explore, design streetscape concepts, parking areas, lighting,

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gateways, and other identified needs. Implementation will occur during phase 3 of the project. Mr. Clark shared similar experiences his firm has had in other communities. He said they want to work with the Village to create something that is exciting, but also achievable within the means of the Village.

Administrator Keim said the proposals were evaluated independently and were ranked similarly by staff without consultation. He visited a space done by Lakota in Oak Park, and said they fit the character of the downtown. He liked their recognition of using the culture of Antioch and listening to staff, as well as the community engagement process.

Mayor Hanson commented that this was initially a recommendation by the Economic Development Task Force, and they were both going to sit in on the interviews, but Mayor Hanson decided to remove himself and task force members and let staff do the interviews in order to speed up the process.

Trustee Dominiak asked Mr. Clark about why he is excited about doing work for the Village of Antioch. Mr. Clark replied that he is very excited about Antioch attracting people from the historical and quaint standpoint, and also providing opportunities in town for families and visitors. Trustee Dominiak asked how the firm will incorporate ideas developed by the Economic Development Task force into their plan. Mr. Clark sees that as the beginning and initial meetings with that and other groups. Trustee Dominiak asked for an elaboration on marketing and branding. She discussed the added costs to implement the plan and asked if there were recommendations on where to begin. Mr. Clark said every project they have done included a phased approach.

Trustee Poulos thinks it's a great idea, and we need a group to come in and implement the ideas recommended by the task force. He said this is a good step.

Trustee Johnson said something of this magnitude, with such a large investment into our downtown, requires a consulting firm with the expertise to ensure it's done to achieve the desired outcomes. This is something that should not be taken lightly. He added that there is a funding source for this type of project, and this is a great proactive step in Antioch's future.

Trustee Macek commented on the Economic Development Task Force and their original intended purpose. He thinks this is the right way to go and applauds this program. This is the next step toward implementing the comprehensive plan.

Trustee Dominiak said the genesis of this program is downtown, and asked staff what is the priority and focus; Pittman property or Downtown Antioch. She asked how that would affect the implementation of downtown. Administrator Keim said the RFQ was published before the Village purchased the Pittman Property, which is why it was included as an addendum. He doesn't believe the Village should bifurcate the projects, but rather thinks they should compliment each other. He discussed the unique aspect of the Pittman property, and doesn't think you can separate one from the other. He believes Pittman has more urgency and would recommend it be implemented first. Trustee Dominiak asked about the budget for downtown, and how this would be paid. Administrator Keim replied that there was a line item in the budget for Pittman visioning, and this will also be budgeted in the next fiscal year.

Trustee Macek commented on other improvements needed in downtown, and said perhaps Lakota can help make those improvements.

Mayor Hanson asked Administrator Keim to comment on the Pittman Property and how we got to this phase with Lakota Group. Administrator Keim said he received a phone call regarding an available grant through the State of Illinois Capital Bill related to stormwater projects. They saw Antioch as a prime candidate for the program, and Administrator Keim found a firm who could put together a rough cost proposal and conceptual plan in order to apply for the grant in a short period of time. The Village was successful in being listed for a grant in the amount of \$2.5 million. The state has not issued the grant notifications yet, and funding

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for the grant will be based on the capital bill. Mayor Hanson discussed the history of the Pittman property, and sees it as a priority.

Mayor Hanson asked Director Garrigan to explain why a consultant is needed at this point when a comprehensive plan has already been completed. Director Garrigan responded that comprehensive plan is a long-term vision of the whole community. One component of that plan is the downtown area, and one reason they chose Lakota is because they worked in our downtown before.

3. Discussion regarding EMB signs in the Downtown – Director Garrigan discussed the electronic message boards requested by the applicants of the Library, School District and United Methodist Church. He said the board will need to consider if EMB signs are appropriate in the downtown sign district. The proposed amendment allows EMB signs as a special use for civic groups. Staff surveyed municipalities throughout Chicago regarding EMB signs.

Trustee Macek said it would be irresponsible to prevent civic groups from putting out their message. He believes they should be allowed for civic organizations for their functions.

Trustee Dominiak thinks that the goal and vision for the downtown includes a historic nature of downtown and EMB signs don't fit into that vision. Director Garrigan said the survey was done through the Northwest Municipal Conference in an attempt to find out what other communities practice. Trustee Dominiak recommended continuing this discussion when the full board is present.

Trustee Poulos expressed concern with the delay of a project just because of an absent trustee. He disagreed with the comments that it would take away from the charm, and would support an EMB sign that was black with white lettering, or something that isn't flashy or too colorful. He doesn't see how the current signs are a better option than the proposed EMB signs, and would see a newer sign as an improvement.

Trustee Johnson agrees with Trustee Poulos, and thinks being able to change the sign easily from the inside of the building would look better. He also agrees that there is a downtown characteristic that needs to be met, but stated sometimes we must deviate away from our initial policy.

Mayor Hanson suggested obtaining an opinion from the selected consulting firm for downtown beautification. If the sign is clean, doesn't have the ability to show a movie, and can be done tastefully, he would support this as a special use. He thinks we can incorporate technology into a historic look and make it work with the vision for downtown.

Mary Pedersen agrees that the consulting firm should be a part of this very difficult decision.

This item will be placed on a future board meeting for consideration.

4. Sign Request from Anastasia's – Director Garrigan discussed this request for a special use from last year. He stated that the ordinance does allow special uses, and this request is for a second sign which would replace the sign face on Hillside and Lake Street. When previously considered, there was a split vote. The applicant is requesting an opportunity to get a second EMB sign, and the proposed sign would be consistent with current EMB sign requirements and was revised to include decorative columns. He asked if the board would be comfortable with a second EMB sign along Lake Street.

Mr. Bill Giannakakis, petitioner, said the message board will be on the top and the logo would be on the bottom. The message display would be one line going across. This would be only one color, white, and is less than 13.5 square feet and is substantially smaller than the sign on Route 173. He added that the sign is only lettering, and doesn't include graphics.

Trustee Macek commented on the staffing shortage due to Covid and the importance of signage. He believes the Village should be more business friendly.

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Trustee Dominiak said her opinion hasn't changed on this matter.

Trustee Poulos thinks the proposed sign looks nicer than what was there previously, and would still rather see white on black than anything of color on any of the requested sign variances.

Attorney Long said this will have to go back to Planning and Zoning Board for consideration.

5. Budget Update – Mayor Hanson said he met with staff a few weeks back to discuss the impact of Covid on our budget and reassess revenues and expenditures to-date. He has asked staff to present their findings.

Finance Director McCarthy provided an overview of the original and revised budget, which was reduced by 9% due to the uncertain impact of Covid-19 on revenues. She stated certain projects were deferred to the next fiscal year, and presented revenues and expenditures to-date. Revenues are very close to where they were last year, and expenses are running under where they typically are at this time. Following the lead of Administrator Keim, staff has been frugal, and is in a good position with budgeted expenses. Revenues hardest hit were video gaming taxes and park programs. She said staff expects revenues to be 4% higher than last year, and expenses lower than what was budgeted. Projected year-end expenses are overall less than the previous year. Directed McCarthy referenced the targeted reserve in the 2012 strategic plan of \$3.5 million, and said we are currently at 93% and on track to meet the April, 2022 goal. She stated that the Village projects approximately \$1 million in business district taxes. The water and sewer revenue is approximately 9% less than what was projected due to suspended shut off and late fees, but expenses are less also.

Administrator Keim said it has been strange year for everyone, and a conservative approach was taken in order to be cautious. He said this puts us in a better position moving forward, and staff will move forward normally in the next fiscal year. Director McCarthy said although we didn't lose money, we also didn't grow, but it is still better than losing.

Trustee Dominiak asked how we can be at 96% at the end of the fiscal year when park program expenses aren't realized. Director McCarthy discussed street lighting and some payroll expenses that haven't been booked yet because of timing and transfers that need to be done at the end of the year. Trustee Dominiak is thrilled that we are on target to reach the reserve goal.

Trustee Poulos commended the board as well as staff for being conservative this year not knowing what was going to happen.

Trustee Johnson agreed and thanked staff and the entire board.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

No report.

VII. Executive Session

The Mayor and Board of Trustees did not go into executive session.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Village Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori K. Romine, RMC/CMC
Village Clerk