

APPROVED MINUTES

VILLAGE OF ANTIOCH BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING

Village of Antioch, Lake County, Illinois
Municipal Building: 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL 60002
June 12, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gartner called the June 12, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:05 pm at the Antioch Municipal Building located at 874 Main Street, Antioch, IL and via Zoom.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call indicated the following Trustees were present: Burman, Bluthardt, McNeill, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen. Also present were Mayor Gartner, Attorney Vasselli, Administrator Guttschow and Clerk Romine.

III. Absent Trustees Wishing to Attend Remotely

There were no Trustees wishing to attend remotely.

IV. Mayoral Report –

Mayor Gartner announced that the July 10, 2024 meeting will be cancelled in order for the Planning and Zoning Board to have a hearing.

Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

There were no citizens wishing to address the board at this time.

V. Regular Business

1. Review of IGA establishing the Lake County Consolidated Emergency Communications (LakeComm) - Administrator Guttschow discussed the regional 911 consolidation, and provided a history and overview of the current situation. There are currently 12 Public Safety Answer Points (PSAP) throughout Lake County. He said the Village of Antioch is currently with Cencom, but one of the issues with the current configuration concerns VOIP and cell phone geographical boundaries, which can result in calls routed to an incorrect center. He discussed the consolidation plan under Lake County's leadership. Cencom has provided fantastic service, but they currently lease space from the Village of Round Lake Beach, and are terminating the lease. The proposed IGA would create the new cooperative organization, which would follow a similar model of joint governance. He discussed a similar situation in DuPage County, the bylaws, staffing structure and transition pathway for current PSAP employees. Administrator Guttschow discussed the costs, which are unknown at this time due to the creation of a new center and new governance, stating much cannot be decided until there is a new board in place. Administrator Guttschow said the number of agencies joining the center will affect the cost, which will be comprised of a blended formula, and will consider call volume, population and other factors. Many finance directors from several other communities are involved, and the current estimated gross costs are \$300k, based on an estimated budget for LakeComm. Administrator Guttschow said there is a potential cost savings the first couple of years, but it will likely exceed current gross costs in year 5 of the agreement.

Trustee Pierce asked when this becomes functional. Administrator Guttschow said the structure is substantially up, and they are making arrangements for the equipment. The go-live date is estimated to be January, 2025. At this time they are seeking an executive director, and the Village will not begin paying until the center is up and running. Administrator Guttschow discussed Lake County Sheriff's

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decision not to participate, and said that Lake County has approved all calls going through LakeComm. Trustee Pierce doesn't want to spend taxpayer dollars to support other communities.

Trustee Macek asked about 911 surcharges currently collected on phone bills, and asked if it would keep up with technology. Administrator Guttschow said one benefit with a new center is that it will include state-of-the-art technology. Administrator Guttschow added that alternatives were researched before making the selection of Lakecomm. Staff explored other cost models, and capacity issues in other communities influenced the decision.

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

2. Discussion regarding a Special use, Variance and site plan for a Solar Farm to be located at the property commonly known as 650 E North Avenue – Ms. Nikki Georgia, Antioch resident, discussed the benefits of the solar farm to the community including revenue, environment, energy infrastructure improvements, ecological benefits, and the commitment of the petitioner to do this properly in order to provide benefits to neighboring property. She urged the board to move forward with this request.

Mr. Brian Madigan, Renewable Properties, addressed questions that came up from the last meeting, and wanted to provide an opportunity for the consultants to address those issues. He introduced experts via Zoom. He presented the pole interconnection and pole height which can range from 35-40 feet, and which look the same as current distribution poles running east to west on North Avenue currently. He presented the landscaping plan in relation to the project recently approved in Lake County, and said the entirety of the landscaping along North Avenue is 3 plant units per 100 feet.

Caleb Scott from United Agrivoltaics discussed the solar grazing outfit, and said they have been doing this for 11 years with a little over 100 properties. He provided an overview of the company, and their proposed plan for North Avenue. He provided an overview of the operations, which includes a vegetative management plan but also an active farm.

Trustee McNeill expressed concerns with coyotes and other predators. Mr. Madigan said they will have an 8-foot tall woven wire fence surrounding the project per village ordinance, and it would be extremely unlikely for a coyote to scale an 8-foot high fence. Trustee McNeill said there is also an opportunity for them to dig underground, and asked if there is a plan in place. Mr. Scott responded that there are many sheep in value on the site, so it is in their best interest to ensure their safety. He discussed their fencing, and responded that they haven't seen many issues with digging under the fence, other than in sandy conditions. He added that there is no greater risk that you would see in any other farming site. Monitoring cameras are onsite to allow a quick reaction in the event something happens, but he hasn't seen an issue in 11 years of doing this. Trustee McNeill confirmed that there is no barn, and the only shelter is under the panels. Mr. Scott said they are typically open range animals, and there is more nitrogen and better nutrients in the plants under the panels. Trustee McNeill asked about use of electronic fences to change the areas in which sheep would graze. Mr. Scott addressed the various grazing models, but said that model is not a general practice. They would likely use single strand polywire. Trustee McNeill asked if the sheep were necessary, or if it is an option. Mr. Madigan said it is their intent, and they would like to implement this model for vegetation management. It also allows them to apply for the Illinois shines program.

Trustee Bluthardt asked if variance would allow for farming of sheep. Director Garrigan responded that the area is zoned agriculture, and this would be a permitted use under the zoning aspect for limited livestock.

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Trustee Pierce thanked the petitioner for bringing up the agrovoltaic, and said he has seen raves about this method in his research.

Trustee Macek recommended bringing in llamas. He added that he thinks this solar farm needs to stay in the Village to control the landscaping, and thinks the sheep are a brilliant solution.

Trustee Pedersen asked about the IL Shines program. Mr. Madigan said it's an Illinois community solar program. Trustee Pedersen confirmed that neighbors won't be able to see into the project area within 4-5 years, and asked if the County had the same buffering conditions. Mr. Madigan said the County buffering requirement is looser. Trustee Pedersen asked if Lake County insists on a decommissioning grant bond. Mr. Madigan responded that it is a state requirement.

Trustee Burman expressed concern with the animals, discussed the IL Shines program, and asked if it is essentially socialized energy. Attorney Striker said nobody is forced to sign up for the program, and it is voluntary. Trustee Burman asked if there is potential for this to go that route. Attorney Striker said most of Illinois is nuclear energy so he doesn't see that happening.

Mr. Jay Higgins, adjacent property owner, said there is a coyote every single night that runs through his property. He discussed a meeting in November at the library, and asked if the fencing has changed from the previously proposed fencing that allowed animals to run underneath. He said he doesn't mind the solar farm, but doesn't like the look of it. Mr. Higgins added that he is worried about battery leakage and contaminating the wetlands and nearby properties. He also asked about the tax revenue.

Mr. Ken Higgins, adjacent property owner, understands the project and asked if Antioch needs this and asked if there are other properties in town that could be considered.

Mr. Madigan said there are no batteries proposed as a part of the project, and discussed the fencing change to be flush with the ground to ensure the coyotes cannot access.

Trustee Bluthardt said it appears that the neighbors don't want to see the farm, and asked if they are open to planting a mixture of larger trees in the berm. Mr. Madigan said there would be a multiple of staggered plants initially planted. The tallest trees are 6 feet at time of planting, and 4 rows of shrubs and trees are proposed on flat ground. Trustee Bluthardt said there is a possibility that if this is rejected, there is potential for the petitioner to de-annex into unincorporated Lake County, where it is likely to be approved.

Trustee Pedersen asked if there was any way to put in larger trees along the berm.

Mayor Gartner said the next step is to put this on a Village Board agenda for a vote on the second meeting in June or July. Mr. Madigan said they are under a deadline with IL Shines program, which requires local denial or approval by the end of this month. This item will be placed on the next Village Board agenda for consideration.

Trustee Burman discussed the proposed fence, and asked if it would disturb animals currently in the area, and is concerned about animals forgotten in the area.

Mr. Higgins said when he asked about a berm or trees he was given a hard no as an answer, and asked how they may be forced them to maintain the trees when they die.

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Trustee McNeill asked about the birds, and proximity to the wetlands. She asked how this could make less of an impact on avian life. Mr. Karl Kosciuch said in the panels in the desert, the sunlight is a fixed tilt without an anti-reflective coating, and this proposed project follows the angle of the sun, so there's less opportunity for glare. Mr. Kosciuch presented research on tilted vs. fixed panels, the absence of observed collisions with birds, and ongoing research funded by US Department of Energy. Trustee McNeill asked about protection from risk of electrocution. Mr. Madigan said there is not a gentle line, and that is more common in larger solar farms.

3. Discussion regarding an Intergovernmental Agreement for Shared Facility Use with the Board of Education of Antioch Community Consolidated School District No. 34 – Parks Director Mary Quilty discussed meetings held with Antioch School District 34, and discussed previous facility use arrangements. She said they only paid previously for use of their facility outside of normal hours. The initial proposal required fees be paid each time the Village comes through the door, however, the proposed agreement charges for each program held at the school. She said parks staff can work with the new proposed amount in order to provide recreation for the children of Antioch.

Trustee Burman asked if the school is charged a fee for use of the bandshell. Director Quilty said we do not charge, but the audio visual consultant is paid for by the school. She added that the charges the Village pays to the School District is for building maintenance. Fees will be charged for use outside of normal hours, and the Village will no longer use the facilities on the weekends or after 10pm. After school from 5-8 is when programming will be scheduled. This is a one-year agreement, and costs will be tracked. This item will be placed on the next Village Board agenda for consideration.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VII. Department reports

Community Development – Director Garrigan said the proposed Starbucks on Route 59 will be coming up for discussion at the next meeting. He said there was a good meeting today regarding the Marketplace property, and the Kia pad is complete and ready to go. He said we received feedback from IDOT, and they are okay with phased improvements. Director Garrigan discussed a meeting with a developer this week who has picked up the 4 commercial outlots at the property. He discussed the rental ordinance, and said it was adopted 2 years ago, and approximately 90% of owners have registered, so we have contact information for the management companies and emergency contacts. He said staff has responded to calls/complaints about units, and if someone is concerned about the condition of their unit they can call for an inspection. Trustee Burman discussed major issues at one particular apartment building and asked if the ordinance covers anything. Director Garrigan said staff did do an inspection, identified major problem, and contacted with management to remedy the issue.

Trustee Pierce asked if the Board could get a diagram of Starbucks sooner rather than later. Director Garrigan will send site plan to the whole Board. Trustee Pierce discussed the implementation of the rental registration program. Director Garrigan said they have been following inspections, and responding to complaints, but do not have the staff to inspect every unit in the Village every year. Owners have requested inspections when there are vacancies, and future software should put the burden on the landlord to schedule those inspections. Trustee Peirce asked if there are records of complaints and inspections. In many cases these are civil matters in which the Village could not be involved. Director Garrigan said he has a number of code enforcement cases in litigation, and that doesn't work quickly. Mayor Gartner discussed the software that was initially purchased, and the challenges with implementation. Administrator Guttschow said that staff is researching software, recommendations were made, and we previously went with the lowest cost option. Staff quickly realized that the solution selected was not going to work, and are currently exploring other alternative options.

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He said staff is working hard and making great strides to make this a priority. Trustee Macek said this was identified as a 2-3 year project when the ordinance was approved. He discussed other properties in town that are in violation of the property maintenance code, and thinks staff is doing a good job.

Mark Sural provided an update on the Request for Proposals for the café building, stating staff didn't realize the challenge of getting into the building during construction, and will have to delay the response deadline until a walk-through of the building can be done.

Police – Commander Smith discussed the funds raised with the Cop on a Rooftop event. He said our full-time code enforcement officer recently resigned, and staff is in the process of interviewing. Police Department Staff continues to work through background checks of new officers. Commander Smith said he attended the last School District 117 safety meeting, and continue to work with them on campus safety. He also discussed various trainings held at the department.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION –

Trustee Bluthardt moved, seconded by Trustee Pedersen to enter into executive session at 8:50pm to discuss Personnel, Collective Bargaining, Property Acquisition and Litigation. Upon roll call, the vote was:

YES: 6: Burman, Bluthardt, McNeill, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 0.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Pedersen moved, seconded by Trustee Pierce, to return from executive session at 9:26 with **no action taken**. Upon roll call, the vote was:

YES: 6: Burman, Bluthardt, McNeill, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 0.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Village Board of Trustees Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori K. Romine, RMC/CMC
Village Clerk