

MINUTES FROM NORTHFIELD VILLAGE CAUCUS MEETING (4/26/2021)

The Zoom meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Chair David Woodyatt and the following current Caucus members were present: Marco Aiello, Marsha Balsamo, Thomas Bolling, Shelley Cohen, Michael Cohen, Kathy Estabrooke, Ericka Foster, Mark Gantner, William Kelly, David Miller, Keith Reed, Beverly Smith, Dennis Smith, Cricket Trutter Hauff and David Woodyatt. Also present were current Trustees Charlie Orth and Tom Whittaker, new Trustee Matt Galin and past Trustees John Goodwin and Tom Terrill.

Stacy Sigman, Northfield's Village Manager, gave a very interesting and informative presentation on the state of the Village. She made the following points:

1. That the new Village Trustees (Tracey Mendrek, Matt Galin and Barnaby Dinges) will be officially certified as new trustees on April 27 and a special meeting will be held that night to seat them. Their first regular Village Board meeting as Trustees is on May 18th. The new Trustees have already attended Board meetings, workshops and appear to be a very strong and capable group. She recognized the excellent service of past Trustees John Goodwin and Tom Terrill and past Board President Joan Frazier.
2. She gave a very positive report on how the Village handled all the problems brought on by Covid 19. The Village was subject to CDC and State of Illinois rules, but because it is a "home rule" village, was not affected that much by Cook County rules. The Village originally estimated that it would suffer about a 10% loss (about 1.2 million) in revenues due to Covid. To track the impacts, detailed financial models were developed by staff and Trustees Lungmus and Fowler. Fortunately, as the Village looks to end the current fiscal year (May 1st) that loss is projected to be closer to \$500,000. The Village Board has a policy of maintaining at least 6 months of reserves for emergency purposes. Those reserves were used this past fiscal year to cover some of the deficit caused by the Covid and the Village was still able to stay above the 6 month minimum reserve. The Village was pleased with its efforts to keep its residents, visitors and businesses safe as possible during the Covid period. President Joan Frazier did an excellent job in exercising her emergency authority to assist local business in such ways as adjusting liquor license requirements, and providing for additional outdoor dining and signage. The Village continued to perform all of its functions (e.g. renovations and architecture planning) even though it had to move out of its offices for much of the time. The Village partnered with Medline, Jewel, Osco and New Trier High School on things like providing personal protective equipment to employees and vaccinations. Through this program the Village has helped vaccinate up 1200 people a day at New Trier West.
3. Stacy reported that the Village Board approved the 20/40 Vision Plan which will be used to guide future zoning decisions. Our zoning code will also be reviewed for improvements. The Skokie Valley Bike Trail is moving forward and Phase One was completed this last year. A Phase 1 study for Happ Road between Winnetka Ave. and Willow Road was also completed this past year. Phase 2 for Happ Road is expected to start soon and will involve the construction engineering and right of way acquisition. Grants have been secured for this work. Once completed the Happ Road improvements will provide for better pedestrian and bicycle mobility, better access to parking and improved vehicular safety. She was pleased to report that our Village business vacancy rate last year was one of the lowest in the State with Heritage Trail and the Wintrust Bank being recent additions to the business community. She mentioned that Field's Auto, Medline, and Mariano's all

did a great job in maintaining their businesses at levels which helped to minimize the Village's reduced revenue.

4. Stacy also reported that the Village is starting on a number of its water/sewer infrastructure projects. Next year the construction design will take place and the Village will try to utilize "slip lining" where possible. This new technique can save about 30% in costs and greatly minimize tree and road disruptions. She also mentioned that the Village is working on a new and improved communication program to help residents access information about the Village.
5. In answer to questions from Caucus members, Stacy reported that the red light photo enforcement that use to be on Willow Road at Waukegan/Willow and Wagner/Willow will not be coming back in the near future due to the now favorable safety statistics at those intersections. There is not currently any intersections in town that meet the State accident and violation warrants to allow red light photo enforcement. Medline is contemplating taking their company public, but has not yet decided that they will do so. If they do go public, it may or may not impact the Northfield campus. We hope either way they continue to consider Northfield a great place to do business. She said that all Village Trustees and Village staff are now vaccinated and that the Village staff will be back in their offices starting April 26th—the plan is to hold the first in person Board meeting in May. She concluded by reporting that the Village is monitoring cannabis licenses by the State to see if that might result in a business wanting to open in Northfield. Neighboring villages are reaping half a million dollars in revenues annually. Dispensaries are now allowed in Northfield in certain zoning districts, but require special use approval.

Stacy was told how much the Caucus members appreciated her update and that they all appreciated the great job that she and the Village staff have done in responding to the pandemic.

CAUCUS BUSINESS MEETING: Upon motion made by Tom Bolling and second by Dennis Smith, the minutes of the last meeting on 2/15/21 were unanimously approved.

Mark Gantner, Treasurer, reported that the Caucus bank account still had \$1032.86 and that there had been no receipts or expenditures since the last meeting.

David referred to the memo signed by Keith Reed that was received by all Caucus members before the meeting that dealt with how certain Caucus committees had performed over the last couple years and how the current Caucus officers would like to have more Caucus members participate more in some of these very important Caucus activities.

Ericka Foster described many of the communication functions that are necessary during every two years when we have trustee elections and those years of no elections. We have used our website, facebook and other social media in order to get our message to the residents but we could use more help on this committee, especially in the area of graphic design. Marco does a nice job with our website design but we can do a better job with telling the residents what the Caucus does and its importance. The Committee size could be 3 to 5 members and it needs to review the need for another community survey as specified in our Bylaws.

Beverly Smith, who has volunteered to chair the Membership Committee, suggested we target the young couples with families in Northfield since most of them really appreciate what the Village does to educate, motivate and entertain their children. We should review the

precincts represented on the Caucus to make sure most parts of the Village are represented. She would like to see about 5 on this Committee.

Dave and Keith mentioned that the Caucus members would be notified of future Village Board meetings and Commission meetings when possible and that Caucus members are encouraged to attend a few of these meetings over the next year and report back at our Caucus meetings. The Trustee meetings usually start at 7:00 PM with a “meeting of the whole” open to the public starting around 5:30 to 6:00 PM. Kathy Estabrooke, Tom Bolling and William Kelly are already members of the Planning and Zoning Commission so they were encouraged to report on this Commission’s meetings at our future Caucus meetings. Other members volunteering to be active in our Caucus committees were John Goodwin, Shelly Cohen and Kathy Estabrooke—Membership; Dennis Smith—Communications; William Kelly—Oversight; and Tom Terrill said he would serve where he was needed.

Dave and Keith thanked everyone for their ideas and for volunteering to help activate some of these committee activities. Keith plans on following up with specific plans/reports from these 3 committees to be presented at our next Caucus meeting.

David Woodyatt added some other developments that he has heard from attending recent Trustee meetings: that there will be another water fee increase this year to residents; that there is a new Foreign Fire Board that the Village has to accommodate but it deals with a tax on out of state insurance companies that have to pay a tax on business in Illinois and it has to be used for the benefit of the local fire department, which should not be that big of a Village problem; that Steve Noble, who retired from the Village staff a year ago as its financial expert, is back with the Village as a contractor for the near future; that the Village Police Department reports a recent reduced number of car burglaries; that the Village “tree ordinance” is being reviewed and updated; and that the proposal to ban gas powered leaf blowers in the summer failed to pass a vote by the Board of Trustees.

At this point in the meeting, non-Caucus members were asked to sign off the Zoom call, at which time a motion by David Miller and second by Mark Gantner to elect former Trustees John Goodwin and Tom Terrill to 2 year terms as Caucus members was unanimously passed; also upon motion by Tom Bolling and second by Kathy Estabrooke to accept Jonathan Don’s resignation from the Caucus unanimously passed; and a motion by Ericka Foster and second by William Kelly to adjourn the meeting was unanimously passed and the meeting was so adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Acting Secretary for the meeting—Keith Reed.