

Village Center Commission

Meeting Notes

February 5, 2020

A meeting of the Village Center Commission was held on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall, 850 Waukegan Road, Deerfield, Illinois. Chairman Jannes Zobus called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present were:

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

Also Present:

Dan Nakahara, Village Planner
Jeri Cotton, Secretary

Public Comment

There were no Public Comments on non-agenda items.

Document Approval

Ms. Reed moved to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2019 VCC meeting. Ms. Holtz seconded the motion. Ms. Reed requested a sentence be added after her comments about parking in Deerfield Square to reflect the media reports stating that SUV sales have overtaken standard car sales. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote with minor changes.

Business:

1. Consideration and Action on 2019 Downtown Resident Survey

The commissioners discussed each point in the proposed recommendation.

1. Pedestrian Safety at Deerfield and Waukegan Road Intersection

The challenge is there is too much traffic and people are concerned about crossing the street. The commissioners suggested some of the points in the recommendation, such as considering median islands with landscaping, are not realistic and would like the options to be renumbered so the more realistic points are seen first. Some of the commissioners believe the Commission should ask for a study while others believe the survey was a study. They believe educating residents is very important, because there

is some misconception that the Village controls the shopping centers as well as Deerfield and Waukegan Roads. There was concern, however, that residents may not read articles. The commissioners discussed reporting the consolidated feedback items rather than presenting solutions to the Village Board.

The VCC is recommending the Trustees support the areas listed in the report for future planning and zoning discussions in the future. The Commission believes the bullets should be limited under each recommendation and should be ordered as follows:

- Install “No Right Turn Sign When Pedestrians are Present” signs at all intersections in the entire downtown area. (Capital Improvement)
- Install bollards at intersection corners. (Capital Improvement)
- Install crosswalk buckets with flags at intersections to improve pedestrian safety at the intersections. (Capital Improvement)
- Educate residents through Village social media platforms as to which entities have jurisdiction on Waukegan and Deerfield Road and the role the Village plays in the responsibility and maintenance of these roads. (Educational Component)
- Consider a pedestrian overpass or underpass spanning Waukegan Road and or Deerfield Road. (Capital Improvement)

The commissioners suggested removing the bullet about the median and putting the hanging flower bullet under the streetscape section. They also suggested changing the verbiage from VCC Suggestions to Consider to Possible Suggestions to Consider.

2. Navigating Parking Spaces and Lots (not Spaces)

The commissioners do not want any shopping centers called out specifically for their parking lots and spaces. Recommendations should be directed to all downtown shopping center parking lots. They also suggested the title be changed to Improving Safety in Parking Lots. The Commission would like the Village to consider lowering the required number of parking spaces in planned unit developments to provide more space for vehicles as well as add designated crosswalks to achieve better safety. They discussed whether it was appropriate for the Village to get involved with the pedestrian concerns that residents have with existing shopping centers’ parking lots. The commissioners suggested the three bullets in this section should be:

- Angled parking spaces rather than 90-degree parking
- Providing marked pedestrian walkways
- Plan Commission revisit parking requirements

3. Desire for a Greater Sense of Community in Downtown Deerfield

The commissioners believe this needs to be in the survey, but suggested keeping two succinct bullets. They believe having smaller, more frequent activities could help build a sense of community. Some of the suggestions include a First Friday event where the stores stay open late on the first Friday of the month. They suggested the following bullets for this section:

- Create more, smaller events
- Have a Village-wide, monthly event
- Explore the possibility of a community newspaper

4. Greater Support of Shop Local

The commission discussed survey responses mentioning commercial tenant rents being too high but believe this may be a perception due to vacant space in the downtown.

The commissioners do not believe this should be mentioned in the recommendation, as the Village does not have control over rents in the shopping centers. Ms. Street informed the Commission about a new Community Text program. The bi-weekly program promotes stores, restaurant and health and wellness merchants with a link to the event and special offers. The Commissioners suggested supporting this program in the recommendation. Ms. Reed suggested creating a Shop Local/Shop Deerfield logo and putting it on brochures and in the water bills. They suggested the following bullets for this section:

- Support the Chamber Community Text Program
- Branding Shop Local/Shop Deerfield and promote throughout the Village

5. Make Downtown Deerfield a Destination

Some of the commissioners believe this is redundant while others believe a sense of community and making downtown Deerfield a destination are different. They discussed what the residents want to draw people to the downtown.

6. Improve Streetscape to be more pedestrian friendly

Ms. Shaw questioned how updating the sidewalks would drive more foot traffic. She believes the challenge is that people need to feel safe on the sidewalks and suggested that is where the bollards should be located. Ms. Shaw believes the Village needs to work on creating a separation between streets and sidewalks. Mr. Nakahara noted these comments were from residents. The commissioners suggested the following bullets for this section:

- Add more bollards/physical barriers to create a sense of safety between street and sidewalk
- Consider hanging baskets to enhance the aesthetics of the intersection of Waukegan and Deerfield Roads. These would also serve as a visual delineation at the edge of the sidewalk.

7. Consider Youth-Friendly Spaces in Developments

Ms. Shaw appreciates that teens need a place to hang out, but does not believe it is realistic to recommend a developer needs to provide a place for teens. She believes this is the Park District's responsibility. Ms. Street does not believe there is anything wrong with asking a developer to consider providing a place for teenagers.

Mr. Nakahara explained the Village has a section in the Zoning Ordinance that states that all development applications for commercial developments in the Village Center shall give due consideration to providing public art on the property. Plan shall consider opportunities for providing public art if appropriate for the proposed development. A policy change for youth spaces would follow this same thought process. Ms. Reed believes it is the commission's responsibility to consider this.

The commissioners discussed the remainder of the recommendation and believe it would be much stronger and clearer if the conclusion section were removed. They would like to elaborate on educating residents, but not make education the goal.

Mr. Stolman moved to redraft the previously accepted draft based on the evening's discussion. Ms. Holtz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Village Center Update

Mr. Nakahara noted the flower planter program would start in April. Due to dwindling participation over the last five years, the commission asked the Village if they could purchase flower planters and plantings and give them out to Village Center businesses on a first come first serve basis. The request was made to add this revamped flower planter program cost to the 2020 budget and was accepted. The new flower planter promotion will begin March 10, 2020, and winners will be notified on March 26. Ms. Holtz questioned if all ten plantings could end up in one quadrant. The commission will divide the planters evenly between the four quadrants. Ms. Street noted the idea is to beautify the entire downtown. Mr. Nakahara asked if the Chamber could also send something out the beginning of March. Ms. Street will send out an email blast with the promotion rules and guidelines. The Village will also promote the program in the next D-Tales and on the Village website.

The commission discussed the Warehouse restaurant closing in late January and the window signage at the Kay Foot Spa. Mr. Nakahara noted that Kay Foot Spa went to the ARC for their window coverings, he will provide the material from that ARC meeting at the next VCC meeting.

Ms. Shaw noted the summer planters looked very good. The winter ones were not so great but it is hard to keep the planters looking good with the salting of the road and winter road maintenance. Ms. Reed noted the winter planters were not removed until this week. She has asked for several years that they be removed in the first weeks of January. She does not understand why Public Works cannot put this on an annual January schedule. The Commission recommends that the removal of the holiday plantings be put on a schedule to be removed the first week of January as feasible.

Adjournment:

There being no further business or discussion, Ms. Holtz moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Stolberg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm.

The next regular meeting of the VCC will take place on March 4, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Note: Aaron Steinberg, a sophomore at Deerfield High School and his mom Debbie were present at the meeting.