

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
April 24, 2024**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gartner called the April 24, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:13 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, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen. Also present were Mayor Gartner, Attorney Vasselli, Administrator Guttschow and Clerk Romine. Absent: Trustee McNeill.

III. Absent Trustees Wishing to Attend Remotely

There were no Trustees attending remotely.

IV. Mayoral Report

None.

Citizens Wishing to Address the Board

Mr. Evan Graham Murray, Village resident, discussed the proposed solar farm, green space, and the nature of the community. He said he is excited about the potential for a solar farm, and encouraged the Board to commit to nature with natural renewable energy, and approve the solar farm.

V. Regular Business

1. Approval of the April 10, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes as presented – Trustee Bluthardt moved, seconded by Trustee Burman, to approve the April 10, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting minutes as presented. Upon roll call, the vote was:

YES: 5: Burman, Bluthardt, Pierce, Macek and Pedersen.

NO: 0.

ABSENT: 1: McNeill.

THE MOTION CARRIED.

2. Antioch Chamber of Commerce Plan for the Taste of Summer – Chamber Director Barbara Porch presented an overview of the Taste of Summer event scheduled for July 18-21, including when the roads will be closed, and the entertainment lineup. They will also incorporate a cheer day for local cheerleaders.

3. Antioch Chamber of Commerce Strut your Mutt Dog Walk Event Details - Chamber Director Barbara Porch presented an overview of the Strut your Mutt Dog Walk event, which is an annual dog walk normally held in Libertyville on behalf of the non-profit Canine's for Comfort. She discussed the date proposed for Sunday, November 15, and said they have reserved Williams Park for the event. Director Quilty said there is another dog event at Osmond Park the same weekend.

4. Liquor License request from the Lodge of Antioch – Owners James Donahoe and Christine Larsen presented the request for The Lodge of Antioch to expand their existing liquor license into the adjacent building located at 893 Main Street. There were no objections to this request, and this item will be placed on the next Village Board agenda for consideration.

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5. Fire District request for water fee waiver – Fire Chief Jon Cokefair discussed the current construction project at Fire Station #1, and said there is a water line off of Orchard that feeds the daily service, hose reels and hose fill line within the station. They are adding a sprinkler system and bringing a new service in off of Holbek. He stated that they are looking to utilize the line coming off of Orchard as a truck fill line. Currently they fill pumpers at fire hydrants, and are allowed by public works to fill up at the Public Works facility. They have an ample amount of lakes, and when servicing a fire or emergency service, they take water from whatever source they can access. He said this will allow for the trucks to be filled with clean water, and is already metered. He added that the Village Board did previously grant a 50% credit on sewer service for Station #1.

Trustee Pierce confirmed that of two lines coming in, one is just to fill trucks which is metered, and the other is for showers and domestic use, to which Chief Cokefair agreed.

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

6. Overview regarding the Splash Pad at the Open Space Development at Main and Orchard – Mr. Kevin Clark of the Lakota Group and Justin Hauad with Fountain Technologies discussed their conversations with the steering committee, and developing the design of the park. Mr. Clark discussed the development of processes for the splash pad which were presented to the steering committee and staff, refined into a preferred concept, and provided numbers for that cost of construction and how it would function. He said the team worked with staff to design and determine if the fountains would use a recirculating system vs. drain-to-waste, the equipment needed for the design, and how it was all going to work together.

Mayor Gartner discussed the evolution of the splash pad from an architectural feature to a play feature for kids. Mr. Clark said it was always intended for kids to be in the splash pad, which included jets, misters and jumping jets. This was also presented to the Village Board with an animation showing the play feature and jets. Mayor Gartner said questions were raised recently about the environmental impact of water discharge and the additional cost of reclamation for the water. Mr. Justin Hauad said the use of drain-to-waste vs. recirculating system depends on the community. He would say drain away systems are likely more common, and increasing in use and frequency.

Trustee Pierce said the Board was told the drain away vs. recycled would use 10 million gallons of water per year unless there is a cut-off switch. Mr Hauad said it's very rare that all jets fire simultaneously, and that amount of water use is extremely unlikely.

Trustee Macek asked what the percentage of those clients that use for drain-to-waste are on a well vs Lake Michigan water. Trustee Macek said there are emails from Lakota that say the feature could be on if there's nobody in the park and its raining out, and once it's programmed, it runs. He discussed water to the residents from the well system. Trustee Macek asked how it can be controlled, and how the programming works.

Mayor Gartner asked how we control outflow when it's running in the case of a drought. Mr Hauad discussed the programming of the feature, which can be coordinated with the owners. The feature can use as much or as little as the user would like. He said the feature's flow rate can be fully tailored based on what choreography is chosen, can be manually shut off at any point in time, and won't arbitrarily run. He added that the Village can control when the choreography triggers, and the Village Board can provide how many gallons per minute they would like used, and create the choreography to fit.

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Trustee Bluthardt said the concern is with the overuse of the system. Mr. Hauad said it can be programmed to activate at a certain time or intervals, or by use of activation bollard. Trustee Bluthardt asked if it is possible to have a different program when the switch is hit vs. the choreographed shows, and said he would like to see the various options available based on water usage in order to make a decision.

Mayor Gartner asked Mr. Clark and Mr. Hauad to be present at the quarterly meeting in May to present computer generated displays of how the fountains would work with corresponding water usages.

Trustee Pierce commented on the splash pad, and doesn't want to be so concerned that the functionality is limited for the users. He said the splash pad needs to be thoughtful, planned out, controlled, and impressive to the end users. Trustee Pierce said there is a system that water bills are automatically increased each year by 3%, which he is opposed to.

7. 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 – Mr. Brian Madigan and his attorney, David Streiker, discussed the previous petition from the land owner to disconnect, which has been formally withdrawn. Mr. Streiker provided an overview of the request for approval for a proposed solar farm on approximately 20 acres in an estate zoning. He discussed the natural resources of Antioch, and protection of water quality and diversity of species. Mr. Streiker discussed the presentations at the Planning and Zoning Board, particularly the impact on migratory birds using the Redwing Slough. They intend to put in a native, deep routed landscaping plan on the site. He said this was discussed with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to confirm that the solar project will be a good neighbor. They will have soil stabilization and water quality improvements on site. He welcomed questions from the Village Board, and is looking to earn their support.

Trustee Bluthardt said he sat through the Planning and Zoning Board meetings, and expressed concern that the applicant answered that they did not have any other intentions for another solar farm in the area, which was found to be untrue weeks later when a petition was approved in Lake County. Trustee Bluthardt asked if there are any other projects in the Antioch area, Lake County or over the border in Wisconsin that the petitioner is currently working on. Mr. Brian Madigan said there are some in Lake County under review and a matter of public record. Mr. Madigan discussed the other project in the area, and apologized for the previous miscommunication. Trustee Bluthardt asked if there were any proposed solar farms from other companies of which they may be aware. Mr. Madigan is not aware of any, but wouldn't be surprised to find there are. Trustee Bluthardt expressed concern with the appearance of the solar farm, and the objections he is hearing from residents isn't over the solar farm, but is the location of the solar farm. Trustee Bluthardt asked if the solar farm on Nelson road has the same berms and buffer as this project. Mr. Madigan said both projects have robust landscape screening and vegetative requirements, even where the project isn't visible, to provide visual screening of the solar farm. Trustee Bluthardt asked to share the Nelson Road planting plan so it may be compared. He expressed concern on the possibility of a de-annexation if the Village Board doesn't approve of this plan, and said it is in our interest to work with applicant to protect our residents. Trustee Bluthardt thinks we should work with the applicant to get the best plan possible vs. the potential for de-annexation and having no control over the county's approval of the project.

Trustee Burman asked how much the project has cost the Village so far over the 2-year period it has been discussed in terms of staff time. Director Garrigan discussed the application fees paid by the applicant, and said the Village has not spent additional money aside from staff time on the project, which Director Garrigan said has not been an inordinate amount of time.

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Trustee Pierce recognized the fact that they have a right to be before the Village Board. He discussed the comments made by IDNR that this is an improvement over what currently exists, and asked if there was anything in writing. Mr. Streiker encouraged the Village to reach out to IDNR directly. He added that native plantings will reduce agricultural runoff to the slough as compared to tilled soil and crop production. He said you would see greater species and diversity, and the IDNR has indicated that a solar facility with a diverse mix of native plants would likely generate more diversity, and show a decrease in pesticide and fertilizer use. Trustee Pierce asked why not go to the County instead of the Village. Mr. Streiker said they are not looking for an easy path and they are currently in the Village. They have always viewed this as a Village project, not Lake County, and said after sitting through meetings 2 weeks ago, they feel more strongly that the things they stand for are the same. He commented that there have been no community comments against the project. Trustee Pierce asked about soil compaction. Mr. Streiker said there will be inverters sitting in the middle on concrete pads, post holes driven into the ground and easy decommissioning.

Trustee Macek left the meeting at 8:21 pm and returned at 8:23pm.

Mr. Madigan discussed soil compaction, stating the equipment isn't all that heavy, but they will put down 4 inches of top soil to make sure newly seeded plants take hold. The applicant will work with the Village on plantings. Trustee Pierce asked about wildlife and the fence prohibiting them from access. Mr. Madigan responded that they will have a fence over which deer could jump, and 6 inches of space between the ground and the fence to allow for wildlife movement. They are also interested in introducing sheep for vegetation management, but would need to manage predators when they are present. Trustee Pierce asked about potential taxes. Mr. Streiker said they are all calculated pursuant to statute, and they are not looking for any abatements. Those present discussed tax revenues, pollinators, Nelson Road and associated revenue with the project.

Trustee Pedersen said she was at the library meeting, and there were quite a few people pushing back. She asked if they have offered to purchase the properties they are completely surrounding. Mr. Madigan responded that they have thought of neighbors, and tried to reach out to the neighbors across the street at North avenue, but phone calls were not returned. He wanted to speak with them to understand their concerns to try and address them. He added that the vegetation screening that is proposed will ensure they are not able to see the project.

Mr. Streiker added that a potential condition of approval would incorporate equestrian-style fencing and he is open to discussing that further. Trustee Pedersen asked about the height of the poles and what they look like, and discussed the closest substation. Mr. Madigan responded that the poles should be same as existing distribution poles in the area. Trustee Pedersen discussed subscriptions, and said residents may not necessarily be subscribers. Mr. Madigan responded that electrons tend to stay local on a distribution level, and it improves the grid locally where the facilities are. Trustee Pedersen asked how much of Deep Lake and North Avenue would be torn up during construction, and how they will be impacted. Mr. Madigan responded that construction will be approximately 6 months, and the posts are 3-4 weeks which would require the most traffic. They don't envision local traffic would be disrupted, but are happy to provide traffic plan prior to construction.

Mayor Gartner thinks it's a foregone conclusion if this solar farm will be in this location or not, but appears it will be de-annexed if not approved at the Village Board level. From a Village standpoint, he asked the Board if it is something they want to control the look, design and use of. He asked the applicant if there has ever been an agreement that an annual use fee be paid to the Village in excess of the tax bill, or something similar negotiated with other communities. Mr. Madigan discussed a host community agreement to offset administrative burden due on completion of construction or commercial operation. They have provided a draft to the Village for their consideration and feedback.

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Mayor Gartner asked how many solar farms have been approved in Lake County? Mr. Madigan responded likely 2 or 3, and none have been denied at County level. Mayor Gartner asked if any US manufacturers are making the panels. Mr. Madigan said they cannot commit to using US made solar panels at this time as they have to go with what is available and economically feasible.

Trustee Burman doesn't know how they expect residents and the Board to trust them, and asked why they weren't able to answer easy questions at the community meeting. She discussed the toxic chemicals created during the manufacturing of the panels. Mr. Madigan said some concerns raised at the community meeting were new topics and he apologized they didn't have the answers. Trustee Burman said she has had many people reach out to her with legitimate concerns, and thinks that it's hard to establish trust at this point. Mr. Madigan discussed a report stating that the negative externalities during manufacturing process go away within 5 years, and the farm would continue 35 years past that.

Trustee Bluthardt discussed the transmittal for the power generated from the solar farm, asking how it connects and where. Mr. Madigan said it will connect to an existing distribution line along North Avenue through a 4-5 pole setup, and then ties into an actual conductor. Trustee Bluthardt said he tried to find information on subscriptions, and asked for an explanation on how that would work for a citizen that wants to subscribe to this program. Mr. Madigan said they work with company that manages the subscription process. There are no commitments to who that company will manage the subscription process since they are not yet approved for the farm.

Trustee Pedersen discussed the payment to NY State and is wondering if it would be advantageous for Antioch to recoup some of this money for our community. Attorney Streiker said there are all kinds of different priorities and agreements that could be considered.

Attorney Vasselli will draft a memo to the Village Board outlining the necessary requirements and asked that the applicant share comments from the state agencies mentioned earlier as well.

Mayor Gartner said we will move this item to a future meeting for consideration after the attorney work with the applicant on a community impact agreement.

8. Itinerant Restaurant License code amendment (waiving fees for brick & mortar) – Clerk Romine explained that the Food Truck Ordinance doesn't consider non-vehicle food operations, therefore those businesses are licensed as Itinerant Restaurants. There is a provision in the Food Truck ordinance that waives fees for those operating a brick & mortar licensed restaurant business in the Village of Antioch, but that provision is not present in the itinerant restaurant section of the code. The Board is asked to consider whether they would like to waive fees for itinerant restaurant licensees in the same manner they do for food trucks that have brick & mortar restaurant licenses. Those present agreed to consider the proposed amendment at a future meeting.

9. Boards/Commissions code amendment (term length) – The current section of the Village Code related to Park Board appointments provides for terms of 5 years, which is contrary to what is allowed in the state statute. While looking at that section of the code, there were other sections that appear to need updates based on current practices, such as alternate members, expending of funds, and handling employment matters. Those present agreed to consider the proposed amendment at a future meeting.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

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VII. Department reports

Assistant Administrator Jim Moran discussed the work with local media to publicize events in town, including the recent opening of 15 Lakes Steakhouse. He discussed an article regarding Delta 8 restrictions and Antioch being the leader in the restriction of those products. He is working with Vegas Café on their 50th anniversary May 1, and said the park naming contest went live, and almost 100 people have voted so far. Last week he attended a workshop with FEMA at ABC7 for PIOs around the Chicago area to be networked with local tv stations. Trustee Bluthardt thinks we need to do our best to get information out ahead of time.

Parks Director Mary Quilty discussed programming and events at the new park, including yoga in the park, Friday date night in the park, duck races in the creek, and a Kris Kringle market and festival of trees. She welcomes suggestions and ideas from the Village Board. This weekend is the bike resale and she said any remaining bikes not sold are donated. Director Quilty announced that staff is gearing up for 4th of July parade, with a theme 'small town...big hearts'. She announced that the memorial bench donated by the Garden Club for the Lions Club was installed. She stated the new aquatics manager will have the pool ready by Memorial Day, and they are still in need of about 15 more lifeguards. She asked the Board to consider a plan for memorial trees or benches at the new park, and the potential for sponsorship at the aqua center.

Public Works Director Heimbrodt discussed maintenance at the pool, and said they have started hydrant flushing. They began flushing on Sunday, and experienced 5 water main breaks Monday morning; one of which requires further repair. He discussed the loss of another employee due to pay gap and said it is becoming an aggressive market, and announced the resignation of a part-time custodial staff. Director Heimbrodt said that Lee Shannon IV works in both the treatment plant and water department, and has recently obtained a Class B water license and will be moving fully into the water department. Staff has been interviewing for treatment plant, and hope to have a decision this week or next on a selection. There are currently 3 employees enrolled in CDL school, and one has recently completed the classes. He reviewed a pre-construction meeting for Clublands Phase IV held the previous week, and will likely hear of activity for that development.

Mayor Gartner asked if they request the construction team across the street to price out bollards along all of Main and Orchard. Director Heimbrodt will have to ask the engineers because it's IDOT right-of-way.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Personnel and Pending Litigation, Lease of Village Property,

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

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