

1 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION OF THE**
2 **VILLAGE OF OLYMPIA FIELDS**

3
4 Minutes of the Meeting of the Economic Development Commission held on Wednesday,
5 May 31st, 2017.
6

7 **CALL TO ORDER:**

8
9 Chairperson Britt-Johnson called the Meeting to order at 6:46 P.M.
10

11 **ROLL CALL:**

12
13 **Members Present:**

14 Chairperson Trinette Britt Johnson, Commissioner George Chandler, Commissioner Michael
15 Lewis, Commissioner Johnny Morris, Village President Sterling Burke, and Village
16 Administrator David A. Mekarski.
17

18 **Members Absent:**

19 Richard Gibb.
20

21 **Guests:**

22 Mrs. Ann Smith (Arrived at 7:20 P.M.)
23

24 **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:**

25
26 **Motion by Commissioner Lewis, second by Commissioner Morris to Approve the Agenda.**

27 **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Carried.**
28

29 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

30
31 **Motion by Commissioner Lewis, second by Commissioner Chandler to Approve the**
32 **Minutes of the Economic Development Commission Meeting of March 29th, 2017, as**
33 **Amended.**

34 **Roll Call: Ayes (4-0) Motion Carried.**
35

36 Commissioner Chandler stated for the record, "Faith, you did a heck of a job with the Minutes."
37

38 **Motion by Commissioner Lewis, second by Commissioner Morris to Approve the Minutes**
39 **of the Special Meeting of the Economic Development Commission of May 17th, 2017, as**
40 **Amended.**

41 **Voice Vote: All Ayes. Motion Carried.**
42

43 Chairperson Britt Johnson stated that she had asked for a few extra minutes for tonight's Meeting
44 because she expects to have a healthy dialog and discussion. She has heard the rallying call of
45 the Members of this Commission. There will be a section on the Agenda where we will have a
46 Critical Next Steps Discussion. At the end of the Meeting, what she would like to be able to
47 conclude is that we have selected one of the Options that will be presented to us. She stated from

1 that she would like for us to move forward with creating an Evergreen Work Plan with timelines,
2 benchmarks, deliverables, responsible parties, so not only this Commission, but the rest of the
3 community will know what we are doing, how we are doing it, and when we are doing it.
4 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired whether or not everyone was okay with that. The
5 Commissioners were fine with that.

6
7 **VISION AND EXPECTATIONS FOR EDC:**
8

9 Chairperson Britt-Johnson asked Village President Sterling Burke to give the Commission a
10 synopsis of his vision and expectations of the Commission.

11
12 Village President Burke stated that he has the utmost confidence in this Commission because he
13 has spoken to the Members on several occasions individually, and collectively. He stated going
14 back to the three points that he gave when he got sworn-in, whatever we do in terms of economic
15 development, we should maintain the beauty and the charm of Olympia Fields. The town has
16 always been a place where people move to because of the beauty that is here, because of the
17 investment that they made with the expectation that it is going to move forward. We have to
18 maintain the nature of the Village regardless of what we do. Any kind of businesses that we
19 move in cannot run counter to what the people have bought into.

20
21 Village President Burke stated at the same time, the architecture of whatever comes in needs to
22 be consistent with the homes. He stated that the Village as a whole, almost every house is
23 unique. If you go to Oak Brook, the McDonald's looks like the homes. Hopefully, going
24 forward, anything that we bring in is going to be consistent with the nature of the architecture
25 that we have.

26
27 Village President Burke stated that he and Administrator Mekarski talked about this whole
28 concept about TIF's. He is very concerned that we shouldn't be giving people money as our first
29 approach to getting them to come to the Village of Olympia Fields. We should be assisting
30 businesses if it is the last resort. His objective is to try to balance the tax burden across not just
31 the people who live here, but also with the Commercial. We are out of sync. The homes are
32 putting in more money than the businesses around here. Village President Burke stated that he
33 and Administrator Mekarski talked about the tax burden in the Village for rentals is extremely
34 high. He stated that we can talk about this later. Hopefully, we can work something out amongst
35 us here. The Commercial Properties are paying 25% in taxes. That is pretty high. We have to
36 figure out a way to get around that. Anything that we are doing from the standpoint of economic
37 development, is to help lighten the burden from the government side. Anything that we can do to
38 reduce expenses at the government level, can be offset by these economic development activities
39 that we do. We are not out trying to do economic development just for economic development. It
40 is to balance the Budget.

41
42 Village President Burke stated that the third thing that he talked about at his swearing-in was to
43 protect the Village of Olympia Fields' property values with an Economic Development Program
44 that is consistent with future lifestyle and new economy business model. What he means by that
45 is, we have to take into consideration that: 1. The Internet is going to be a big player. People are
46 going to be buying things over the Internet. What can we do to supplement and go after every
47 dollar that we possibly can that we will be getting off of Internet Sales, and maybe some of the

1 people that we are going to talk to let's see what kind of business that they have that is going to
2 be coming from the Internet. Maybe we don't need as big a footprint as we might have thought
3 before. The Wal-Mart is here. Wal-Mart has 15% to 20% of their business coming through the
4 Internet. The worst thing that we can do is to go and get somebody that puts in a big-box or
5 something around here, and then all of a sudden as they move more and more to the Internet then
6 we have a box sitting around here that nothing is going to come out of that. People are going to
7 be buying things online. We ought to take that into consideration and try to find those kinds of
8 businesses or retail that will be Recession proof, and be Internet proof, that have longevity that
9 they will be here for a while. We don't want somebody coming in and then all of a sudden, they
10 disappear and then we have an eyesore.

11

12 Village President Burke stated that those are the three main things that he is looking at. This new
13 economy is going to be hitting us. All you have to do is go look at what happened over in
14 Matteson. They were all depending on the Shopping Center. Now, the Shopping Center is gone.
15 They are struggling trying to find a way to fill the hole. The government group, they were paying
16 that with taxes that they were getting out of the Shopping Center. Shopping Centers are going by
17 the wayside. Whatever we bring in needs to be a little bit more oriented towards the town, or
18 Village environment that we have, and not necessarily try to become a big-box driven, tax base
19 business. That is kind of conceptually where he is coming from. Chairperson Britt-Johnson
20 thanked Village President Burke.

21

22 **COMMISSION MEMBERS INTRODUCTIONS:**

23

24 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she would like for the Commissioners to take two-minutes
25 or less to introduce themselves to our new Village President, and just give a little bit of your
26 background.

27

28 Commissioner George Chandler stated that he is the President of the Vienna Woods
29 Homeowners Association. He has lived in the Village for about eight or 10-years. His parents
30 built a home here 30-years ago. That is the home we are living in. He has grown up in Park
31 Forest, Chicago Heights, and Crete. He has a construction background, General Contractor.
32 Currently, he is a Real Estate Agent with Coldwell Banker in Flossmoor. He does a little bit of
33 Commercial, Residential, and Industrial stuff and that's him.

34

35 Commissioner Michael Lewis stated that he lives in the same subdivision as Stoney does. He has
36 lived in the Village since 1984. He retired from BMO Harris Bank. He resisted offers to come on
37 to the Commission earlier because he had too much going on at work. Soon after he retired in
38 2013, a phone call came through. He was invited to participate in the Commission and he
39 accepted because he didn't have the time constraints that he had before. As a Banker, he was a
40 Commercial Banker, a Corporate Banker, and he still has some contacts in the City and in the
41 government. He also sits on the RTA Board. That's another commitment he has. He was
42 appointed to the RTA Board by Toni Preckwinkle. He actively participates in that, as well as a
43 few other business organizations still in Chicago. He primarily grew up as a Corporate Banker
44 and is a long-time resident of the Village of Olympia Fields.

45

46 Commissioner Johnny Morris stated that he has been in the Village for 25-years. He raised his
47 family here, both of his kids were educated at the Rich Central High School. Both of them are

1 Doctors today. Commissioner Morris stated that he had an interest in joining this particular
2 Commission because his background is in Operations, Management, and Marketing. His
3 philosophy was he spent a lot of time across the country doing a variety of a lot of other things.
4 He came to realize that he has not given anything back to the community of which he lives. He
5 made a commitment that he would be an active participant, non-conditional, and to drive the
6 community toward what everybody is looking for as we get older, transitional wealth. He wanted
7 to make sure that as we invest in our properties that we are maximizing our retirement
8 investment. He is committed. He has fresh ideas and energy. He is just excited about the future
9 and excited about the possibilities in this community.

10
11 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she has lived here for 15-years. She has a Degree in
12 Industrial Engineering. She has a Degree in Urban Planning. She is a licensed Real Estate
13 Broker. She is a Small Business Consultant. She has worked in various neighborhoods in the
14 City of Chicago, primarily for Not-for-Profit Agencies. She has been a Property Manager, a
15 Construction Manager, and a General Contractor. She has worked on all kinds of deals.
16 Chairperson Britt Johnson stated that what she does for a living now, she does brokerage as well
17 as both Residential and Commercial, as well as a Developer. She works in other suburban
18 communities, or other Counties and Cities to do Real Estate Development. She has worked with
19 growing small businesses for quite a few years. So, she felt that she had something to contribute
20 to this Committee, then Commission.

21
22 **ICSC UPDATE:**

23
24 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that next is the ICSC Update. We would love to hear a Report
25 from Village President Burke and Administrator Mekarski.

26
27 Administrator Mekarski stated that he had the distinct pleasure to attend the International
28 Council of Shopping Centers Retail Leasing Conference. This is one of the largest Retail
29 Brokerage Conferences in the country. He stated that it is literally miles long. It has three-floors
30 with 35,000 Delegates. He stated that for a three-day period this is where the majority of Retail
31 Leases are executed and deals are made across the country.

32
33 Administrator Mekarski stated that he attended this session with Village President Burke, and
34 Gladys Foster who assisted in manning the booth when he and the Village President participated
35 in a series of Meetings with the Retail Brokerage Community, as well as property owners and
36 retail interests in the Village. It was one of the most productive sessions we have had to-date.
37 The Village has been attending this for about four or five-years. We had every minute on our
38 calendar filled with scheduled appointments with Brokerage Firms. We did a series of cold
39 calling on the various leasing areas, as well as met with a lot of the property owners who were
40 attending that Conference that had real estate interests in the Village.

41
42 Administrator Mekarski stated that they met with over 25 Brokerage Firms and/or retail interests.
43 We concentrated primarily on the Lincoln Highway Corridor and the Vollmer Road Corridor.
44 Concentrating on trying to assist the current Developer and Broker and stimulating interest for
45 the Olympia Corners Plaza, the old Jewel/Osco Plaza at Lincoln and Western, as well as the
46 President's visions for Vollmer Road. We commonly refer to it as the "Meijer's Shadow Site."
47 That would be on the south side of Vollmer Road starting from Park all the way to the US Bank.

1 In addition to working on those Centers, we did have an opportunity to do a number of cold calls
2 to try to do in-fill on some of the vacancies in our two Shopping Centers on Vollmer Road,
3 Butterfield Plaza and Olympia Square. Those were primarily contacts with some fast/casual
4 restaurants. We had some expressed interest from Mr. Spero Adamis who is the Chairman of the
5 Retail Restaurant Association in the Chicagoland area. He was specifically interested in looking
6 at some of our existing restaurants, Black Iron sites that could be immediately occupied. In
7 particular, we have one that still has gas, and the hood, and all of the upgraded electricity, which
8 was the old Fish and Seafood Place, Sharp's Chicken that later on turned to Turbot Chicken,
9 right next to Dunkin' Donuts. He stated that before he left work today he received an e-mail from
10 him indicating that he is interested in coming down for a site visit to look at some of those
11 opportunities to fill some of those vacancies. He will be working with the Village President to
12 schedule that site visit. He is also going to be looking at some other opportunities in some of the
13 other communities that we shared the booth with. We share the booth with six other communities
14 from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, as well as the SSMMA's Chicago
15 Southland Economic Development Corporation, and the representative from the Chicago
16 Southland Visitors and Convention Bureau. Those additional aides, Reggie Greenwood and
17 Holly Campbell representing CSEDC, and Jim Garrett representing the Chicago Southland
18 Visitors and Convention Bureau, gave some additional quality of life information to some of the
19 retail contacts that we met and that they met independently.

20
21 Administrator Mekarski stated that what was significant about this Conference from previous
22 sessions, we were fortunate to have all of the property owners that we are trying to attempt deals
23 in the Village visit with the new Village President. We met with Michael Rourke of @properties.
24 He is the owner of the CVS Gateway Parcel located on Lincoln Highway and Olympian Way.
25 He discussed some of the opportunities and constraints for development. He talked about some
26 of the issues that he is facing, primarily as it relates to the high property tax burden. That was
27 reiterated by Irene Itkin's. She is the owner of the Dunkin' Donuts Plaza that is fronting the
28 former Jewel/Osco building. Irene Itkin's facility is probably the most classic example of the
29 disparity between the Chicago Southland and other retail opportunities around the Metropolitan
30 Chicagoland area. Irene had mentioned to him and the Village President that typically in a
31 Commercial Lease situation for retail, taxes on that property should be anywhere from \$4.00 to
32 \$7.00 per square foot. She is collecting in rents, the lowest being Game Stop at about \$12.00 per
33 square foot. The Dunkin' Donuts is approximately \$16.00 per square foot. The dentist office is
34 \$18.00 per square foot. She is facing that 25% Commercial Assessment from Cook County, and
35 because of the lack of a lot of commerce in the Village, primarily we are a Residential bedroom
36 community, and have a very small portion of Commercial land, she is paying \$22.00 per square
37 foot for taxes. It makes it very, very difficult for her to fill those vacancies and make a profitable
38 deal.

39
40 Commissioner Lewis inquired is the Commercial Assessment a constant. And the variable
41 becomes the number of businesses that are located. So, if we only had one Commercial business
42 they would have to take the Assessment for all Commercial taxes that would be due in our
43 Village?

44
45 Administrator Mekarski stated that he thinks that he hit it right. That 25% Commercial
46 Assessment is something that is unique to Cook County. The other Counties don't have that
47 high, Commercial Assessment Rate. Our Residential Assessment Rate is 10%. The Commercial

1 Assessment Rate is 25%. The variable, you are absolutely right, is the amount of actual
2 commerce that we have that would essentially help everybody's tax rate go down.
3
4 Commissioner Lewis stated using Flossmoor, they would have the same 25% Commercial
5 Assessment Rate, but if they had 100-businesses, then they would take those 100-businesses,
6 divide that 25% times the assessed value for Flossmoor and that would be their rate. So, it would
7 be on a percentage basis, probably lower. Is that a correct statement?
8
9 Commissioner Chandler stated that he doesn't think so. If you've got a \$400,000.00 building, it
10 is a \$400,000.00 building and business. You are paying 25% of that.
11
12 Commissioner Lewis stated that he is just trying to understand. Do we have a unique disparity in
13 Olympia Fields, or is this something that is commonplace no matter where you are in the south
14 suburbs?
15
16 Commissioner Chandler stated that here in the south suburbs in Cook County it is commonplace
17 for the whole area, Bloom Township, Rich Township, it doesn't matter. A lot of his projects are
18 small buildings or little industrial deals. They are paying way too much money, and they are
19 paying on that particular building. He had a property in Hazel Crest and it was \$45,000.00 for a
20 3,000-square foot little Medical Office Building. The taxes were 45 Grand. They had to move
21 out of the property, get a Class 8 Tax Abatement so they could sell it for \$98,000.00. When they
22 were paying the \$45,000.00 it was appraised for \$215,000.00. Nobody was going to pay that.
23 There was nothing wrong with the building. The taxes are out of control.
24
25 Village President Burke stated that we had several discussions that Administrator Mekarski
26 indicated with people about this. He had asked the question, "If we were in Wilmette, or
27 Winnetka, are they still paying the same kind of prices?" People kind of looked at us like I really
28 don't know. If it is in Cook County, Cook County's 25% was across the board. Then you have to
29 ask the question, "Why is it that someplace like Wilmette or Winnetka does not have this
30 problem as much?" He stated because some people may very much want to be there and they
31 will pay those taxes. Whereas, down here because there is a loss of businesses around here, it
32 pops up as a much bigger issue than it would have been up north and the western suburbs. He got
33 the impression it was across the board. Like Commissioner Chandler is saying, we are not the
34 only ones. It's just that there has been flight from here which causes it to have more of an impact
35 on our property taxes than it would up north and the western suburbs. It's still a stone that we
36 have to carry around with us. We have to figure out a way to kind of get around it. This Class 8
37 seems to be a way that you can change that, but at the same time from what he has heard so far,
38 this was a crash course to him. What he has heard so far, people who have applied for this have
39 not necessarily gotten a remedy in an expeditious fashion.
40
41 Administrator Mekarski stated that all the taxing bodies essentially put out a fixed levy. As
42 everyone knows, it's the schools, our primary schools and our secondary schools that carry 75%
43 to 80% of your Tax Bill. The only way to get everybody's taxes down, both Commercial and
44 Residential, is to increase the amount of commerce. If you just compare ourselves and
45 Homewood, these are hypothetical numbers, we have approximately 1800 residents, and less
46 than 100 total businesses. Homewood may have three times the number of residents, but they
47 also have about 10 times the amount of businesses. Small businesses, retail, and big-box, it is

1 probably 10-fold what we have. When you take the total pie of everybody's levy, like our levy in
2 Olympia Fields here for the General Fund is \$7,000,000.00. Then you have 162's levy, and you
3 have 227's levy, and you have Prairie State College, and you have the Mosquito District. If we
4 had double the amount of retail, or double the amount of retail and commerce, everybody's tax
5 rates, Residential and Commercial would go down proportionately. Therefore, that tax dollar of
6 \$22.00 per square foot would probably drop significantly. One of the difficulties that we are
7 faced with in Olympia Field is look at the amount of Commercial area that we have. He stated
8 for retail, it is just that small corner at Lincoln and Western. A little pocket over on Lincoln
9 Highway and Kedzie Avenue. And the potential which is not having any retail right now of the
10 Meijer's Shadow Site across from Meijer's, and the existing Shopping Centers on Vollmer Road.
11 Commissioner Lewis stated that answered his question. He knows that we have to move on.

12
13 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that we have a guest. Mrs. Ann Smith introduced herself to the
14 Commissioners. Chairperson Britt-Johnson welcomed Mrs. Smith.

15
16 Commissioner Lewis inquired if the Village had no Commercial area, would we have no
17 Commercial Assessment. Is that how it works?

18
19 Administrator Mekarski stated yes. The Commercial Assessment is only provided for
20 Commercial Properties. If we had no retail whatsoever, or no Commercial Assessments, our
21 Residential Tax Rate would be significantly higher. We would carry more of the burden for
22 running our schools, police, and our Mosquito District and our colleges.

23
24 Village President Burke stated maybe we need to clear this up. The 25% is the equalized
25 assessed valuation, not the rate. We are talking about the assessed valuation on the property.

26
27 Commissioner Lewis stated if we had no Commercial Property, then we wouldn't have that 25%
28 Assessment. Village President Burke stated that there wouldn't be 25% because there is nothing
29 it would be on. The whole tax burden would be 10% assessed valuation. He stated go back to
30 Wilmette, if they had no Commercial at all, the property taxes and the levy that Administrator
31 Mekarski just talked about would be against the 10% valuation for the properties that are
32 Residential. There wouldn't be anybody else to tax. If it was one person who had a Commercial
33 Property in a place like Wilmette, then whatever the value of that property it would be 25%.
34 Their rate would be commensurate with the rate with everybody else. It is just it is hitting them a
35 bigger piece of their property value.

36
37 Commissioner Lewis stated that he understands. What he was driving at was because we had a
38 Commercial base before, at this point what he is trying to determine is the properties that we had
39 before established the Commercial Base Rate, when those Commercial Businesses left, we still
40 had that base tax rate that had to be satisfied. Is that how it worked?

41
42 Village President Burke stated that he thinks it is just another source of income. There is no
43 floating rate. It's whatever the levy is, and whatever the money is needed to pay whatever the
44 levy is, it is going to go against whoever is left.

45
46 Commissioner Lewis stated so whether it is Commercial Property Owners or Residential
47 Property Owners. Village President Burke stated that's why it is more of a bigger impact on the

1 south suburbs because the property values have fallen. A lot of the Commercial stuff has
2 disappeared. Whatever the levy is from the local government, that's why his comments about
3 reducing it and trying to improve the efficiency of the government, if you get that down, that's
4 an additive that helps us overall, because the levy should stay stable or drop. It's driven by the
5 levy across the board. If the levy is going up, you don't control that and you lose property values
6 and you have no Commercial, then the burden is very high on the individual homes.

7
8 Administrator Mekarski stated that is precisely what is happening. We are only 11% of the Tax
9 Bill. The burden to the Commercial taxpayer and the Residential taxpayer are our School
10 Systems. That is 75% to 80% of your Tax Bill. It's impossible for the Village, a Non-Home Rule
11 Community, to raise its property taxes without going to the voters to get permission from the
12 voters. It's not the same with School Districts that essentially don't have the same restrictions.
13 They can essentially deal with a Backdoor Referendum.

14
15 Village President Burke stated that doesn't let us off the hook. We have to do any and everything
16 that we possibly can to keep the expenses of government down, and look for any economic
17 development that we can. The only reason he guesses that we are having this conversation right
18 now is just to give everybody a level set of what some of the hurdles are. He stated that what he
19 heard at that session was that there were people who are reluctant to come here. He is not
20 completely convinced that that's the real issue. He believes that race has a piece to do with this
21 and they are using that as an excuse not to do something here. We need to do whatever is
22 necessary to eliminate that as a possibility.

23
24 Administrator Mekarski stated that he has been working on this subject for 16-years. He is a firm
25 believer that Retail Redlining is alive and well in the Chicago Southland area. It does affect retail
26 location decisions on a daily basis. There's implicit bias that impacts retailers coming here. And
27 you couple that with the high Commercial Tax Rate, then you have a real difficult problem to
28 solve.

29
30 Commissioner Morris stated that he heard Administrator Mekarski talk about the strategy that
31 the owner of the facility where the Game Stop is, she is pretty much subsidizing that business's
32 rate 50% or so. Have we had a discussion with her with regard to what her mindset is? Can we
33 bring any successes out of perhaps sharing a strategy with potential businesses that are interested
34 in coming here?

35
36 Administrator Mekarski stated that part of it might be able to be solved with some political
37 influence of our new Village President and possibly joining forces with other Presidents to
38 impact Cook County. Almost a year ago, the former Board gave Irene Itkin's a Class 8 Tax
39 Incentive. They wouldn't apply it to the existing three occupancies, not Game Stop, not Dunkin'
40 Donuts, and not the dentist's office, but to the three vacancies. That took it from a 25%
41 Commercial Assessment to a 10% Assessment. It is for 11-years. It starts to ramp up at the 9th,
42 10th, and 11th-year. It has been a year. Even though the Board has given a full Resolution in
43 support to fill those vacancies, the County still has not adjusted her rate. She is still paying for
44 that building, which is 9,000-square feet, \$189,000.00 in property tax. She has three occupancies
45 and three vacancies. One is going to be filled in the next few weeks, and she is still paying
46 \$189,000.00 in property taxes.

47

1 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wants to piggyback on something that the Village
2 President stated. She wants us to be careful. She thinks that there are a variety of options that we
3 can try to propose to put together to assist a small business or property owner. She wants us to be
4 careful and to not be so loose with Class 8 because when we consider proposing Class 8's to
5 assist some of these businesses we want to make sure that it is a business that we really, really,
6 really want before we get a little bit loose with that. We have to answer the other side, that 25%.

7
8 Village President Burke stated so let's be very, very, very clear about this. He is of the opinion
9 that he doesn't want to give anybody any assistance. He believes in competition. If we can get a
10 whole bunch of businesses competing to come here because of things that we do that are more
11 creative. He is in no way advocating that we should be giving Class 8's, any TIF's, or anything
12 like that. He will be resisting that as much as possible. He stated let me tell you what he saw at
13 this Conference. Administrator Mekarski gave you an outline. Village President Burke stated that
14 he sent you a copy of Administrator Mekarski's Report. He stated that Administrator Mekarski
15 could distribute it to everybody else. He stated let me give you my opinion and thoughts. We
16 wound up having a strategy on the fly that he will talk about for a second here. There were four
17 different types of people that he personally met at this show. There were people that they met
18 that he is going to classify as "Flippers." They come in, and they buy up Shopping Centers that
19 are depressed and then they try to find somebody to flip it. Let's call that "Romney people."
20 They want to catch somebody in trouble, and then they are going to do something and turn
21 around and sell it. Then there were the "Brokers." These Brokers, they are just like Real Estate
22 Brokers. They want to sell a house.

23
24 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired whether or not they were Tenant Reps or just regular
25 Brokers. Administrator Mekarski stated that some represented specific retail interests, others
26 were looking for opportunities.

27
28 Village President Burke stated that these Brokers, they are like someone who is going to broker
29 your house. He took your suggestion to go in and understand what is really going on. He just
30 kept asking people how they were making money. Why are you here? How do you do this? They
31 had acres, and acres of little tables where people got a half an hour stint to sit down with
32 somebody to make a deal. You had these retail people who had stores and things. They had these
33 Brokers. They had these Flippers. And they had these people that were the Developers that are
34 going to get their 10% or 20% cut out of this whole thing. And all of these people were in
35 between Municipalities that were looking for people to come into their Villages. The people who
36 were the retail outlets they are looking for someplace. The retail guys have outsourced stuff to
37 these people in the middle. We were getting some opportunities to speak to these Brokers, or in
38 some cases the Developers. What made him kind of uncomfortable, we were at a table with some
39 of these other people from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association. We had a half
40 an hour. We are trying to pitch what we wanted to do. He didn't necessarily like that at all. It is
41 like Commissioner Lewis is sitting here from Flossmoor. We had Flossmoor, Homewood, and
42 Richton Park. He is at a table with the three of you, and then we have got one guy sitting here
43 and we are trying to pitch to him this is what we want to do. He didn't care too much for that at
44 all. What we tried to do then was to get a Private Meeting, or get them to come to Olympia
45 Fields and see what we have. That was part of the strategy.

46

1 Village President Burke stated looking at this even further, we talked to the Brokers that are
2 working on some things around here. We asked where are we on each one of these things. We
3 had a list. He asked Administrator Mekarski to put together a list of all the potential businesses
4 that we could possibly bring in before we get there. The guy who was our Lobbyist, if you want
5 to call him that, we want you to have a list of people to talk to. We got a chance to talk to some
6 of those people. Unfortunately, it was in an environment with two or three other towns. He didn't
7 like that.

8
9 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired of Village President Burke whether or not the person he was
10 talking about was Todd, that you are calling the Lobbyist person.

11
12 Administrator Mekarski stated that we had an individual Meeting with Todd. Village President
13 Burke stated that Todd fell into the category of a Developer. Joe Salamone wasn't there. Todd
14 was there. We did have a one-on-one with him for about 20-minutes, half an hour. It was at one
15 of these little tables with just the three of us talking. That was something that we did on the side,
16 not necessarily with the rest of the people. He walked around. Administrator Mekarski walked
17 around. Village President Burke stated that we did cold calling on the retail people themselves.
18 Some of these folks were Franchisers. They had Franchises. What we got out of Todd was it is
19 not a Lowe's. There is no Mariano's. You go down through the list and these people are off the
20 table. As Administrator Mekarski had said, there are two main areas. It's down by the Wall-Mart
21 and up on Vollmer Road. Village President Burke stated that we have to have a strategy that is
22 going to sell Olympia Fields. The little strategy that he started pitching to people, and we already
23 had this conversation because we visited the Country Club. We talked to Allan Spooner at the
24 Hospital. He stated that these are the two anchor clients in this Village. What is going to happen
25 on the north side of the Village where you have a \$175,000.00 median income, we have to have
26 those kinds of economic development opportunities that is going to take advantage of those kinds
27 of people. At the south end of the Village, that's a totally different story.

28
29 Village President Burke tried to put Todd on a very short fuse. The deal with Joe Salamone is
30 18-months. Administrator Mekarski stated that is correct and there are opportunities for
31 extensions. Village President Burke stated that it was for 18-months. He stated that nine-months
32 has already expired. All of the taxes prior to the nine-months are forgiven. And anything forward
33 was forgiven up until we get to this 18-month period and then his thing goes away. He told Todd
34 that he is going to have to find something for us that works. We talked about DSW, Ross, and
35 one other entity. Administrator Mekarski stated that At Home is a Home Décor Superstore. It
36 expressed an interest. It was one of the retail interests that came to our table and was looking at
37 sites in the Chicagoland Region. They are from down south. They are penetrating the Illinois
38 area. Todd is going to work very aggressively on trying to bring that retail interest to look at that
39 Plaza. That would take up the whole Plaza.

40
41 Village President Burke stated that Todd is on a short fuse. He told him that he has to come up
42 with something that will specifically go in over there. If for no other reason, the clock is going to
43 run out with what Joe Salamone has. On the north end, what we were pitching is, we have a
44 Hospital that is putting \$150,000,000.00 into it. It is going to double it. It is going to be a cancer
45 site where you can come in and have cancer treatments. Family members may come while
46 people are going through treatment, we want them to have someplace to stay. At the Meeting, we
47 had at the Country Club, they have people with reciprocity with clubs all over the world. They

1 have these Tournaments over there. People who come in here don't have any place to stay. The
2 Country Club only has 18-rooms. Commissioner Lewis stated 27. Village President Burke stated
3 that the overflow goes to Labanque. Labanque is getting \$350.00 a night for the overflow. They
4 have 15-rooms there. While he was there, he looked up the Event that is coming up with the
5 LPGA. He tried to find a room. If he wanted to attend, the closest room he could find was in
6 Alsip. They have 200, high-powered women coming in from Condoleezza Rice to Ginni
7 Rometty, the CEO from IBM, the highest-ranking person. They have the woman from Microsoft.
8 There will be 200 of them at a Conference at the Country Club. They have no place to stay. This
9 concept of a destination, he tried to put that in the Welcome Letter to the LPGA. He pitched that
10 to Hotels. He spoke with the Marriott, the Hilton, Hyatt, and Best Western. He went out on his
11 own and sat down and talked to them. They want to do Franchises. The cost of a Hotel is going
12 to be anywhere from \$75.00 to \$95.00 a room. We can have Conference Centers. The tax rate for
13 occupancy is like 13 plus percent, which is a lot bigger than what we would get if we were just
14 getting sales tax coming out of these places. He is putting it out as a potential strategy. Once you
15 have a hospitality environment on the north side to share with Olympia Fields as a destination,
16 then the restaurants that you would have around that would fill-in the blanks. We talked to Mike
17 Brown about what kind of restaurants we could have up there. If we had that kind of concept
18 going forward, then we can start building something around it.

19
20 Village President Burke stated that he had somebody talk to him about high, upscale, outlet
21 stores. He stated if you have outlet stores, Hotel and hospitality, where you can have banquets
22 and things like that in Olympia Fields, that could be a possibility up there. The bottom line is the
23 Economic Development Commission, he understands that we are going to be creating a tactical
24 list of businesses that we want and a Strategic List of businesses that we want. He just wanted to
25 throw that out that we were pitching this Hotel Concept, because that made us unique. It took
26 advantage of all the beauty that is in Olympia Fields and everything that has drawn us here. The
27 fact that we are 35-miles from downtown, some people would be willing to maybe get off of the
28 expressway and come stay at a Hotel here in Olympia Fields, play golf at one of the five golf
29 courses around here, take the train downtown to go see a show or something like that, come back
30 to the Hotel here that would be a better deal than downtown Chicago. That is just some of the
31 stuff that we were pitching when he talked to people.

32
33 Commissioner Morris inquired so the conversation surrounding Joe Salamone, can we terminate
34 that contractual clause if it was agreeable by both parties. He stated the second question is the
35 guy that you talked with that was talking about the potential DSW, why can't we get Joe to
36 piggyback and work with those guys. Village President Burke stated that guy is Joe's Developer.
37 Village President Burke stated that he and Administrator Mekarski talked about this. Instead of
38 us giving money to people and leading money with the conversation, we need to get a hopper
39 that is full of potentials so these people start competing with each other versus telling them we
40 are going to give them X number of dollars. If we get enough people who have enough faith and
41 confidence in what we are doing here, then you don't have to go and give people money to come.
42 This becomes a destination. He doesn't think that the people in Oak Brook are giving people
43 money. Some of these other places they are not necessarily giving people money. Going back to
44 your earlier comment about Class 8, that is not in Stoney Burke's concept of what we are doing.
45 We need to protect the tax base and the homeowners. We need to do everything that we can, and
46 be as creative as we can, to come up with something that is different from everybody else. If we
47 can do those kinds of things and get enough people in the hopper, that this is the place that they

1 want to have their stores or their businesses, that will help us solve this issue. He stated but
2 having one Developer, he doesn't feel comfortable with that. Joe Salamone, the guy kind of has
3 an exclusive, we need three, four, or five guys competing.

4
5 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wanted a little clarification. She inquired of
6 Administrator Mekarski whether or not Mr. Adamis is the only person that expressed an interest.

7
8 Administrator Mekarski stated no. There are a number of Retail Brokers that expressed an
9 interest of coming down to do site visits. They requested additional data, some of our cut sheets
10 that they didn't want to necessarily take with them. In the next few days we are going to be doing
11 follow-up with all 25-contacts that we made.

12
13 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired whether or not that is something that they could get
14 information on as far as who they were and kind of track that follow-up. That is going to lead
15 into the next item on the Agenda.

16
17 Administrator Mekarski stated yes, absolutely. There's a huge opportunity. There was a huge
18 host in the restaurant section of Franchised, Fast/Casual and Sit Down Casual Restaurants that
19 would look at Olympia Fields. They have one, major criteria. Can you identify a Franchisee that
20 we can work with? Our Village President has indicated that he has a number of entrepreneurial
21 contacts in the Village, existing residents that own a number of Franchises that we can possibly
22 marry up to some of these either Fast/Casual or Casual Sit-Down Restaurants. That doesn't only
23 apply to the restaurant industry. Ace Hardware is another retail outlet that might fit very well
24 across the street from the Meijer's area, or even well in the Lincoln/Western area. That requires a
25 partnership with a Franchisee.

26
27 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired of Village President Burke what kind of timeline he gave
28 Todd. Village President Burke stated nine-months because that is what was left on the 18-month
29 deal. We are halfway through it. He didn't threaten him. He just stated that this has been going
30 on for a long time. We need to see some movement. Village President Burke believes that he got
31 the impression that we were not desperate but it is not as much us, but the Land Bank Deal is
32 going to expire. When that clock runs out, the taxes are going to start incurring on those
33 properties over there and it will make it harder for them to attract people. It was very clear to him
34 that these Developers and Brokers were trying to cultivate as many opportunities as they would
35 like to have. It is just like in the Real Estate Business. He stated that Commissioner Chandler
36 could chime in on this. He stated that in the Real Estate Business, the Real Estate Broker wants
37 to get as many people signed up with them as they possibly can. Whoever sells the property, they
38 are going to get half. Is that correct? They are going to get a percentage because they got the
39 listing. The more people that we can get that have the listing of what we want that is in our best
40 interest instead of just having one person like Todd. Do we have an exclusive with him only up
41 there? Can we have other people who act like they are interested in any of those properties at the
42 Jewel up there?

43
44 Administrator Mekarski stated that everybody was welcome to compete on that property. Village
45 President Burke inquired right now going forward, can we recruit other people who would go in
46 and develop it, and put stuff in there? Administrator Mekarski stated not as long as Mr.
47 Salamone has the legal option on the property, essentially purchase that option to the owner.

1 Village President Burke stated that he understands that. There is an option on the land. If
2 Salamone does not have anybody, and we got some other people who might want to come in that
3 area, and they can work a deal, we can do that, correct? Administrator Mekarski stated
4 absolutely. Village President Burke stated that he is just suggesting, and he is calling that
5 “Filling up the hopper,” if there are other people that might want to do something there that helps
6 him move along. He thinks the clock is going to run out on them based on what he saw. That was
7 his personal assessment.

8
9 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wanted to clarify a little bit how it works. She believes
10 that the Agreement that Todd’s Brokerage Firm has with Joe Salamone, he has an exclusive,
11 meaning that he is the Broker for the Owner, or who has the option, which is Joe Salamone. So,
12 another Broker can only help if that Broker is representing a business. Otherwise, there is no
13 opportunity for him or her to get paid.

14
15 Village President Burke stated that exactly what was there was very clear. There are a lot of
16 Brokers not necessarily representing a Shopping Center, but they were representing a retail
17 establishment that is looking for the right place to go. He stated for example, in the case of the
18 Hotel, when he talked to them, what they basically were telling him was we have a department
19 who is looking for places to Franchise these Hotels to. We don’t build Hotels or we are not
20 managing them. We are selling Franchises. So, if we had someone who wanted to buy a
21 Franchise and put a Hotel in the Village of Olympia Fields, that is what Administrator Mekarski
22 is alluding to. He had a conversation with a guy who owns six McDonald’s who lives in Olympia
23 Fields. He indicated that he has been wanting to do Hotels for a long time. He thinks Hotels in
24 Olympia Fields would be a great thing. The gentleman suggested that we pull together a group of
25 other people who live here and have a session on how we can work collaboratively together to go
26 after some of these potential Franchises. That doesn’t mean it is taking anything away from Todd
27 or Joe Salamone. It means that there are some people who might live here who might be
28 interested in doing that. Village President Burke had stated that he thought that was a good idea.
29 Why don’t we try to do that later on this summer, and pull some of these people together and see
30 if we can do that? He understands that Todd is representing Salamone. If someone else is
31 representing some retail outlet that wants to do something, that does not mean we can’t bring
32 them in and say, “Hey, look here. Here is somebody.” And let the market work it out. If we can
33 help bring some more people to the table, that could be helpful.

34
35 Administrator Mekarski stated that he had some discussions with Bonnie Realty, LLC to partner
36 with another Developer to say, “Let’s do this together.” Obviously, you would have to split the
37 profit, but splitting the profit is better than no profit if you can stimulate a deal. Keep in mind,
38 without the Land Bank, we would have a very, very difficult time to attract a retailer. That Plaza
39 is 95%, 99% vacant. The only thing that is coming out of that Plaza right now is \$10,000.00 a
40 month for the Daycare Center. Everything else is totally dark. Cook County is still requiring
41 somewhere in the neighborhood of like \$650,000.00 to \$750,000.00 a year in taxes. We had a
42 Flipper who owns the property in North Carolina, Chad Whichard, who wanted \$5.4 Million for
43 the property. The market was not responding. \$5.4 Million is probably way above the market
44 rate. It’s a Plaza that has no leasable money coming in. It had \$750,000.00 in back taxes. It had
45 about \$750,000.00 of forward taxes annually. No one is going to pick up that kind of equation
46 unless they have in their pocket a number of signed deals with principally an acre, or a major
47 restaurant draw. That’s one of the things that Joe and Todd are attempting to do. Following the

1 strategy of the Village President, rather than looking for that big-box retailer, looking at an
2 exciting restaurant destination. Hypothetically, getting a Portillo's in that corner would draw a
3 lot of people. It would also draw retail interest. More and more communities and Shopping
4 Center Developers are using exciting restaurants like Cooper's Hawk over in Oak Lawn as their
5 anchor, rather than a big-box retailer or a big-box grocer.

6
7 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wanted to make a point of clarification so that we can
8 move onto the next item on the Agenda. Before Todd and/or Joe inks a deal, Todd is going after
9 Letters of Intent from businesses before they ink a contract. Are they coming back to get buy-in,
10 or are they just going to go ahead?

11
12 Administrator Mekarski stated no. Keep in mind, we have an existing Tax Incremental Financing
13 District established there that requires any kind of deal to be presented to the Village President,
14 so the Village President can analyze it with this group, and then make a recommendation to the
15 Board of Trustees, and essentially the Board of Trustees can either accept or decline the retailer,
16 the type of TIF Incentive you are providing and the terms of that TIF Incentive.

17
18 Commissioner Morris stated we talked nine-months. This nine-months in this business is like a
19 couple of hours. Do they have a robust, expedited plan on trying to bring in this activity before
20 this timeline expires?

21
22 Village President Burke stated that he didn't have a very warm feeling that anything was going
23 to happen like tomorrow. He tried to create a new marketing guide pending an event on the
24 horizon. The sale ends on such and such a date. What are you going to do? He tried to push it to
25 that point. If you ask him what his assessment is today, he is going to say that he doesn't believe
26 it. If you say, "Do I have a hope for it?" He is going to say, "If that is what is setup yeah." He
27 thinks that we have to take this upon ourselves to try and fill this thing in to make something
28 happen by finding as many of these opportunities as we can on our own. The people that we got
29 cards from that are coming down here, they want to come in and look around. There are other
30 potential people who can go out and find stuff. He is not suggesting that we personally go and
31 beat the bushes. Maybe we should. He is trying every day. But these people that we got cards
32 from, let's go do something. The flip side of that is it was very clear to him that everybody was
33 begging for some money, rezoning, and doing all the things that we have been hearing about. He
34 doesn't know if we need to worry too much about that because if they want money to move
35 forward, it is kind of up to us. When he says, "us," there will be nothing presented to the Board
36 that this body right here won't know something about. That's his commitment. We are going to
37 make this decision as the Economic Development Commission, along with the Zoning
38 Commission, that is going to say, "Do we have the right kind of zoning to fit this in?" That's
39 another thing that people are looking for. Can I go do this?

40
41 Village President Burke stated that he has a guy right now that he has been talking to for a
42 couple of months, not anticipating that he was going to be President, but just trying to drive some
43 more people that can come in here. The guy wants to put a service station at the corner of Kedzie
44 and Vollmer Road. He has been talking to the Owner. He builds Gas Stations all over the
45 southern suburbs. Village President Burke inquired of him can we do this. He has to find out
46 who has the land and what it is going to cost to go back and talk to this guy. That's another one
47 of these things where we are going to come back and say, "What do you guys think?" He didn't

1 ask for any money yet, but he knows he is because he knows that all these people are asking for
2 money. It is going to be a collective decision before we make any recommendations. You have
3 his word on that. We hold the purse strings. If we hold the purse strings, then we are the ones
4 that are collectively going to make that decision. If they don't consent to what we want, then the
5 worst case we are just where we are.

6
7 Commissioner Morris stated we talked about site visits. He heard that a couple of times. Do we
8 need to revisit how that looks? His belief is when we get these people out here, we really have to
9 make a splash to make sure that it is hard for them to say that they don't want to do business here
10 in Olympia Fields. We have not talked about it. Is that something that we need to review to make
11 sure that we maximize the opportunity that is given to us?

12
13 Village President Burke stated that he thinks that is the critical next steps. We are taking a lot of
14 time telling you what we saw on this trip. You now know almost as much as what we know. You
15 probably already knew. But he doesn't know if the rest of the guys knew. This is the game that is
16 played. In his opinion, being a person that has had a marketing career, he was always taught you
17 have a whole box of prospects, and the more prospects you have the better chance of what is
18 going to fall out of the bottom of that box are people that are going to become clients. What we
19 have to do is fill that box up. What they all want is for us to give them some money. As long as
20 that is what they all want, nothing is going to happen here unless we make a decision that we
21 want to give them money because they are the right type.

22
23 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wants to move to the next item because that is going to
24 take some time. There are some other items on the Agenda. Her quick response is she calls that a
25 "Dog and Pony Show." The Dog and Pony Show needs to go both ways. A business that is
26 interested in coming to Olympia Fields, they need to do their Dog and Pony Show to prove, to
27 justify why they are a good fit and why they are good for this community. If we have an interest
28 in a particular business, when they come out to do the tour, we want to put on a Dog and Pony
29 Show for them. It goes both ways. She inquired of Administrator Mekarski whether or not he had
30 a comment because she wants to move on.

31
32 Administrator Mekarski stated that he wants the Economic Development Commission to be
33 aware of the kind of competition that we have. He is not going to mention the name of the
34 retailer because it is still proprietary with the Village of Matteson. There was a Class "A" Grocer
35 looking for 80,000-square feet of space. Their preferred site was Olympia Fields in the
36 Jewel/Osco Building. They were looking at the old Dominick's in Matteson, and the old Cub
37 Foods. The reason why they decided not to ink the signature on the deal with the Olympia Fields
38 site, was it was too close to Ultra, and that particular grocer used the same supplier, Centrella,
39 and they didn't want to get that close to Ultra. Ultimately, even though the economic incentives
40 were better in Olympia Fields, because of that contractual issue with the supplier, they looked at
41 the Dominick's site. They didn't come to the Dominick's site just simply by itself. The Village
42 of Matteson purchased the Dominick's site. They are giving the site and the building to the
43 Developer for free. And on top of that, he doesn't have all of the facts on this, they are probably
44 going to add economic incentives on top of that. Ironically though, after that deal was pending in
45 the Village of Matteson and it is going to be happening, what did we just read in the paper about
46 Ultra? They are closing stores all around the region. It was just bad timing. If that Ultra decision
47 was made three-months ago, that Class "A" Grocer, 80,000-square feet would have been in

1 Olympia Fields because that was their preferred site. (Somebody was speaking without a
2 microphone).

3
4 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that they were preferred because of the demographics of the
5 Olympia Fields site.

6
7 Village President Burke stated that Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that we need to have a Dog
8 and Pony Show. We need to have a can presentation that says, “Here’s why Olympia Fields” and
9 be very succinct with it and be very clear, and start beating on people that this is why you should
10 come here. It’s us and Flossmoor primarily. He stated \$175,000.00 per median income. If we
11 want those Class “A’s” then we have to put together why Class “A” and really go after those
12 folks.

13
14 Administrator Mekarski stated that we entertained Mariano’s in the parking lot of Jewel/Osco for
15 45-minutes to an hour. They had a whole team of officials from Roundys. They were also
16 evaluating nine other sites in the south suburbs, South Holland, to Glenwood, to Matteson, to
17 Olympia Fields. Every one of the communities in the south suburbs have that same issue with
18 Cook County Taxes. So, everyone is offering a suite of incentives. We have to be aware that as
19 much as we do not like economic incentives, this disparity with the marketable rents versus taxes
20 has to be addressed. If it is not addressed, they will go ahead and do a deal with one of the
21 competitive sites. The Mayor is absolutely right, you can only do that until you do a Cost Benefit
22 Analysis. You have to be aware of all the surrounding communities in the trade area, what we
23 are competing against.

24
25 Village President Burke stated that when Mike Hoffman was here the last time we met, he had a
26 model that showed all the money we could have in the bucket. Village President Burke had
27 stated that he wanted to see a model that we can take whoever wants to come into the Village of
28 Olympia Fields and we can take their Business Plan and put it into that model and see how much
29 we are going to benefit from that. That is another thing that we want to look at before we say we
30 are going to work with somebody. Is it going to meet our financial target? If it is not going to
31 meet our financial target, we are not just going to go do it. There are a lot of things that we need
32 to kind of factor into how we are going to make a decision. It’s the demographics. It’s who lives
33 here, and what else we think we can drag in here. At the same time, it has to make financial
34 sense. If it doesn’t make financial sense, then why do we have to do it?

35
36 **CRITICAL NEXT STEPS (DISCUSSION):**

37
38 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she wanted to move onto the next item which is “Critical
39 Next Steps.” As she prefaced at the beginning of the Meeting, there are three Options that will be
40 presented. These are not hard and fast and carved in stone Options. There are three Options for
41 us to consider. She would like for the Commission to select at least one of these Options so we
42 can move forward, and everyone will know what we are doing, when we are doing it, and how
43 we are doing it. She will create an Evergreen Work Plan so we can continue on with our work.

44
45 Commissioner Lewis stated that this is action amalgamation of work that we have done over the
46 last couple of years. He thinks trying to assimilate a lot of the things that have been talked about
47 tonight that we learned. He should preface this by saying two things: 1. He hasn’t been a big

1 proponent of the Las Vegas Event only because they continue to talk about the Redlining of the
2 south suburbs. It's almost like we get that feedback. He thinks that we heard some information
3 tonight that addresses some of those issues. Historically, that has been a real big sticking point
4 which kind of culminated into the kinds of things that you are going to hear later. The second
5 thing that he wants to make sure that he mentions before he starts is that a famous man once said
6 that, "If you are going to take an airplane trip to California, sometimes you have to get the plane
7 to start heading west and then you figure the rest out later." He wants to put that out on the table
8 before he starts talking about these critical next steps.

9
10 Commissioner Lewis stated that he believes it is because of his Corporate Background, but he
11 tends to like the whole concept of planning your work and then working your plan. We, as an
12 EDC, he thinks are trying to figure out the most efficient way to look at critical next steps and
13 what the outcome might be. It is important to have measurable outcomes as Village President
14 Burke stated to justify the investment.

15
16 Commissioner Lewis stated that Option I is outlined under "Critical Next Steps." It is looking at
17 what the existing EDC has done with the resources that we have available, which is essentially
18 ourselves and about a \$2,500.00 Budget. If we were to pursue the course that we are on now, that
19 we have been doing for essentially the last couple of years, the benefits as we see them would be
20 for some local businesses to benefit from the activity. They get a little bit more visibility. There
21 would be a little more of a residual impact to the residents, but the activities that would be under
22 maintaining our current strategy, would be kind of more of the same. "Small Business Awards
23 Program, Business Connections, some retention efforts in terms of us trying to go out there and
24 have Limited Conversations with the Existing Businesses. The Business Audit Concept, we
25 talked about before with Commissioner Gibb where we try to do a well-being check, if you will,
26 on local businesses to determine how we can be more helpful to them. Bring in Small Business
27 Resources whether it be Prairie State, or Governors State, or some other government agencies.
28 We've also done some initial steps in terms of Website Production. It has been more reactive
29 rather than proactive in terms of what we have done on the Website. And our continued
30 partnership with our area partners, which includes Franciscan Health, School Board District 227,
31 Governors State, Prairie State, and South Suburban College."

32
33 Commissioner Lewis stated that under that Option, maintaining our current strategy, more of the
34 same, we basically think that the impact overall will be minimal, because we are not really
35 driving new business. We are being more of a "catcher" versus a "pitcher." The economic impact
36 on the community would be negligible because we really aren't bringing in the kind of large
37 scale opportunities that the President articulated and that we would all agree would be necessary
38 to help drive us forward. So, for \$2,500.00 we can continue to do more of the same. That's the
39 first Option.

40
41 Commissioner Lewis stated that Option II would be to modify the current strategy slightly. A
42 Marketing Manager goes back to a theme that goes under the category of "Branding" which
43 Commissioner Morris has talked about a lot. By adding a Marketing Manager, we think that
44 using the existing team and a Marketing Manager, or a Marketing Manager like function,
45 engaging an outside firm to conduct a Needs Assessment of the community would help us get to
46 that next level. We need to know what it is that we are selling. We need to know what our brand
47 is all about. We need to be able to have something to sell. He stated that with your IBM Training,

1 you know that you can't sell a product that you don't know what it is that the product has to
2 offer. This Marketing Manager and Assessment would help us to be able to figure out exactly
3 what can the Village of Olympia Fields offer and sell in the marketplace, so that we can be more
4 effective at soliciting and being proactive in our outreach.

5
6 Commissioner Lewis stated that the expenses would be somewhat moderate. We have the
7 \$2,500.00 as the baseline. We think that a Consultant could come in and really help us formulate
8 some of the thinking around what our marketing pitch ought to be. We identified a part-time
9 Marketing Officer function which would be someone who would be dedicated to really selling
10 our Village, proactively going out and letting people know what our brand is. We think that we
11 should be able to attract three to five new businesses. We figure that the average Sales Tax
12 Revenue of \$10,000.00, we assume a \$100,000.00 in Revenue business and 10% taxes so that is
13 how we came up with the number. At best, we think it might be a break-even proposition, but at
14 least it begins to identify us as a viable community with a Commercial offer that would go after
15 and attract the right kinds of businesses to come to our community. The Needs Assessment,
16 target marketing based on the results of the Assessment that would come from the Consultant
17 would be the required first steps. We think the impact would be meaningful. It would be over
18 time. It would be a little longer time period before it wrapped up. It would allow us to have
19 proactive outreach. We would specifically be going after those businesses. One of the things we
20 learned is that there is an interdependency between businesses. Once Ultra, which wasn't in our
21 community was here, then that excluded a lot of other businesses which therefore wouldn't come
22 because Ultra was here. Wal-Mart is here. He stated that because Wal-Mart is here there are
23 other businesses that would say we can't come. That interdependency needs to be factored in so
24 that as you begin to go out and pitch, you are pitching the right businesses that will be here for
25 the long-run and for the right reasons. The expenses, we identified and the Revenue. It would be
26 a break-even proposition overall, but it would certainly put us on the road to being a viable,
27 proactive, outreach based entity, and over time would drive us in a new direction.

28
29 Commissioner Lewis stated that Option III is the one that incorporates all the thinking that we
30 have picked up over the last couple of years, to develop a new Plan, have a Marketing Manager
31 function, and an Economic Development Officer function dedicated to this endeavor. The
32 expenses that we identified in Option I would be there, plus a part-time Economic Development
33 Officer function and an ongoing update to enhance the Website which would complete the cycle.
34 Some of these things seem to be a little less clear, but he thinks it all makes sense when you look
35 at it in its totality. We want to be able to identify one major business per year with these
36 resources that we think could generate \$100,000.00 in Sales Tax Revenue. That's \$1,000,000.00
37 in sales. Wal-Mart is like \$35,000,000.00 in sales roughly.

38
39 Administrator Mekarski stated between \$45,000,000.00 to \$65,000,000.00. Commissioner Lewis
40 stated that is a conservative estimate. If we are talking about \$1,000,000.00 in sales that is not a
41 very big business, but we think that under this Option if you have a dedicated Economic
42 Development Officer function and a dedicated Marketing function, because again, going back to
43 the Dog and Pony Show, someone has to be here who has the skills to walk these people around
44 and let them know what it is we have to offer. It's not something that can be done by a volunteer
45 group. It has to be done by somebody who has got the absolute skill set and really knows how to
46 talk the language that they are requiring in order for them to be interested in coming to our
47 Village. It will force the Village to not only have a Needs Assessment and a strategy that is

1 customized to the needs of the Village and independent of other south suburban communities
2 which we feel pretty strongly is another element with this Plan. We want to plan for the Village
3 of Olympia Fields. It's nice to assume that we would like to be captured in the same south
4 suburban conversation, but we are a unique Village. We have unique attributes. We have unique
5 qualities. We have unique offerings. Our brand is very different than say the brand of Park
6 Forest. Our brand is different than the brand for Matteson. Our brand is different than the brand
7 for Flossmoor. We need to capitalize on that, to look at bringing the kinds of entities to our
8 community that can help us over the long-run. Where we can do it independently we do, and
9 where we can do it in concert with the neighboring Village like Flossmoor or Matteson that also
10 makes good sense. It is going to require dedicated resources from a marketing perspective and
11 from an economic development perspective in order to accomplish that.

12
13 Commissioner Lewis stated that under Option III it is a Full-Fledged Plan. The Marketing
14 Manager function, Economic Development Officer function, a Strategic Plan that is being
15 created and customized for the Village, the enhancement of the Website, and proactively going
16 after, identifying those entities that makes sense that will sustain us over time, as opposed to
17 really being reactive into whatever we might solicit. So succinctly, those are kind of the three
18 next steps. This was put together before this discussion came from the events in Las Vegas. We
19 have assimilated it over the last couple of years with our thinking as to how we might approach
20 this task of trying to make the Village of Olympia Fields truly the "Jewel of the south suburbs."

21
22 Administrator Mekarski stated just a point of order for the record. He stated to generate
23 \$100,000.00 in sales tax you would need \$10,000,000.00 in gross sales. That would be like a
24 small Shopping Center. That is probably similar to a Bizios Market. He stated that 1% of
25 \$10,000,000.00 is \$100,000.00.

26
27 Commissioner Lewis stated that he thought the County got 10%. Administrator Mekarski stated
28 that the Village only receives 1%. He stated that you are right with the County, but we always
29 look at it from the standpoint of Olympia Fields.

30
31 Village President Burke stated that he spoke with an individual that manages thirty-five
32 Walgreens. The Village President was told that a good Walgreens will profit around
33 \$7,000,000.00 a year. If you have something like a Walgreens that is going to generate some
34 revenue. A service station could do it too.

35
36 Commissioner Lewis stated that he would say that these are fairly conservative, because the size
37 was assuming \$100,000.00 or \$1,000,000.00 in revenue. No business is assumed to be any larger
38 than that. He used numbers that were conservative. He stated that as Administrator Mekarski
39 points out, some of them were not to scale, but if you scale them up and use the 1%, you are still
40 getting pretty close to a number. The point was pay for what is required to be invested, rather
41 than having the investment come and be an additional expense or burden on the Village.

42
43 Administrator Mekarski stated that our gas stations currently are producing about \$30,000.00 in
44 sales tax each, the two Speedways. And approximately, another \$20,000.00 from the Shell.
45 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that before we go into discussion on these three Options, she
46 needs clarification from Administrator Mekarski or Village President Burke. Was our Budget
47 ever approved that was submitted for May 1st?

1 Administrator Mekarski stated yes. He would have to check this tomorrow morning. He believes
2 that there is \$30,000.00 in the Budget for marketing, and you had your previous Budget for
3 Option I activities. The key is that you have at least \$30,000.00 for the Marketing Manager.
4 There was one other special project that we put in the Budget for this year. Chairperson Britt-
5 Johnson stated that it was for the Website. Administrator Mekarski stated that the Website has
6 been approved and that has been financed as part of that.

7
8 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she would like discussion on these Options, but take into
9 consideration we do have a Budget of \$30,000.00.

10
11 Commissioner Morris stated that he would have to read this again and let it digest. It is a gray
12 area. He is thinking about being fiscally responsible when we start throwing out these salaries.
13 One of the things that came to mind is perhaps we could explore some short-term contracts to
14 determine the relevancy of this Proposal, and also whoever these candidates may be, giving them
15 an opportunity to prove them self, but also have that carrot in front of them. He is a little bit
16 uncomfortable initially. He stated maybe some short-term contracts, some assignments, and see
17 where we go with that.

18
19 Commissioner Lewis stated point well-taken. This is a concept, and there are not individuals
20 lined up to do this. This is just conceptually. What we have done the last couple of years is
21 basically try to do things when we could or on a volunteer basis. We are just suggesting that we
22 need to commit to a resource that has the skill set to deliver the product that we ultimately want
23 for the Village. Conceptually, a Marketing Officer or conceptually, an Economic Development
24 Officer, there's not a person identified. That function is needed in order to execute the Plan.

25
26 Commissioner Morris stated that he hears you. He understands. The second part of the question
27 would be what we are proposing here, how does this overlay with the existing Administrative
28 Team that we currently have in the Village of Olympia Fields? We may need to take a look at
29 their duties and responsibilities to see if we can realign, if they have the skill sets, make some
30 realignments there to achieve some of the things that we are looking for.

31
32 Administrator Mekarski stated that you can never have enough marketing. The more marketing
33 you have, the stronger the team is, the stronger the President's Administration is. One thing you
34 may want to do, you mention Consultants on both of these. You may want to take some time to
35 develop a very good request for Proposals, put it out there, and get a number of Consultants to
36 Bid on those Proposals, and then you can compare apples and oranges too. He is not talking
37 about the part-time person. That is something that you can probably just look at salary
38 comparables of existing Marketing Managers. He stated that Ben Wilson in Matteson is working
39 as a full-time Economic Development Officer. Homewood has an Economic Development
40 Officer. You can take the full-time comps and then just do a part-time assuming on half the
41 hours. He stated for your Consultant, you may want to get six or seven Consultants giving you a
42 specified dollar amount and specify a scope just to see what comes out of it.

43
44 Commissioner Morris stated that we talked about this. We definitely need it. It is just a matter of
45 what approach we want to take. We talked about this once before. The thought came, when we
46 talk about Olympia Fields what is it that we want to market. Village President Burke brought up
47 going forward. He likes those words. We know what we are going to try to market. We are going

1 to try to market this golf course and we are going to try to market the Hospital, and build a
2 Marketing Plan around those things. When we started talking about Olympia Fields, what do we
3 want to market in Olympia Fields? That is going to lead up to that Website.
4

5 Commissioner Lewis stated back to the analogy of when you want to go to California, you get in
6 the plane and start heading west. We could do these things concurrently. This doesn't mean it is
7 a ground halt. You can do the things while you are doing some of the other strategic work. He
8 believes that for too long we have operated without a Guiding Plan, without some of the
9 milestones that are really important in order to make sure that you achieve your goal. By having
10 these elements in place, we will make sure that we are achieving, measuring. The acronym
11 "STAMP" is a very good one, "Strategic, Transparent, Accountable, Measurable and Practical."
12

13 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she believes for clarification, maybe the Commission is not
14 clear on what the suggestion is. She has heard the rallying call from this Commission as to who
15 are we, what are we, what are we doing, how are we moving forward, and so forth and so on.
16 Option I is we just keep doing the same thing we do month after month. We are crawling. We
17 have made some successes. Do we keep doing the same thing? Commissioner Chandler stated
18 no.
19

20 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that Option II, we do the same thing, plus we identify
21 somebody to help us with concentrated marketing efforts. We just heard both Administrator
22 Mekarski and Village President Burke express their experience in Vegas. Option II, do we
23 identify somebody that this is what they do part-time whatever? We need some additional help.
24 Administrator Mekarski needs some additional help. It doesn't make sense that Gladys is going
25 out to Vegas manning a booth. It doesn't make a lot of sense to her. What that makeup is, we
26 have not decided. But conceptually, do we want to do what we currently do, and then add a
27 function as Commissioner Lewis says to rev up our concentrated marketing efforts to market this
28 Village? That is Number 2. And maybe have what she calls a "Needs Assessment" done. So, we
29 know what we are marketing, what the vision is. We don't know what the vision is. We don't
30 know what we are marketing. We don't know how to market. That's Option II.
31

32 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that Option III is to do all of that, plus a dedicated function of
33 additional strategic economic development activities. That is what the discussion is. Once we
34 decide, and we are going to decide tonight on an Option, then we can break this down, tweak it,
35 mold it, fix it into what we want to do.
36

37 Administrator Mekarski stated that following that scenario, it seems logical then, and it is in the
38 Budget and already approved by the Board of Trustees, to start out with a Marketing Consultant
39 because they can help you develop a Strategic Plan, and the Professional Consultant can give
40 guidance on what that part-time EDO should be marketing and how they should be marketing it.
41 One of the points that he was making with the Village President is that if he had limited
42 resources, and we have heard of this from other Mayors, other Developers, and other Retail
43 Brokers, if you had limited money, we heard this from the Mayor in Romeoville, he had stated
44 that it is probably better to spend a bigger amount of money on the local, Chicagoland, Retail
45 Leasing Show, then spend the same amount of money in Vegas. When we met the Mayor in
46 Romeoville, he didn't have a booth. He was doing cold calling to Retail Brokers. He had
47 appointments set up at their booth. Minimal expense for Vegas except for his Hotel and his

1 flight. In the Retail Leasing Show that is held at Navy Pier, he put a big spread out. That kind of
2 decision making process would come out of the Consultant working with the Commission giving
3 you guidance.

4
5 Administrator Mekarski stated that his recommendation would be start out with a really good
6 RFP, and get a number of Consultants to give you Proposals, and then pick a Consultant. You
7 have the Budget. The Village President might be able to enhance the Budget. There might be
8 some Public/Private Partnership opportunities. And then define whether or not you need a full-
9 time EDO or a part-time EDO, and what that EDO should help market. His recommendation is
10 that the more money spent in marketing, the faster we will get to the vision of the Village
11 President.

12
13 Commissioner Chandler stated that he goes with Option III, and start out with some stuff with
14 Option II. You have to end up with Option III and even get to Number 4. You cannot spend
15 enough, and do enough different things to try to generate what we want to generate.

16
17 Administrator Mekarski stated that while you are doing this you don't have to be static. You can
18 be dynamic because the CEO of Franciscan Alliance has offered to the Village President the
19 opportunity for the Village and this group to use their marketing resources. You can do some
20 marketing through Franciscan St. James. He inquired of Village President Burke whether or not
21 he was correct in that.

22
23 Village President Burke stated that he wants to be a little bit more aggressive than what is here.
24 He has it in his mind that he wants to hire a full-time economic development marketing type
25 person. That's their job. They will have a quota that you have to go through this. He stated
26 exactly what the target is, he wants to go back and see from the Budget how much we think is
27 going to be needed to keep the Budget balanced in year two, three, and four, and let that be part
28 of the driver that determines how much we have to chase in terms of economic development. He
29 stated that Betty can do a really good job of telling us. We already kind of know that. We can
30 look at the trends that is associated with the money that we have coming in, what we will be
31 getting, what's the real money from Wal-Mart, what's the real money we are going to get from
32 this economic development. They already have an idea of what the slope of the increases are
33 going to be. He stated just for argument sake, we need \$200,000.00. The question becomes in
34 year two, where are we going to get \$200,000.00 from? Do we have enough time to have
35 somebody say you have to go find some businesses that are going to come in here and give us
36 \$200,000.00 of additional income, or we are going to have to increase taxes by that amount of
37 money? That is part of what he is looking at. He believes that we have to have a Plan. The Plan
38 is fed by a Financial Plan that the Village should have. He is inclined to go along with what
39 Commissioner Chandler said that Option III is kind of where we want to do it, but he is already
40 kind of committed to having a full-time person that is going to help drive this. He thinks what the
41 Commission here can do is to help create what our brand is, what kind of businesses we want to
42 get. He has heard the Commission talk about that before. We can have a Strategic List and we
43 should stick to that. There are going to be some tactical things that pop up, that are opportunities
44 that we should be ready to take advantage of. At the same time, in all of his 40 some years in
45 business he always had a quota. It got down to the point that his last year he had a half a Billion
46 Dollar quota. They took away half of his salary. He had to figure out a way to go do it. He has no
47 trouble putting somebody on a quota to go do it. It's all based on what we think that's a real

1 number. The way it is done in the business world, it's what is it you want to make the bottom
2 line look like for stock purposes in the business. That dictates what the quota is going to be
3 downstream to the people who are going to be doing it. He personally has been, and will
4 continue to be knocking on doors trying to find things that will come in here. He stated having
5 that Strategic List of who we think we want is very important. At the same time, he wants to hire
6 a person whose full-time job is to help drive the numbers to get what we need.

7
8 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that you are starting with Option III plus, in essence. Village
9 President Burke stated that he is going to take input from the people here. This is a real important
10 thing. It should be driven by what we think the Financial Plan of the Village is going to be. We
11 are going to control expenses. We are going to find other ways to add revenue to the Village
12 other than what we have already done because some of these things don't make sense to him at
13 the moment. Commissioner Chandler stated in the brand. Village President Burke stated in the
14 brand. We have to have a brand, and we have to stick to the brand. The person who is doing this
15 marketing, they are selling our brand.

16
17 Commissioner Lewis stated that he agrees the financial piece being driven concurrently by the
18 strategy and the brand and what we want to look like. If a business comes in and goes out of
19 business in two-years, that doesn't do us any good. If it is sustainable, it makes sense for our
20 brand and for what we have to offer in terms of a value proposition. That is the key to success.
21 He doesn't think that we have had an opportunity to do that before. He stated that moving
22 forward, that is the stuff that sticks to the ribs. He stated that is encouraging.

23
24 Chairperson Britt-Johnson believes that Option III is needed. Village President Burke stated that
25 if we are going to do this you don't need to tiptoe around it. You go jump in it and go do it. He
26 learned how to fly in the Navy. The little patches they wear on the side of their arm was a
27 Mother Eagle kicking a baby off a cliff. That Eagle had to learn how to fly. The first time you
28 land on an air craft carrier, there are no familiarization rides, you got to do it. He thinks that we
29 need to be really aggressive about going and doing this. Otherwise, we are going to be coming
30 with patch approaches to everything that we are doing. He believes that everybody sitting here is
31 saying that we need to fix this and we just can't continue bumping along on the bottom. He says
32 Option III, and try to ratchet it up from there. You have to get enough revenue that helps feed
33 and take care of the Village's expenses that is above and beyond the person that we are going to
34 be bringing in. If they are just going to break-even, we may as well just stay at home and watch
35 the basketball game.

36
37 Administrator Mekarski stated that he certainly applauds the opportunity to do Option III
38 enhanced. The one suggestion he would give when you are undertaking the brand identification,
39 he has heard this over the years, reiterated to him by Retailers and Developers, not only in
40 Olympia Fields and the Chicagoland area, but across the country, Retailers don't just look at the
41 community. They look at the trade area. He stated when you brand Olympia Fields you have to
42 also brand whatever size trade area they are looking at. He stated with Wal-Mart for instance,
43 they weren't looking at Olympia Fields. They were looking at the six-mile radius. They were
44 looking at the demographics in that six-mile radius, and the population in that six-mile radius,
45 and the average daily traffic counts in that six-mile radius, and the educational attainment in that
46 six-mile radius, and the aesthetics in that six-mile radius, and the governance in that six-mile
47 radius. All of those elements came into play. When we brought in Wal-Mart, we didn't entertain

1 them over here in the Village. When they announced that they would like to meet the Village
2 President, Administrator, and Economic Development Team at the time, we got the best
3 Conference Room at the Country Club. We had tea service. The Country Club gave it free to us.
4 They rolled down Country Club Drive. They rolled into this beautiful Country Club. The
5 President was sitting at the head of the table. The Consulting Team was on the one wing. He was
6 on the other wing. The Broker and the Realtor came in. We showed them not only Olympia
7 Fields, we demonstrated why the trade area makes sense. We had a map of the trade area. We
8 talked about the demographics of the trade area, and the governance in the trade area, and all the
9 elements. Administrator Mekarski stated that within 45-minutes the gentleman leaned over to
10 Michael Pierce which was the Broker and he said, "I like the way this community does business.
11 This is where we are going to build the next store." It is important to brand Olympia Fields. He
12 stated that Chairperson Britt-Johnson knows this from being in economic development for so
13 many years, you have to brand, and market, and sell the trade area. Every retail opportunity has a
14 different trade area. Some are smaller and some are larger. IKEA has a bigger radius. It can be
15 10, 15, 20-miles.

16

17 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that we are over time. She would like the Members to vote on
18 an Option. This isn't the hard and fast Option, but the concept. And then we will go back to work
19 on figuring out what it really looks like. She stated that Option III plus is not on this paper is
20 what has been suggested by the Village President. She would like the Members to vote on
21 Option III plus.

22

23 Village President Burke stated that if it is Option III you can always bring it up to Option III
24 plus. Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated Option III. Commissioner Chandler stated that he votes
25 for Option III. Commissioner Lewis stated that he votes for Option III. Commissioner Morris
26 stated that he supports the concept and he votes for Option III. Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated
27 that she supports Option III.

28

29 **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:**

30

31 **Lincoln Highway Corridor Update** - Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that we are over time.
32 She has just a couple of things for update. She wants to go to the Lincoln Highway Corridor
33 update. Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired of Administrator Mekarski where we are with respect
34 to the Lincoln Highway Corridor Beautification Project.

35

36 Administrator Mekarski stated that we have a \$500,000.00 Grant from RTA. It was 80% locked
37 in. There were a number of engineering elements that had to be completed. Tree Survey and
38 some other Engineering Surveys of existing conditions. That has been fulfilled and forwarded to
39 RTA. It goes to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency in Planning. They have to approve all of those
40 remaining elements, and then we will get the Grant Agreement. It has a local match. He stated
41 for the match we applied for a \$75,000.00 Grant with Cook County. Right before the Mayor
42 came into office, we had a conference call with Cook County with Administrator Mekarski,
43 Robinson Engineering, and Jim Landini. We aced that interview to a "T."

44

45 Chairperson Britt-Johnson inquired of Administrator Mekarski when will we know.
46 Administrator Mekarski believes that it is just a matter of weeks that we will hear from Cook

1 County on the match. It is that “Invest in Cook County.” It still may be a few months away for
2 getting the Chicago Metropolitan Agency in Planning. It is right around the corner.
3
4 Village President Burke inquired of Administrator Mekarski whether or not this is just a
5 sidewalk, or is this beautification. Administrator Mekarski stated that it is a pedestrian walkway
6 that would go from Olympian Way all the way to Wal-Mart, including street trees. There would
7 be improved lighting and signage by the railroad overpass. Village President Burke inquired
8 whether or not you have to have a walkway.
9
10 Commissioner Lewis stated that he has been pushing for the south suburbs to get more usage out
11 of RTA Funds. It is Federal Funds that passes through the RTA. It enhances any access to public
12 transportation, and enhances that Corridor wherever the Retail Center might be and the public
13 transportation element. They tend to try and make it as conducive as possible for pedestrians and
14 for access to and from. Village President Burke stated you have to have a walkway.
15 Commissioner Lewis stated yes.
16
17 Administrator Mekarski stated that it includes boulevard planting. There is a concrete
18 embankment in front of the railroad overpass that is close to the entrance of The Reserves of
19 Maynegaitte. That concrete would be removed. It would be enhanced with landscaping right in
20 front of the bridge embankment.
21
22 Commissioner Lewis stated that the walkway is also conducive to pedal, the green thing. That is
23 also the reason for the walkway. Village President Burke inquired whose land is this on.
24 Administrator Mekarski stated State right-of-way, IDOT’s. Village President Burke inquired so
25 where the fences are right now, that’s where the property line ends for the people who live over
26 there. Administrator Mekarski stated that is correct. In order for us to do fence improvements,
27 one or two things would have to take place. We don’t have the funds in the Grant for the fence
28 because the fences are all on private property. But in order to do the fence work like Park Forest
29 did, you would have to either move the fence if we have the room in the public right-of-way and
30 get permission from IDOT to do that, and then you could use public dollars to improve the fence,
31 or we could work with all the homeowners adjoining Lincoln Highway and do a Special Service
32 Area, which you just amortize 15 or 20-years of the expense of building a new fence. You get
33 Easement Agreements from each of the homeowners and they can pay for that with a small
34 property tax over 20-years which will be almost insignificant for a homeowner. Then they get a
35 brand-new fence instead of paying it upfront.
36
37 Village President Burke stated that the people who live along there, they don’t like that Wal-
38 Mart. They are really upset about that Wal-Mart. This thing is so far down the road on what we
39 are talking about trying to do. Did we get buy-in from the people who live there about putting a
40 walkway behind their house like that?
41
42 Administrator Mekarski stated no we did not because we haven’t gotten the Grant Agreement
43 yet. Village President Burke inquired of Administrator Mekarski what the status of the Grant is
44 right now. Administrator Mekarski stated that we have a letter issued from RTA saying that they
45 are going to give us the money as long as we complete these minor engineering elements and it
46 goes through the Chicago Metropolitan Agency in Planning’s approval process. Village
47 President Burke inquired what percentage of the money of the Grant is going to improvement

1 versus going to people that are pulling the plans and stuff together. Administrator Mekarski
2 stated that he would have to check that. He believes it is just a Standard Engineering Agreement.
3 It is all covered by IDOT. IDOT has a specific percentage for any projects and so does RTA.
4 Village President Burke inquired of the Commissioners whether or not they have seen what the
5 Plan looks like. Who has seen the Plan?
6

7 Commissioner Chandler stated that he doesn't know if anyone has seen it. They talked about it at
8 one of the Board Meetings. His comment is the fences are not part of the Grant. He knows what
9 you are saying about folks don't maybe want all that, and all that other stuff. If you look at all
10 those fences that are over there, those fences are in pretty bad shape. In about another five-years
11 they are going to fall down.
12

13 Village President Burke stated that none of the money is going to fix the fences. Commissioner
14 Chandler stated that he understands. Village President Burke stated that we are going to spend
15 some money to make what is on the outside of the fence look nice, but then the fence is still
16 going to be an eyesore. Commissioner Chandler stated that's right. He doesn't know what the
17 answer is. The homeowners are going to have to pay for the fence sooner or later because the
18 fence is just going to fall down. Then they have to pay for it all at once and you have 20 different
19 kinds of fences. It could cost them an extra \$100.00 a year or something for the next 20-years or
20 whatever that number is he doesn't know. It is the same way with that little subdivision over
21 there, Nottingham Court. That wall is deteriorating in that subdivision so what happens with
22 that?
23

24 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated for the Members to correct her if she is incorrect, so you get a
25 little bit of background. She lives close to Lincoln Highway. She stated for about a year a couple
26 of us complained about the Lincoln Highway Corridor and how it looks coming from Matteson
27 to Western. The fences are terrible. She was one of the complainers of the gray fence closer to
28 the viaduct, the Metra, because that is where she lives and had issues. If you drive up and down
29 the street it looks horrible. Part of the thinking was, how are we going to attract the right kind of
30 businesses when you drive down the street and the road looks bad, there's grass, there's weeds,
31 there's fencing? So, we kept complaining about it and then however this Grant came up,
32 Commissioner Lewis might have identified and mentioned the Grant and Administrator
33 Mekarski filled out the Application. She was after how can we do streetscape improvement for
34 the Lincoln Highway Corridor because it looked so bad. That is something that is important to
35 this community when we are trying to attract folks. That's how it kind of started, the history.
36

37 Village President Burke stated that part of what makes it look bad is the fence. Why can't any of
38 the money be used to fix the fence? Administrator Mekarski stated that it is on private property.
39 Village President Burke inquired if you move the fence a little bit closer to the street can it be
40 used. Commissioner Lewis stated that he doesn't know. Typically, it is for public right-of-way
41 access areas. If it is not private property and it is in a public access area he guesses it would
42 qualify. He honestly doesn't know. Administrator Mekarski stated that he doesn't believe the
43 fence was an eligible item even if it was in the public right-of-way. The landscaping and
44 sidewalk was. If we did have the room to put it in the right-of-way, and the last time he spoke
45 with the engineer that may be questionable in certain areas. If we do put it in the State right-of-
46 way and the State gives us permission to redo the fence there, which is also another hurdle,
47 ultimately, the Village could pay for it. It would be difficult to find a Grant to pay for it.

1 Commissioner Lewis inquired of Administrator Mekarski what Park Forest did because they did
2 do their fence with their funds. On the south side, Park Forest got a Grant as well. Village
3 President Burke stated and it looks nice. What they did on the other side looks great.
4 Commissioner Lewis stated that we have to figure out how we can do something like that. He
5 stated whether we like it or not, it is our Commercial Corridor on that side.

6
7 Administrator Mekarski stated that they had an ITEP Grant. They had more right-of-way. A
8 portion of it was picked up by the ITEP Grant. The other portion they infused General Fund
9 Dollars, public dollars. (Someone was speaking without a microphone). Administrator Mekarski
10 stated that they put a sidewalk all the way to Orchard. They are going to look for General Funds
11 or another Grant to do it the rest of the way. He can bring Pat Barker to the next Meeting to
12 layout their survey.

13
14 Commissioner Morris stated that Village President Burke mentioned the residents over there.
15 You indicated they don't like the Wal-Mart. What's the perception of the walkway?

16
17 Village President Burke stated that he went around and talked to people. Some of them like the
18 Wal-Mart. It's a security issue with them with Wal-Mart being in close proximity to them.
19 Somebody driving by is one thing. When you have people walking up and down the street right
20 next to your backyard that has another different level to it then if it was somebody driving down
21 the street. That's why he said if there was no sidewalk and there was trees, bushes, and stuff like
22 that he thinks people would feel a little bit better about it from that standpoint. He didn't mean to
23 blow this up or anything. He is just saying from what he heard that people were not happy about
24 having people walking behind their house. That was his only point.

25
26 Commissioner Lewis stated that you made a good point. One thing we didn't talk about is there
27 is more space on the Park Forest side. He was wondering if a collaboration is possible because
28 they have the sidewalk on the south side that stops at Orchard. There is a lot of room by that
29 church. And then going eastbound, a sidewalk on that side wouldn't be as much of an issue.
30 There is more space.

31
32 Administrator Mekarski stated right. He stated that Pat Barker from Robinson can answer all of
33 those questions. We had to pull their Grant data to help us get our Grant. There was some Survey
34 information on the CMAP requirements. If you would like he can have Pat Barker come to the
35 next Meeting and talk about the Grant Application, the Survey that was done, the status. We
36 could knock it out in 20-minutes. You could have 10-minutes of questions and answers.

37
38 Village President Burke stated that if there is a way that we could have a sidewalk on the other
39 side of the street, and you can beautify with our Grant our side of the street. It looks to him that
40 in some places you only have from here to there for a fence. How are you going to put a
41 walkway there? Administrator Mekarski stated that Commissioner Lewis could probably answer
42 this better than him. The whole purpose of the Transit-Oriented Development Grant from RTA
43 was enhancing pedestrian and vehicle access. That's why we have the lighting and
44 beautification. If we didn't put the sidewalk in it, we wouldn't get the Beautification Grant.
45 Commissioner Lewis stated that the south side would be a viable option. There's also a Pace Bus
46 Service that goes up and down there too. That also helps to enhance it. That's another element of
47 why they wanted to have some kind of walkway. It doesn't have to be on the north side.

1 Village President Burke inquired whether or not they were talking about putting a bus stop
2 between those. Commissioner Lewis stated that the bus stop is already there. Commissioner
3 Morris stated that there is one at the light. Commissioner Lewis stated that there is one at Wal-
4 Mart. There is one at the light and one at Indiana. There is one at the bus turnaround.
5 Administrator Mekarski stated if you like, he can bring in Pat Barker for a short presentation.
6 Village President Burke stated that he is not interested in doing that.

7
8 **Website Update** - Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that it is almost 9 o'clock. Did we agree
9 because of the transition is CivicPlus onboard or not onboard? Village President Burke stated
10 that we had a Meeting in this room where we went through it. That is going forward. We need
11 you guys to be involved in that piece of it that has to do with economic development. The
12 Managers, we all sat down and had a remote telephone thing where you can see and go through
13 things. It has a lot of benefit that the Village is going to use to roll out some things that we want
14 to do. Chairperson Britt-Johnson requested that the Commission Members look at the economic
15 development portion of the Website for data tweaks and suggestions. She inquired whether or
16 not CivicPlus is going to make it look pretty. Administrator Mekarski stated correct. Chairperson
17 Britt-Johnson stated that we still have to finish our portion on content.

18
19 Village President Burke stated that's right. They want direction from us on what content we
20 want, and what we are trying to drive, what is our message.

21
22 Commissioner Morris inquired whether there is a timeline. Village President Burke believes that
23 they are meeting sometime in the next month with them. We already started it. Chairperson Britt-
24 Johnson stated we still have homework to do.

25
26 **Franciscan Health (FHS)** – Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that she will be reaching out to the
27 Subcommittees. We are going to go ahead and move forward with our Joint Task Force Meetings
28 with Franciscan Health. She will be reaching out to schedule the large group Meeting. She will
29 send out a reminder for the Subcommittees to get back together and start doing their homework
30 before we have the Joint Task Force Meeting.

31
32 Chairperson Britt-Johnson stated that it is 9 o'clock. She thanked everyone for the extra time
33 spent this evening. The next Meeting is June 28th, 2017.

34
35 **ADJOURNMENT:**

36
37 **Chairman Britt-Johnson adjourned the meeting at 9:00 P.M.**

38
39 Respectfully submitted by Faith Stine.

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45