



Minutes
Village of Glen Ellyn
Village Board
Special Workshop
Monday, August 7, 2023
7:00 PM

Glen Ellyn Civic Center, Galligan Board Room

A. Call to Order – 7:00 P.M.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Roll Call

Upon roll call by Deputy Clerk Cannova, President Senak and Trustees Christiansen, Fasules, Simon, and Thompson and Gould answered “Present.” Trustee Kalinich arrived at the meeting at 7:01 P.M. and responded “Present”.

Also in attendance: Village Manager Franz, Interim Finance Director Brankin, Economic Development Coordinator Hannah, Police Chief Norton, Professional Engineer Daubert and Assistant Village Engineer Peebles.

D. Audience Participation

Patrick Van Tiem, resident of south Glen Ellyn, addressed the Board on his opposition to the hotel site being used for affordable housing.

Wayne Richards, resident of Glen Ellyn, spoke to the Board on accountability to the public for tax funds.

E. Presentation

1) Downtown Construction Update (Assistant Village Engineer Peebles)

Assistant Village Engineer Peebles gave a PowerPoint update on Phase 2 of the downtown Streetscape Construction program. His presentation included an outline of the general progression of work, project milestones to date, an overall status update on progress to date and future milestone potential dates, as well as a summary of stakeholder communications undertaken by the Village and Resident Engineer Keller.

Key takeaways of this presentation were that the originally targeted end date of Phase 2 Streetscape construction was September 29, but this was delayed due to Nicor conflicts for required underground utility work, thus changing the work order of construction. He could not yet name the final completion time but would identify this as soon as possible.

President Senak asked Assistant Engineer Peebles whether anything further could occur which would delay completion of remaining construction. Assistant Engineer Peebles responded that the weather is always a concern. They feel fortunate that thus far the weather has not delayed work. He also mentioned possible supply chain issues which may arise for needed road materials, such as cement.

President Senak asked for questions at this point from the business owners.

Julie Spiller, owner of Gather and Collect at 501 Pennsylvania Avenue, asked about whether Pennsylvania would be one or two lanes in the coming weeks.

Shannon Burgess, owner of The Bookstore at 475 N. Main Street, spoke on the challenges she faces, and that all local business owners face, in the current construction time. She spoke more broadly as a representative of all impacted businesses about lower sales and foot traffic.

2) Business Support Programs (Economic Development Coordinator Hannah)

Economic Development Coordinator Hannah highlighted the various business programs and temporary programs which arose from the CARES funding. She spoke of Village initiatives to drive business to the downtown during construction. Two of the most recent initiatives are the Shop Saturdays promotion and gift card giveaways by Community Service Officer Perez, who covers the downtown for parking and other needs. CSO Perez has given away these certificates at the holidays but this current give away's aim is to stimulate shopping in the downtown during construction.

President Senak asked for trustee questions at this point. Trustee Fasules said he'd like to hear from business owners. President Senak agreed.

Mark MacKenzie, owner of the Bike Hub at 495 N. Main Street, spoke on issues he faces as the owner of a bike shop and the business revenue impact from construction. He spoke of how he'd counted on this summer to rebound more from the impact of Covid.

He complimented the grand vision of the Village in the outcome of construction and the construction teams. He spoke of revenue loss of 50% and how the spring, summer, and fall are his seasons to make maximum revenue to sustain sales slow-down of winter. With construction, he hasn't been able to make that revenue to offset the coming winter slow down of sales. He also worries about losing customers who won't hassle coming into the store, will then buy a bike elsewhere, and bring their bike elsewhere for servicing.

President Senak asked if he wanted help. Mr. MacKenzie responded that he would appreciate a safety net of funds. President Senak asked if that could not be, what would he wish for? Mr. MacKenzie responded that, \$10,000-15,000 per month would offset losses. Mr. MacKenzie said he strategized as best he could in anticipation of this construction season. Trustee Simon asked whether employee retention was affected. Mr. MacKenzie answered that he had lowered hours, to keep his payroll expenses lower.

Janet Avila, owner of String Theory at 477 N. Main Street, next spoke on Streetscape's impact on downtown businesses. She cited sales reduced May-June, and feels her numbers are better than other stores as she has been in business 19 years. She invested CARES money into creating a website for her business. She said the word is entirely out that Glen

Ellyn is under construction and with the reopening possibly delayed until November, it will take a while to draw folks back.

She requested cash; President Senak asked what amount, and Ms. Avila suggested giving business owners a couple of months rent, if she and they were to show their rent bill, or funding otherwise if they show what money has been lost.

Sean Murray, owner of Ko-ze Wine Bar, at 484 N. Main Street, mentioned that he is entirely service on premise with retail. He purchased the business with his wife last year. They knew construction needed to happen but he hadn't anticipated the hit they would take. He felt that the south side fared better during their Streetscape work as they have two parking garages. He asked if the Village could subsize web design or give cash. He mentioned a strong need for parking. He then thanked the Board for listening.

President Senak asked generally of the business owners if it would feel invasive if verification were to be requested? The consensus from the owners was no, it would not.

Vincenzo Giovenco, owner of Punch Barber at 491 Pennsylvania Avenue, spoke to the Board that his business was down.

Shannon Burgess went to the podium at this point in the meeting again to address the Board. She noted that people do not park on the south side and then shop on the north side of downtown. Also, trains at times are stopped and people get impatient to cross and they remember the hassle the next time they think of crossing the tracks. She cited parking as a huge issue, that people are confused about where they may park. Her Bookstore has a robust website but they lose customers to Amazon, and if people start to order from that vendor, they are not as likely to return to shop in her store. She requested rent relief to the question of what specifically would help this current situation.

Sharon Burgess then read a letter from the owner of Chocolaterie Stam, Liz Mager, to the Board regarding her struggles as a small business owner in downtown. She cited her best month of May since opening in 2017 followed by a sales slide in June, with sales sliding further in July. She had enjoyed a streak of 10 consecutive months of consistent sales growth. She cited significant cost increases as major challenges. She suggested that the Village Board offer shop owners a financial program which could be a tax break or a monthly stipend during construction. She closed by stating that the central business district deserves to be maintained for future generations, but she just wants her business to be part of the improved downtown.

Ms. Burgess then read a letter from Wes Barrow, owner of Larc Jeweler, who cited his lack of any debt at the beginning of this year, and the steps he took to prepare his business for construction. He has since borrowed to cover the shortfall of operating expenses and he anticipates needing to borrow more as his pace of sales is so slow. He appreciates the empathy but that nothing short of a cash infusion will help his business move forward.

Julie Spiller, owner of Gather and Collect at 501 Pennsylvania Avenue, asked for better signage for parking and complained about the length of time it took to receive better signage about parking. She complained of the need to have employees move their cars to avoid tickets, and that she didn't wish to burden high school students particularly with needing to pay for parking tickets. She talked of further unique burdens during construction, such as rising costs, and that FedEx has at times been unable to deliver

merchandise she has staffed up to receive and unpack. Trustee Simon asked the reason for the inability for the Fed Ex deliveries; the answer was that they cannot safely park amid the construction.

Jill Foucrè, just-former owner of Marcel's and Marche, who sold her business to Renee DiSanto on June 1, works in a transition capacity for the new owner who could not be at the meeting. She said that while business was good for her and she believes still is now for Ms. DiSanto, revenue is down. She asked whether landlords could be asked to help, as it is well-known that property values in Glen Ellyn are very favorable and will continue to be. She complimented the Village staff in planning the project and communicating but feels that opportunities were missed when the Alliance generated a list of actions which would help businesses in the construction earlier in the spring.

Trustee Kalinich said that in her notes from May 8, 2023, that the Alliance was asked to flesh out the list further after that initial discussion, but did not return, and Ms. Foucrè said she could not say.

President Senak said that he is interested in where this could go. Trustee Kalinich stated that Economic Development Coordinator Hannah worked with the Alliance on this.

Trustee Thompson asked if it would have been better to do Main Street one year, and Pennsylvania the next? Ms. Foucrè said that no, it should get done all at once, and then be done.

Barb Lemme, co-owner of Sign of the Whale, and President of the Alliance of Downtown Glen Ellyn, thanked the Board, President Senak and Trustee Fasules for first bringing this forward, as did President Senak, as well as Trustee Gould for her work with the Alliance. She said that Economic Development Coordinator Hannah and Communications Coordinator Paplauskas have been amazing, including their suggestions, ideas and being available on the weekends.

Rick Lord of Lord's Auto Clinic, of 453 Pennsylvania Avenue, addressed the Board about Village support of businesses. He felt that Village communication to businesses about the probable extent of their pending losses due to construction would have been helpful. He asked what the Board would do to help. He complimented the citizens of Glen Ellyn in keeping businesses open.

JJ Pacettii, owner of Main Street Pub, then rose to speak to the Board. His numbers are down, especially having lost the patio out front. People no longer will grab a drink and wait for an outside table. Parking, the street spots, is an issue; he cited that 200 parking spots lost during construction. Employees needing to move cars is an ongoing challenge, and he is losing staff for other restaurants who can offer more hours and longer (better) shifts.

Dean Pappas then addressed the Board. Mr. Pappas owns Glen Oak Café at 479 Pennsylvania Avenue. He had earlier in the week submitted a letter to the Board outlining his gratitude for being able to have a business in this town, but that after Covid, the current reconstruction of downtown streets and sewer project has magnified those losses and he is down at least 30%. He felt dividing the work into smaller segments instead of closing such large areas all at one time would have been better. At this moment, though, verbally addressing the Board and the room, he said that his business closes at 2 pm and that any other businesses nearby could use his lot then for their parking, and signs allow them to do

so.

Manager Franz talked of all available parking in the downtown, citing the agreements with Duly Heath and Care, and free employee parking. Julie Spiller asked a follow-up question about employee parking.

President Senak stated that the Board would digest all the comments of the evening and meet again soon.

F. Reminders

Village Board Meeting Monday, August 28, 2023 at 7 pm

G. Adjourn – 9:16 P.M.

Mover: Trustee Fasules; Second: Trustee Christiansen. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Submitted by Penni Cannova, Deputy Clerk