

**MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING**

**DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS**

**NOVEMBER 11, 2008**

Mayor Sandack called the Workshop meeting of the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Village Hall. The Mayor led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Present: Mayor Ron Sandack; Commissioners Marilyn Schnell, Commissioner Martin Tully; William Waldack, Sean P. Durkin, Geoff Neustadt, Bruce Beckman; Village Manager Dave Fieldman; Village Attorney Enza Petrarca; Deputy Village Clerk Linda Brown

Absent: Village Clerk April Holden

Visitors: **Press:** Catherine Leyden, Downers Grove Reporter  
**Residents:** Stephanie Sanderson, 6880 Middaugh Court; Alex Cobell; Christine Fregeau, 1918 Elmore Avenue; Alice Strelau, 5611 Brookbank; Marge Earl, 4720 Florence; Gordon Goodman, 5834 Middaugh  
**Staff:** Mike Baker, Deputy Village Manager; Mike Millette, Assistant Director, Public Works; Brandon Dieter, Management Analyst; Tom Dabareiner, Director, Community Development; Judy Buttny, Director, Finance; Robin Weaver, Interim Director, Public Works

Mayor Sandack explained that Council Workshop meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are video taped live and for later cable-cast over cable channel 6.

The Workshop meeting is intended to provide Council and the public with an appropriate forum for informal discussion of any items intended for future Council consideration or just for general information. No formal action is taken at Workshop meetings.

The public is invited to attend and encouraged to comment or ask questions in an informal manner on any of the items being discussed or on any other subject. The agenda is created to provide a guideline for discussion.

Mayor Sandack wished all veterans a Happy Veteran's Day and thanked them for their service to preserve our freedom and defend our country.

**MANAGER**

Manager Fieldman summarized the Active Agenda, Informational, and Consent Agenda items for questions and/or discussion by the Council or audience.

1. Active Agenda and Informational Items

- a. **Liquor Provisions.** The Manager said this ordinance amends the Liquor Code to allow outside consumption of liquor in certain facilities.

**Commissioner Beckman** asked for information before next week as to how the Police can monitor private parties that require enforcement.

- b. **Revisions to the FY09 Recommended Budget.** The Manager said this is the proposed revised budget. He presented a Power Point summary. The revised budget addresses many questions from the Saturday, October 11 Workshop. Approval is expected later this month or in early December. The Manager presented an overview of the budget objectives to reduce expenses, avoid tax and fee increases, and incorporate the Strategic Plan and Long Range Financial Plan. These objectives have been met in the proposed budget. The balanced budget is now \$41.7 million, which is a decrease of \$550,000. He said cash reserves will not be used, and revenues and expenses have been reduced by \$550,000. Existing staff vacancies will not be filled, and the transportation fleet has been reduced by ten vehicles. Manager Fieldman said the budget proposes to use one-time actions using the real estate fund, fire station bond proceeds, and construction bond proceeds. The revisions include reducing the general fund revenues by \$50,000 for the Hotel Sales tax, \$150,000 in sales tax revenues, and a building permit revenue reduction of \$350,000. The pension levy requests from the Police and Fire Pension Boards were about \$187,000 less than what was estimated. Staff proposes to defer the leaf pickup program for 2009, defer the branding and marketing initiative, eliminate a squad car, and eliminate the Strategic Planning consulting fees. This would reduce the levy for the 2009 budget to \$11.26 million, which is an increase of \$109,000 from 2008. He said the good news is that no levy is proposed for debt service payments. Property values in the Village are expected to increase about 6%, which will drop the Village tax rate from .463 in 2008 to .441 in 2009. He referred the Council to their packets for additional information, and said staff hoped to receive consensus and direction from the Council on this proposal.

Mayor Sandack said that there have been a number of meetings on the budget, and decisions must be made by December 16.

**Dr. Gordon Goodman**, 5834 Middaugh, said he supported the deferral of the leaf pickup as it is better for owners to manage individual properties by using the leaves for mulch, etc. Dr. Goodman then congratulated staff on including TCD III and the Strategic Plan for 2009. He asked what would be included, hoping that in-house projects would include State certification for the Historic Preservation Program, as well as discussion on the Comprehensive Plan and Community Neighborhood Conservation District studies.

Mayor Sandack agreed that the TCD III is the forum for that discussion. Manager Fieldman said the proposed budget still includes funding for a consultant for TCD III.

**Commissioner Durkin** asked whether funds will be included for the Future Land Use Map update. Manager Fieldman said that staff is talented and could do the work in-house, but if the budget allows, they hope to bring in Houseal and Levine to continue as consultants. Manager Fieldman said the Village will save between \$10,000 and \$25,000 by small changes to the contract.

**Commissioner Beckman** said for clarification that they would be eliminating the outside consultant, but not eliminating the Strategic Planning program, which Manager Fieldman verified.

**Commissioner Schnell** agreed that the Director of Community Development has experience in this and has a talented staff. She asked for a better understanding as to how this would be done with existing and supplemental staff. She went on to say that she is not sure they have reduced revenues enough. She would rather err on the side of caution, than have to reduce more later. She sees eliminating the Staff Attorney position at this time as necessary, unless the sales tax revenue picks up. From the list provided, there are several things that can be eliminated to bring them closer to the amount needed.

**Commissioner Neustadt** asked if the elimination of the police squad car is part of the ten vehicles, and the Manager said it was, and would allow transfer of funds from the Equipment Replacement Fund back to the General Fund. Commissioner Neustadt then referenced the \$96,000 in staff and personnel costs for Crossing Guards. He asked whether they still need 17 positions, and if that number could be brought down a bit. He suggested reviewing the needs at the intersections in question and finding an alternative way to man those intersections with the assistance of other agencies.

**Commissioner Waldack** commended staff on their work to bring the budget into place. He said there has been some public input, and asked for additional input from residents. He agreed with Commissioner Schell that more work could be done in-house, and suggested shaving part of the \$100,000 dedicated to the TCD III.

Commissioner Durkin noted the proposed elimination of two newsletters, and asked whether providing those newsletters on the Internet or through an e-mail fact sheet is being considered. Manager Fieldman said that most of the costs for the newsletter relate to printing and mailing. He will discuss the possibility with Doug Kozlowski and bring that information back to the Council.

Commissioner Durkin then referenced the elimination of the leaf program, noting his passion and support for this program. He would like to have discussions in July or August 2009 to determine revenue in the first six months. If there are funds available he would like this to be a top program to be placed back in the budget. He also asked for a review of the 2008 program and a better understanding on the street-sweeping program costs. He agreed that perhaps there is the possibility of reducing the scope of the existing leaf program, thereby reducing the cost.

**Commissioner Tully** asked if they can further reduce the 2009 budget to make the dollar amount of the levy the same or less than FY08. The current levy for FY09 is \$11,257,000. He asked about the options for elimination, such as TCD III, newsletters, fireworks, etc. Manager Fieldman said the list of cuts already made is the last bullet point of page 2 of the green sheets, to reduce other General Fund expenses.

Commissioner Tully then said that the primary question is whether the 2008 tax levy should be increased \$108,000 over the 2007 tax levy. He would like the dollar amount to stay the same. The 2006 and 2007 tax levies were both increased, and they should hold firm now if at all possible. If the only way to do that is to eliminate TCD III and the Comprehensive Plan, however, he would be reluctant to eliminate them. The Comprehensive Plan is long overdue. In regard to the leaf pickup, he recommends keeping the services we have and look at the leaf program again next year.

Commissioner Beckman said he concurred with many of Commissioner Tully's views, and in his opinion the Comprehensive Plan has priority over TCD III. He is concerned about the conversation to bring various projects in-house to reduce costs, and asked if that were done what it would do to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. He sees only one person who would be

able to handle that the Comprehensive Plan. Manager Fieldman said that staff has that same concern. Staff has received clear direction, and he will have Tom Dabareiner prepare a proposal as to the impact doing it in-house will have on Mr. Dabareiner's department and other projects. He will get that to the Council next week.

Mayor Sandack said that staff has been asked to be diligent in keeping expenses down. Staff has initiated a process that is incorporated regularly as part of a quarterly review. Projections are based on the best economic information currently available, which does not look good at this time. If the situation improves, there are tools available to bring back some of the programs. The Mayor said that the Council has been given a bare-bones budget that bodes well for the Village in comparison to some neighboring communities that have laid off personnel or jettisoned programs and raised taxes. The Village is not looking to raise taxes, but is looking to live within our means. The Mayor said that staff has heard the Council with regard to the Comprehensive Plan. The Fairview issue is illustrative of the problem that needs to be addressed. He said that staff should not be championing the project entirely, because it is reasonable to have a professional set of eyes as well. There will invariably be tensions and issues as a result of neighborhood discussions, and staff should not bear the brunt of each of those discussions. They need to roll out a plan with some level of protection. He said that he hears Commissioner Tully and Commissioner Schnell, but he doesn't necessarily agree. He enumerated all of the levies residents see on their tax bills. There are more levels of government here in Illinois than anyplace. If they want the Comprehensive Plan, they must find the additional money.

Manager Fieldman said that Commissioner Schnell asked a few weeks ago whether staff could get to something closer to a flat corporate levy. Staff prepared a list of \$273,000 of additional cuts, which included \$100,000 for TCD III and the Comprehensive Plan, as well as \$100,000 of cuts that appear in the revision now before the Council. From what he heard tonight, the additional \$73,000 will be out of the budget in the next revision. He referred to a table in the Council's packets that showed asterisked points that are changes already included. Anything without an asterisk is debatable for further cuts. He showed the table on the overhead for review. The question is the level of priority that exists on the remaining items. He added that he and the Village Attorney are concerned about the deferment of hiring a Staff Attorney at this time, since legal work often increases during down economic times. They will submit a report to the Council in that regard.

Commissioner Tully said he apparently misunderstood what was still on the table, but that has been clarified. As to the Staff Attorney deferral, he doesn't want to create problems down the road. He reviewed the items in question and asked what was spent on some items such as Springfield Drive Down, Training and Travel, etc. He'd like to see a flat tax rate if at all possible. He still questioned the Staff Attorney position. The Mayor responded that is the biggest ticket item on the list, and Ms. Petrarca and the Manager will further review this.

Manager Fieldman said he understood where the Council was going in this discussion, and would prefer to go over this in a methodical analytical way and provide a report by next week.

Commissioner Neustadt asked what the 20% Village travel reduction will be.

- c. **2008 Aggregate Tax Levy.** The Manager said the Council just discussed this tax levy and it is explained on page 2 of the green sheet materials. The 2008 estimate is \$11.25 million previously discussed.

3. Consent Agenda Items

- a. **Asset Maintenance Management Software.** The Manager said this is a purchase in the amount of \$24,800.
- b. **Parking Deck Security System Maintenance.** The Manager said this is for a one-year contract in the amount of \$15,000. Commissioner Durkin asked why they don't have a multiple-year deal. The Manager said a one-year and three-year comparison will be provided next week, with reasoning for the decision to go with one-year.
- c. **Request for Amendment to Design Services – Inverness Avenue (ST-003).** The Manager said this request amends the contract with GC Engineering.

Commissioner Waldack said he noticed the original budget was \$25,000 and the amount keeps creeping up. He asked how they go about the process of establishing budgets for projects, how they are bid out, etc. Often they pay more than was budgeted. The Manager responded that there is substantially more design work being done this year and in the coming year. Staff will be coming to the Council with proposed changes in the way the design process occurs and how to make the process more efficient.

Commissioner Durkin said it appears from the green sheet that staff has changed the plans. The Manager said that staff asked for the additional work to be done.

- d. **Safe Routes to School Program.** The Manager said this resolution allows the Village to participate in the Safe Routes to School Program.

Commissioner Beckman asked what happens if this program is not funded. The Manager said without the grant, staff would recommend that the Village not proceed with the program.

Commissioner Waldack said that there are interesting statistics in the report, and one thing that caught his attention is that private non-District 58 schools are not included in the process. The private schools also have children bused to school with the 1-1/2 mile requirements. In the future he would hope to include all the schools, since they want all of the children to be safe. There is busing involved with the non-District 58 schools. He said a CMAP meeting was held at the Library and two items raised were the environment and transportation. The Village has one of the most efficient transportation systems for school children. He noted on the report that about 1,000 students bike or walk to school, while 2,100 use a family vehicle. Twice as many children are driven than walk or bike. A lot of things can be inferred from this information since many of those children live less than 1-1/2 miles from school. He said a great deal of time is spent with planning and working with the schools. Many parents are frustrated with the traffic congestion at the schools. He thinks this is a cultural change that is taking place, and they need to encourage walking and biking. He noted that there are parking problems in neighborhoods surrounding high schools, because some high school students feel they must drive to school. This is a situation that has to be better addressed as a community.

**MANAGER'S AND DIRECTORS' REPORT**

No reports.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

## DRAFT

Village Attorney Enza Petrarca said she was presenting five items to the Council: 1) An ordinance amending the provisions of the Class C Club Liquor License; 2) A resolution authorizing execution of an addendum to an agreement between The Village of Downers Grove and GC Engineering, Inc.; 3) A resolution authorizing execution of a maintenance agreement and addendum agreement between The Village of Downers Grove and Advent Systems, Inc.; 4) A resolution in support of participation in the safe routes to school program within The Village of Downers Grove; 5) A motion approving a contract between The Village of Downers Grove and the Downers Grove Lodge No. 73 and the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council.

### VISITORS

**Mark Thoman**, 1109 61<sup>st</sup> Street, commented that he would like to see as much work done in-house as possible for TCD III and the Comprehensive Plan. He said there is a recurring concept of a Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee which makes residents part of the process, and he would like to see that happen in Downers Grove. That could set aside the \$73,000 budgeted for outside consultants at this time. The Committee could also be used as a buffer between Council, staff and citizens.

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Commissioner Neustadt said on Thursday night he and his wife, Leslie, had their first son, David Gregory Neustadt. He thanked the Good Samaritan Hospital staff, doctors, and hospital President, David Fox for all they did for his family. Everyone is doing well. He will bring a picture next week.

Commissioner Tully expressed appreciation to all Veterans on behalf of the Village. He also congratulated the Downers Grove Choral Society for launching their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season this weekend.

Commissioner Beckman said the Chamber of Commerce will hold a luncheon meeting tomorrow to discuss transportation and business. The Village Manager will participate in the panel discussion at 11:30 a.m. at the Double Tree Hotel.

There being no further discussion, the Workshop meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Linda J. Brown  
Deputy Village Clerk

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