

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
HUMAN SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING

November 3, 2010, 6:30 P.M.

Chairman Jacaway called the September 1, 2010 meeting of the Human Service Commission to order at 6:35 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

**PRESENT:** Chairman Jacaway, Ms. Carroll, Mr. Carter, Ms. Crowe, Mr. Grammich (arrived 6:40 pm) Mr. Meaney, Mr. Melton, and Mr. Rogers

**ABSENT:** None

**STAFF**

**PRESENT:** Stan Popovich, Village Planner

**VISITORS:** Commissioner Bob Barnett; Lucy Lloyd, Downers Grove Chronicle; Megan Schroeder, 6036 Ridge Court; Bill White, 4779 Seeley Avenue; Elaine Johnson, Downers Grove Patch

Mr. Popovich noted that Commissioner Barnett, the Council liaison to the Human Service Commission was in attendance and wished to address the Commission. Commissioner Barnett introduced himself and offered his assistance to the Commission as a liaison. Commissioner Barnett noted during the October 5 Council agenda's new business he presented an item with regard to the Human Service Commission. Commissioner Barnett provided the commission members with a handout that put into words his idea from the October 5 Council meeting. He noted with the elimination of Counseling and Social Services that the Village is not doing what it had done in the past although the needs do not go away. Council would like to engage the Commission to look at these issues. He believes there are ways to use the Villages infrastructure to do more than they are doing. To frame his thoughts, Commissioner Barnett noted that on previous water bills, residents could make a donation for fireworks display. He noted small events can raise significant amounts for different causes. Commissioner Barnett wondered if the Village could use their resources to foster these types of ideas. He noted there are needs out there that the Village is and is not knowledgeable about. Can the Village leverage the assets we have in place now to do better?

Chairman Jacaway welcomed the three new Commission members and felt it would be appropriate for each Commission member to introduce themselves to the group. Chairman Jacaway introduced himself and each commission member followed suit.

**AUGUST 4, 2010 MEETING MINUTES – MS. CARROLL MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PREPARED, SECONDED BY MR. ROGERS. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 8-0.**

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2010 MEETING MINUTES - MR. ROGERS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PREPARED, SECONDED BY MR. MELTON. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 8-0.**

Mr. Popovich noted the November agenda is generally the same agenda that was going to be discussed in October. Mr. Popovich reviewed the TCD3 focus of the Commission and the discussion surrounding non-geographic based groups. Mr. Popovich reviewed the TCD3 recommendation of geographic based organizations and stated geographic based organizations should be the focus of the HSC.

Mr. Meaney supports the focus and noted that the only previous visitor to the Commission meeting was a condominium owner who was supportive of non-geographic based organizations. He also noted his discussion with Commissioner Schnell who encouraged him to 'think outside the box' with this recommendation. He reviewed various interest groups that transcend specific geographic based organizations.

Chairman Jacaway asked the new members if they had any questions with regard to the topic at hand.

Mr. Popovich reviewed the Village's communication models that were presented during the September meeting. Mr. Popovich noted these models are mostly about getting information out but may lack significant feedback from residents. Mr. Meaney noted the Community Wide Notification System can be targeted to specific areas of the Village. Chairman Jacaway noted the contract was expiring soon and Mr. Popovich noted he would follow up to determine if the contract would be renewed.

Mr. Grammich asked about the social media policy. Mr. Popovich believed one of the issues was who should respond to feedback on social media networks and how quickly the Village should respond.

Mr. Carter noted the Village has many ways to communication with residents and inquired if the real challenge was residents communicating back to the Village. Mr. Popovich noted that was correct. Mr. Popovich noted based on TCD3 meetings and resident input, separate areas of the Village had concerns that were important to a specific area but that it might not be a concern throughout the Village. A neighborhood organization could present an issue to staff or Council that the neighborhood has reviewed and feels is a real concern.

Mr. Meaney noted the recommendation also included inter-governmental communication as well. Chairman Jacaway noted the Commission needed to answer whether it is necessary or not. Mr. Popovich noted the recommendation comes down to the Village working with residents to determine what is important to each neighborhood. Mr. Popovich noted a traffic study that is going to take place south of Maple Avenue and how this could be an example of a neighborhood group coming to the Village and asking for assistance with this.

Chairman Jacaway noted the information from other communities stated that sustainability is a difficult thing. Mr. Meaney noted Commissioner Beckman made the point that it is difficult to

sustain groups like this over time unless there is an issue that keeps people interested. Mr. Meaney noted this could be transitory in nature and may not unite a neighborhood over time. That is why he thought more of an overlay type of thing where there are causes, issues, and interests that people have across the board. He noted the differences between the Downtown Management and the Chamber of Commerce and how the Chamber is a type of overlay throughout the Village.

Mr. Meaney noted his conversation with Commissioner Beckman about HOAs where there are restrictive covenants bound by legal means which leads to the legal status of geographic neighborhood groups. Mr. Popovich noted in the four other communities (Dublin, OH; Overland Park, KS; Denver, CO; and Knoxville, TN), HOAs are part of the program. Mr. Popovich explained some of the differences between HOAs and neighborhood organizations.

Mr. Popovich noted the Commission may not be meeting in the next couple of months with regard to the TCD3 recommendation so that staff can do some additional research on other models. Mr. Popovich noted tonight's agenda was to go over the four models to see what people liked or did not like. Per a request, staff noted they could keep the Commission informed during the absence of meetings. Mr. Popovich reviewed the open meetings act requirements for Commission discussions.

Chairman Jacaway noted Commissioner Barnett's discussion earlier tonight does not preclude the TCD3 recommendation. Mr. Popovich noted they would not be discussing Commissioner Barnett's discussion tonight as staff needed time to look over his recommendations. Mr. Meaney saw it as opening a conversation to see what the Commission members thoughts are on Commissioner Barnett's topic. Mr. Popovich noted the Commission's opinions can be stated for the record, but that staff needs to review Commissioner Barnett's proposal to the Commission. Chairman Jacaway noted he had not yet read Commissioner Barnett's handout and that the Commission should focus on what is on the agenda. Mr. Carter believed they should stick to the agenda but said they had been given a charge by the Council liaison and if they could discuss this sooner rather than later. Mr. Meaney noted a lot of this is on-line and that this is not only Commissioner Barnett's vision but is being actively debated on-line. Mr. Popovich reiterated the only item on tonight's agenda is the TCD3 recommendation. Mr. Popovich noted staff needed to review Commissioner Barnett's vision. Ms. Carroll supports staff's position and stated the Commission can go to Council to discuss this, but that the Commission does not have the power to distribute funding or merge with the Community Grants Commission.

Chairman Jacaway wished to move forward with the agenda. Mr. Grammich felt that it was appropriate to proceed with the agenda and that maybe more direction was needed on Commissioner Barnett's topic. Mr. Meaney suggested attending the next Council meeting and requesting Council have the Commission discuss this topic in December or January.

Returning to the TCD3 discussion, Mr. Rogers liked the Knoxville model in which the city helped with start up and initial meeting, but eventually the groups have to form on their own and maintain themselves on their own. He also liked that these groups were formed geographically but there could be non-geographic groups within them. Mr. Popovich clarified that

condominiums, seniors, etc. would all be a part of the geographic group as long as they are within the boundary.

Mr. Meaney is interested in the residential community overlays in addition to geographically based organizations. He felt the Denver program was interesting with regard to notification of the neighborhood organization with regard to planning and zoning projects. Mr. Popovich reviewed the Village's notification procedures and explained how the Village could notify a neighborhood organization. Chairman Jacaway inquired about additional notification costs.

Mr. Meaney noted each of the handouts was the machinery and mechanics behind setting up the organizations. He felt what was lacking was the force behind the organization of these groups. Mr. Popovich explained Overland Park grew out of neighborhood improvements in older parts of town. He noted Knoxville was similar to Overland Park with the interest. The Denver program was really about a business coming into a neighborhood that was not necessarily desired. The Dublin program started mostly with HOAs.

Mr. Meaney noted historic districts might show some interest and formally come together. Ms. Carroll noted it could be as small as a neighborhood watch group. Chairman Jacaway noted the program would have to be sold to the public and the benefits attached to the program. He noted the Village at some point may need to incentivize the program through grant programs, that is, seed money. The concept must be sold to the community and provide a feedback system from the residents on how this could benefit the residents. Chairman Jacaway noted the Council would need to know if there would be funding available for a program like this

Mr. Carter requested the Commission get some feedback from Village residents to get the temperature of the community with regard to this concept. Mr. Meaney looked back to the objective to formalize a collection of neighborhood voices that are important to them. Mr. Rogers noted when people speak at Council meetings, most people come up and say 'I've got my neighbors here with me.' It may be about organizing a collective and sustained voice and that this voice could be heard before going to the Council meeting.

Mr. Popovich clarified how long the other communities have run these programs. He noted the program in Overland Park started with the city targeting a specific neighborhood which had some concerns about maintaining their neighborhood. Overland Park started holding meetings for other neighborhoods, but soon the groups formed on their own. Mr. Rogers noted some of these groups may be already formed and meeting in Downers Grove.

It was clarified that a staff member or members are dedicated to these neighborhood organizations in other communities. Mr. Meaney wondered in the case of an Orchard Brook what would be added by a neighborhood organization. Mr. Rogers noted it might not add anything, but could serve as a model for other parts of the Village. Maybe the Commission meets with some of these existing groups. Mr. Rogers did not feel a neighborhood organization would modify existing HOAs.

Chairman Jacaway noted the Commission would have to recommend whether the Village determines the groups or if the groups should form on their own. Mr. Rogers believes it should

be up to the neighborhood. The Commission could recommend a best way, but Council would have to decide on the recommendation.

Per a question, Mr. Popovich noted the activity level of these groups varies, some do not meet at all and some meet monthly. Each city has different requirements.

Chairman Jacaway asked if this would be something the members think could work in the Village. Ms. Crowe noted Denburn Woods meets once a year and two or three other times a year. Ms. Crowe noted her previous neighborhood really did not have any major concerns that would have brought them together.

Mr. Rogers stated it would be good to only meet once a year if there are no issues. Maybe it should be left up to the groups to how often they meet. Mr. Rogers thinks neighborhood organizations are a good idea. He thought we should solicit feedback from existing groups.

Ms. Carroll thinks it is something that should continue to be looked at. Mr. Carter was still trying to come to grips with the overall concept. On first glance, he did not think the Village should be in the business to spark or sustain community groups. If there is a need, the group will form. Once formed, the Village could become responsive. Discussing where the recommendation came from, Mr. Carter asked if there were examples where the failure to communicate led to resident losses. Mr. Popovich noted TCD3 found that the identified issues were not Village-wide in scope but more local in scale.

Mr. Grammich wanted to study which types of issues that would be presented or discussed with a neighborhood organization. Mr. Grammich noted there is no singular driving theme in the Village and that the Village is looking to aggregate opinion. Chairman Jacaway noted the original charge from Council. Mr. Grammich noted the bike-path issue, there are interest groups that would be able to figure out how to get to Council to push that idea.

Mr. Rogers noted the discussion is about how residents communicate to the Village, since the Village has so many ways to communicate to its residents. Chairman Jacaway noted staff is specific that the topics would mostly be physical issues. Mr. Popovich noted all the issues brought up in TCD3 that spawned the recommendation are within the appendix of the TCD3 report.

Mr. Meaney thinks it is an interesting concept but wonders how it can be operational. He wondered if the consultants would be available for the Commission to hear their thoughts. There seems to be quasi-legal status to these groups. There are groups that form without the benefit of government so what would be the point in formalizing these groups.

Mr. Melton felt it was important to give organizations options with regard to how they form. Mr. Melton noted if there are no real problems, then there might not be a reason to form the groups.

Mr. Meaney questioned whether the Commission could really come back and say no, we don't agree with the recommendation. He recommended thinking outside of the box. Mr. Rogers agreed with Mr. Meaney and asked if the consultants could come in and talk to the Commission

about the recommendation. Mr. Popovich reiterated that TCD3 was the public participation component of the Comprehensive Plan process.

The Commission questioned why the next scheduled meeting was in February. Mr. Popovich noted staff would be looking at other alternative communication models. Between meetings, Mr. Popovich noted the Commissioners could seek feedback from neighbors regarding this topic. Mr. Meaney noted historic districts seem to have some cohesiveness with a common interest. He mentioned neighborhood conservation districts. Mr. Grammich noted it might be interesting to ask existing organizations if they are aware of the available communication channels with the Village staff and Council. Mr. Popovich noted the historic district listings are available if residents wish to come forward and that there are currently three honorary historic districts.

Chairman Jacaway opened the meeting up to public comment. Ms. Megan Schroeder, 6036 Ridge Court, attended the meeting because of Mr. Barnett's discussion at the October 5 Village Council meeting and Council agreement to talk about different ideas about fundraising for some of the things that the Village cannot fund. She was under the assumption that the Commission would be brainstorming about this tonight and did not understand why the group was talking about neighborhood organizations. Ms. Schroeder was hoping they were going to discuss Commissioner Barnett's ideas because she has ideas with her marketing and fundraising background.

Chairman Jacaway noted the Commission did not receive information from Commissioner Barnett until the meeting tonight. Mr. Popovich stated the Commission would be taking up the issue Commissioner Barnett spoke of earlier tonight. A staff report will be coming out prior to the December meeting and the Commission would be starting to discuss this topic during the December meeting.

Mr. Meaney strongly recommended the Commission look at patch.com and the trib local website for information and comments from citizens regarding this topic. He was surprised more people did not know about this. Mr. Grammich noted his appointment was purposed on Commissioner Barnett's vision for the Commission and was surprised others were not aware of the vision.

There being no further public comment, Chairman Jacaway closed public comment.

**MR. MEANEY MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MR. CARTER SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

**THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:40 P.M.**

/s/ Stan Popovich  
Stan Popovich  
(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)