



Meeting Minutes

Village of Downers Grove - Council Meeting

Council Chambers

January 02, 2024

07:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Mayor Barnett called to order the Village Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. and let those in the room in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. He explained the protocol for the meeting and the guidelines to submit public comment.

2. Roll Call

Council Attendance (Present): Mayor Barnett, Commissioner Hosé, Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, Commissioner Glover, Commissioner Tully, Commissioner Davenport

Council Attendance (Not Present): Commissioner Gilmartin

Non-Voting: Village Manager Dave Fieldman, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca, and Village Clerk Rosa Berardi

3. Minutes of Council Meetings

MIN 2023-10156 - A. Minutes: Village Council Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2023

MOTION: To adopt the meeting minutes of the December 19, 2023, Village Council Meeting, as presented.

RESULT: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MOTIONED TO APPROVE: Commissioner Hosé

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

AYES: Commissioners Hosé, Sadowski-Fugitt, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Barnett

NAYES: None

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Mayor's Report

REP 2023-10165 - A. 2023 Annual Report

Mayor Barnett presented the Village's achievements of 2023 via a PowerPoint presentation. He credited the collaborative efforts of a team comprised of the residents and businesses of Downers Grove, his Village Council colleagues, Village staff and partner organizations for the successes over the past year.

Mayor Barnett began by stating that the Village made great progress in the construction of the Civic Center Project. He explained that construction on the project began in late 2022 and has continued throughout 2023. He noted that the project remains on schedule and under budget and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2024. He gave further

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details about Civic Center Project, including the sale of Lot 2 (located between the new Civic Center building and the existing Fleet Garages), which will help to fund the project.

The Mayor explained that environmental sustainability has been a top priority for the community for decades and continues to be a guiding principle in the efforts and activities of the Village. He made note that the new Civic Center will contain several environmentally sustainable elements focused on energy and water best practices. He provided a list of those features. He also went on to explain that Environmental Stewardship has been a part of the Village's strategic goals for many years and can be found throughout the community. Those efforts include the installation of bioswales, pollinator gardens, stormwater basins, native plantings and improved biodiversity. The Mayor explained to further its commitment to the environment, the Village joined the Greenest Region Compact in March of 2023 and hired a professional staff member, Jason Michnick. Jason will be specializing in environmental issues and policy and will be working with the Environmental Concerns Commission to continue work on the Village's Sustainability Plan.

Mayor Barnett went on to explain that keeping Downers Grove a safe community is one of the Village's strategic goals. He noted that walkability, ride-ability, drivability and connected neighborhoods are desirable attributes and the reason that the Village takes pedestrian bike and traffic safety seriously. He listed the projects that the Village worked on in 2023. Some of those projects included the design and authorization for the construction of the Main Street Safety Project, striped sharrows, several new stop signs, reduced speed limits, and pedestrian safety improvements to the downtown.

The Mayor then moved on to the beautification efforts made to the Village's downtown. Those efforts included the replacement of sidewalk corner treatments and pedestrian crosswalks, the installation of new landscape planting beds, the enhancement of existing landscape planting beds, repairs to curbs and sidewalks, and the installation of irrigation systems to keep the plant beds looking great throughout the season. He showed a short video highlighting some of the beautification efforts.

Mayor Barnett stated that the Village's Police Department is ranked as one of the top of Police Departments and remains one of the community's greatest assets. He further explained that in 2023 the Safe-T Act went into effect, and the Village continued to invest in the police department through technology to provide its officers with the tools needed to perform their duties with an enhancement to services and improvements to safety, transparency, and accountability. He said that the Village's Police Department continues to be accredited by CALEA— a designation that proves the department's commitment to excellence in leadership, resource management, and service delivery.

The Mayor shared that not only does the Village pride in its Police Department, but it also prides in its award winning Fire Department. The Fire Department was awarded the highest recognition, the Mission Lifeline Gold Plus status, by the American Heart Association. This recognizes the department's coordinated proactive system of care that turns first responders, hospitals and other health care providers, into a team using proven guidelines and best practices to treat patients suffering from heart attacks and strokes. This helps to help save lives and improves patient outcomes from symptom onset, all the way through cardiac rehabilitation. The Mayor said that the Downers Grove Fire Department holds a Class 1 Public Protection Rank for fire protection effectiveness and is only one of 27 fire departments in Illinois and one of 411 fire departments nationwide with that rating.

Mayor Barnett continued and shared that the Village launched its Social Services Referral Program in 2022. He explained how the program, which includes licensed Social Worker, Heather Lippe, works by connecting individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide those services. He explained that in 2023, there was improved awareness of the program through police and fire education programs and events. Other initiatives included publishing information on partner agency platforms, featuring information at booths at a variety of community events, printing brochures in Spanish. The program was also highlighted in newsletters, on social media platforms, and on the Village website. The Mayor said that because of the awareness efforts, the program was improved and referral and acceptance rates increased. He noted that the program operates with the assistance of the Human Service Commission and offered a special thank you to the members of that commission. He then showed a short video of a short video used across media platforms in 2023.

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Next, the Mayor explained that over the past several years the Village has developed a strong working relationship with DuPage County Pads, further explaining that Pads recently began operating a facility on Butterfield Road offering short term lodging to people in need of permanent housing. He explained the Village's role in leading coordinated meetings with PADS, District 99, District 58, the Park District, and the Library to identify needs and develop strategies to address needs. The Mayor said that on a similar note, the Village led and coordinated meetings with several community churches that participate in the Community Kitchen Program. He gave further details about that program.

Mayor Barnett went on to state that additional Village accomplishments in 2023 included the replacement of the ERP System, the enhancement of Cyber Security, and the launch of the new Village Website. He explained that the Village maintains high standards for cybersecurity to reduce the risk of business interruption and loss. He gave some highlights about the new website.

After this, the Mayor explained that in 2023 the Village adopted updated building and fire codes to make buildings more safe and enhance environmental sustainability. He stated that this put the Village in a position to maintain its top rating by ISO (the Internal Organization for Standards) and FEMA. The Mayor further explained how the Village's FEMA rating allows residents participating in federal flood insurance programs to do so at a lower cost.

Mayor Barnet then focused on the Village's construction of stormwater infrastructure projects in areas subject to frequent flooding. He gave a history of the projects completed since 2008, and provided an explanation of the current Stormwater Capital Projects. He also noted that in addition to those projects, there are additional annual, recurring, programs that the Village takes part in. The Mayor showed photos highlighting the improvements made on Sherwood and Chicago Avenues. He explained that in addition to the stormwater systems, the Village owns and operates multiple infrastructure systems and one of the largest is the Village's street system, including over 167 miles of streets. The Mayor said that the Village works diligently to maintain the Village streets. He explained what the Villages efforts were in 2023.

The Mayor then moved on to the topic of video gaming. He explained that the Village approved an ordinance allowing video gaming in a limited, highly regulated manner that will go into effect in January 2025. He said that because the Council wants to hear from residents of Downers Grove, prior to allowing video gaming, they have placed an advisory referendum question on video gaming to appear on the November 2024 ballot. The Mayor further stated that if this referendum fails to pass, the Council plans on reconsidering the Video Gaming Ordinance in November or December of 2024. Mayor Barnett stated that this process increases the public's awareness of the issue and allows the public to provide input into the decision making process. He requested that all stay connected to the Village's website, as a page will be created in late March with information on the referendum. This will include the referendum question, the ordinance, and frequently asked questions.

Mayor Barnett explained that thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Village's partnership with the Economic Development Corporation and the Downtown Management Corporation, the Village has a low tax base and a constant cycle of development in its commercial areas. He explained how the Village budgets funds to support the work of the EDC and the DMC. He listed some of the businesses that joined the Village in 2023 and explained that with a growing community, comes an increase in sales tax revenue, food and beverage tax revenue, an enhanced property tax base, more jobs, and an improved appearance and attractiveness to the community.

The Mayor then went on to explain that the Ogden Avenue TIF (Tax Increment Financing District) was created in 2001 and was set to expire at the end of 2024. He said the Village worked closely with the EDC and the General Assembly Elected Officials to extend the expiration of the District. The extension allows the Village to invest TIF revenues, received prior to the original expiration date, in redevelopment projects that will result in new and expanded automobile dealerships and new restaurants. He said that this will generate sales tax and food and beverage tax, create and retain jobs, and enhance property value. Mayor Barnett noted that TIF revenues generated during the extension period will be declared surplus, and will be distributed to other taxing bodies. He explained how projects that took place over the past two decades have transformed the corridor. He showed a short video showcasing the change.

Next, the Mayor spoke about how the Village partnered with the EDC and DMC in the summer of 2023 and promoted the Andy Warhol exhibit at the Macintosh Art Center (the Mac). He explained that promotional signage and banners were used to encourage people to visit the Warhol event and to shop in downtown Downers Grove. He explained how the arts help to break down barriers among different parts of the community and brings everyone together.

Mayor Barnett said that the Village, as an employer, advanced its diversity, equity and inclusion practices in 2023. He noted that a community that values all its members as a community, is best ready to engage in challenges. He also said that a government that reflects its residents is best ready to serve them. He explained that efforts have been made to attract and retain a diverse staff, create opportunities for all, and celebrate differences - knowing that diversity makes everyone stronger. The Mayor said he was proud to report that the Village staff team has become more diverse, and all staff members received training on diversity, welcoming, and inclusion. He said the Village participated in the Metropolitan Mayor's Caucus Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group and Task Force. He assured all that the Village is committed to ensuring a welcoming workplace for all.

The Mayor then explained that one of the Village's strategic goals has been as a steward of financial sustainability. He further stated that financial sustainability is achieved by aligning expenses with revenues, on a long term basis. He then explained how the Village has controlled expenses and implemented revenue sources that withstand short term uncertainty, and provide long term stability, while providing value to the residents and taxpayers of the Village. He explained that in 2023 the Village Budget was maintained wisely, giving details about how the Village addressed both short term and long term financial needs, while minimizing the impact on property taxpayers. He stated that the 2024 Budget was approved in December and reflects the strategies and recommendations in the Long Range Plan and contains a sustainable General Fund. He said that the Village's Property Tax Levy will not increase in 2024, so property taxes will stay the same. The Mayor noted that the Village has been recognized for 30 years for its accuracy, transparency, and consistency by the Government Finance Officers Association. He explained that the Village has once again received the Distinguished Budget Award and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report from the GFOA.

The Mayor concluded his report by stating that the Village is making every effort to communicate with the residents, businesses, and guests that it serves, and to provide the information that is needed to help make decisions and understand the community better. As a result of trying to make communication better, the latest information on Village issues and operations can be found by following the Village of Downers Grove on social media or receiving the weekly E-Newsletter with links to the Village website, meeting agendas, construction updates and local events. Registration is easy with a visit to the E-News subscription page on the Village website. Additionally, he said that everyone is able to register for community wide notifications and to receive important messages via phone, email and text. Mayor Barnett encouraged all to visit the Village website at downers.us and to choose the communication methods of that work best.

6. Consent Agenda

COR 2023-10157 — A. Claims Ordinance: N0. 6535, Payroll - December 15, 2023

COR 2023-10158 — B. Bills Payable: No. 6774 – January 02, 2024

MOTION: To adopt the consent agenda, as presented.

RESULT: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MOTIONED TO APPROVE: Commissioner Hosé

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

AYES: Commissioners Hosé, Sadowski-Fugitt, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Barnett

NAYES: None

7. Active Agenda

ORD 2023-10138 — A. Ordinance: Extending the Term of the Ogden Avenue TIF District and the Ogden Avenue

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Corridor Redevelopment Project Area for the Village of Downers Grove, Illinois

Summary: This ordinance extends the term of the Ogden Avenue TIF District and the Ogden Avenue Corridor Redevelopment Project Area for the Village of Downers Grove, Illinois to December 31, 2027.

MOTION: To adopt AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING THE TERM OF THE OGDEN AVENUE TIF DISTRICT AND THE OGDEN AVENUE CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA FOR THE VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS ORDINANCE 6036

RESULT: Motion carried unanimously by roll call.

MOTIONED TO APPROVE: Commissioner José

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

AYES: Commissioners José, Sadowski-Fugitt, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Barnett

NAYES: None

Village Council Questions/Comments

Commissioner Tully noted that the Ogden Avenue TIF District has been an unmitigated success and that he wanted to continue that trend.

8. First Reading

There were no First Reading agenda items.

9. Manager's Report

Village Manager Fieldman thanked the Village staff team for the work they contributed to the accomplishments of 2023. He also thanked the Village Council for providing the policy direction and policy decisions required to get the work done.

10. Council Member Reports

The Commissioners wished their colleagues, the staff and the public a Happy New Year. Mayor Barnett also thanked his colleagues and staff, stating that it has been a pleasure to work with them. He said that he looks forward to 2024.

11. Adjournment

Mayor Barnett asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: To adjourn the January 02, 2024 Village Council Meeting.

RESULT: Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

MOTIONED TO APPROVE: Commissioner José

SECONDED BY: Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

AYES: Commissioners José, Sadowski-Fugitt, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Barnett

NAYES: None

Mayor Barnett declared the motion carried by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosa Berardi
Village Clerk