

MINUTES
WINNETKA VILLAGE COUNCIL RESCHEDULED STUDY SESSION

October 13, 2016

(Approved: November 3, 2016)

A record of a legally convened meeting of the Council of the Village of Winnetka, which was held in the Village Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, October 13, 2016, at 7:00 p.m.

- 1) Call to Order. President Greable called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Present: Trustees Andrew Cripe, William Krucks, Penny Lanphier, Scott Myers, Christopher Rintz and Kristin Ziv. Absent: None. Also in attendance: Village Manager Robert Bahan, Assistant Village Manager Megan Pierce, Village Attorney Peter Friedman, Public Works Director Steve Saunders, and approximately 30 persons in the audience.
- 2) Stormwater Early Action Study for Western and Southwestern Winnetka. Mr. Saunders explained that full implementation of Strand Associates' Final Concept Vision will require community and stakeholder negotiations to ensure mutual benefits. He added that much of the Village's ability to bring large-scale flood relief to the Southwestern Winnetka study area hinges on a large stormwater detention project on Cook County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD) property. He said a framework for an agreement between the CCFPD and Winnetka is anticipated within the next few months, paving the way for a public process.

Mr. Saunders reviewed a proposed alternate phasing chart offering a broad overview of an approximate five-year implementation timeline, contingent upon approval from the CCFPD and other Village partners.

Mike Waldron, Strand Associates' Project Manager, presented the results from the Early Action Study, beginning with a review of the watershed conditions. He explained that the central problem for the area lies in finding a place to store excess stormwater until it can be safely and legally released into the Skokie River. He summarized the stormwater management opportunities identified in the Final Concept Vision, which was presented to the Council in June. At that time, the Council requested the Vision be further refined in an effort to identify whether any early action projects could provide interim relief while negotiations with the CCFPD take place.

Mr. Waldron reviewed potential early action projects that could provide limited relief to the "tree streets" north of Willow Road. The proposals include underground storage at Duke Childs Field, increased stormwater conveyance along Hibbard Road and Ash Street, and green infrastructure improvements. He explained that not much relief would be provided by early projects in the area south of Willow Road until a suitable detention project is constructed.

Mr. Waldron and the Council discussed the Skokie Ditch, a piece of Winnetka's storm sewer system that runs through private back yards in the southwest Winnetka area, and which is prone to overflowing during heavy rains. Mr. Waldron suggested starting discussions with property owners who would be affected by a potential Skokie Ditch project about the future of this conveyance.

Mr. Saunders reiterated that without the addition of significant stormwater storage, not much can be done to mitigate flooding in the watershed south of Willow Road. He stressed that

there is no recommendation for any type of early improvement at Crow Island Park, since the ultimate shape of any such project is dependent on the potential agreement with the CCFPD. He added that any potential project at Crow Island would only become reality after a great deal of community discussion.

Mr. Waldron next reviewed the “mitigation zones,” areas that would still be at risk of flooding even with full implementation of the Final Concept Vision. A pilot area has been identified for further evaluation, including gathering field data, verifying flood risk and evaluating individual or group flood remedies.

Mr. Saunders explained that the proposals in the Final Concept Vision hinge upon an agreement with the CCFPD for a mutually beneficial project on Forest Preserve land. He suggested discussions with New Trier Township High School (NTTHS) about storage under Duke Childs field be accelerated as negotiations with the CCFPD continue. He reviewed possible alternative phasing scenarios to keep the Concept Vision moving forward and to pave the way for timely construction of stormwater projects.

The Council discussed Mr. Waldron’s presentation at length. It was pointed out that early action should not involve making plans and spending money on projects that may never come to fruition; however, much necessary community engagement can be accomplished until it is possible to begin engineering and construction activities. There was general consensus to hold off on starting any early projects until the CCFPD negotiations are finished. In the meantime, the Village can start discussions with NTTHS about Duke Childs field detention prospects and also begin a dialog with residents affected by the Skokie Ditch.

President Greable called for public comment.

Bernard Hammer, Tower Road. Mr. Hammer had a question about how rainfall on grassy areas affects calculations of stormwater utility fees.

Jim Gordon, White Oak Lane. Mr. Gordon requested the Village investigate who owns the Skokie Ditch and who has easements along it, and he proposed filling it in. He also urged the Council to take a second look at the Tunnel Project.

Lisa Kaestle, Apple Tree Lane. Ms. Kaestle asked about the permit process for a potential CCFPD detention project. Mr. Saunders explained that most of the permits required would have a very manageable process, and he added that the permitting times have been baked into the project timeline and construction cost estimates.

Chris Crone, 1205 Sunset. Mr. Crone suggested tapping the expertise of Winnetka’s neighboring Village Engineers, and possibly forming a regional stormwater task force, since every municipality in the region is struggling with flooding issues.

Hugh Abrams, 1152 Ash. Mr. Abrams said the Village needs to provide flood relief right away as the conversation has been going on for years, and meanwhile his neighborhood and home still experience flooding.

Leslie Farmer, 388 Berkeley. Ms. Farmer urged the Council to implement the Early Action projects for north of Willow Road.

Trustee Cripe cautioned that the Village might need to construct a much larger detention project at Duke Childs Field if the CCFPD project does not come to fruition, so early implementation of a detention project there is risky.

Tim Foley, 165 DeWindt. Mr. Foley said the problem is not with pumps but with bottlenecks in the system because there is no open space to detain excess stormwater. He cautioned against performing a cost/benefit analysis of the Final Concept Vision, urged the Council to spend money on flood risk reduction in this area, and expressed support for detention at Crow Island.

Jeff Franzen, Euclid Avenue and Save Crow Island Woods. Mr. Franzen said the objective of his group is to have Crow Island Woods removed from the Final Concept Vision, as the park is a popular site and is in the middle of an improvement project.

The Council debated how best to move forward with discussions about Duke Childs field, and Mr. Saunders noted the high school is very concerned about losing access to the field during baseball season. After more discussion, the Council agreed that the Possible Alternate Phasing scenario was the most effective way to proceed, and that planning for a potential Duke Childs field detention project can begin while negotiations with the CCFPD are heading towards a preliminary agreement.

Mr. Saunders was requested to begin immediate discussions with NTTHS about Duke Childs field, and to bring mitigation zone and green infrastructure proposals to the 2017 budget meetings. The Council also directed Attorney Friedman to determine who owns the Skokie Ditch and whether there are associated easements.

- 3) Public Comment. None.
- 4) Closed Session. None.
- 5) Adjournment. Trustee Cripe, seconded by Trustee Myers, moved to adjourn the meeting. By voice vote, the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Deputy Clerk