

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE VILLAGE BOARD**

**STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF HENRY)
VILLAGE OF ORION)**

The regular meeting of the President and Board of Trustees was held on March 7, 2022, at Village Hall, 1202 4th Street, in the Village of Orion, County of Henry, State of Illinois. President Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendance at the meeting was as follows:

Present: Jim Cooper, Mel Drucker, Jim Hickerson, Bob Mitton, Neal Nelson, and Steve Newman

Absent: Mike Dunlap.

Street Superintendent Neil Dahl, Sewer Superintendent Chris Lundburg, and City Attorney John Ames were also present.

**I. APPLICATION FOR VARIANCE BY EXEMPTION FROM MUNICIPAL CODE
CH. XXVII, ART. III**

Mr. Nelson moved to grant Dan Lees a certificate of exemption authorizing the transfer of an 800-square-foot parcel of 1109 1st Street to 1102 1st Street, an adjoining lot owned by Nathan Hall. City Attorney John Ames clarified that this transaction is not a “subdivision”—and is therefore exempt from review by the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals—because it involves the sale, transfer, or exchange of a parcel between adjoining property owners and said parcel is less than 2,000 square feet. Mun. Code. Ch. XXVII, § 2.43. Mr. Hickerson seconded the original motion, and the board voted without further discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Hickerson, Mitton, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: None

Absent: Mike Dunlap.

The motion passed. These minutes shall serve as the “certificate of exemption.”

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Minutes of the regular meeting on March 7, 2022, continued:

II. DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

A. Krystin White, executive director of Main Street Orion, to request FY 2023 membership contribution

Before Krystin White, the new executive director of Main Street Orion, asked the board for a membership contribution, she described the ways she plans to add value to the organization. Primarily, she would like MSO to work more closely with and promote member businesses. MSO will still hold all the popular “fun” events—Daddy Daughter Dance, Saturday with Santa, Little Miss Shortcake pageant, etc.—while also filling the space left by the Chamber of Commerce. Ideas to facilitate and encourage community engagement with member businesses include hosting an interactive online calendar and local job board that will push traffic to member websites. Ms. White would also like to integrate members businesses into fun, monthly games like the “MSO Madness” tournament, member business bingo, and “O’Mazing Race” event.

Ms. White requested a 2023 membership contribution from the village in the amount of \$6,000 with the option to ask for more as needed. The village’s membership contribution is primarily used to pay for event insurance, advertising, and office supplies. The board thanked Ms. White for her presentation and expressed admiration for the new energy and spirit of creativity she is bringing to MSO. In the past, the board has been critical of the organization and skeptical of the way in which its annual membership contribution was spent. Mr. Drucker encouraged Ms. White to work with realtors to help sell commercial properties, especially those on Main Street. Ms. White agreed and hopes to make the community more aware of economic incentive programs offered by MSO, especially the façade grant and cooperative interest buydown programs.

III. COMMITTEES

A. Streets

Trustee Nelson reported that Hutchison Engineering started the engineering for the 5th Street reconstruction project. The railroad crossings are especially rough right now as a result of the ordinary freeze/thaw cycle. Mr. Dahl is working on getting equipment ready for the warm weather months. There may be an issue with the roller.

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Minutes of the regular meeting on March 7, 2022, continued:

1. Discuss West Concrete drainage issue (109 10th Avenue)

As a preliminary matter, Jason West explained he was not asking the board to take action on his drainage issue that night; he just wanted to talk. As discussed at the meeting on February 21, 2022, Mr. West purchased 109 10th Avenue last year. He plans to operate West Concrete and erect at least one large building on the property. The land is low-lying and a creek runs onto and under it. 10th Avenue, a 70-foot-wide right-of-way, runs along and adjacent to the south side of the property. A 42-inch-diameter drainage tube runs under 10th Avenue and 120-feet onto Mr. West's property. This tube is connected to a 60-inch tube under the property on the other side of 10th Avenue. A large part of Orion and hundreds of acres of farmland on the west side of Route 150 drain into these tubes and the creek.

Mr. West's property regularly floods during large rain events. Also, the abrupt change in the size of the drainage tube causes the water to "gunbarrel" through his property and out into the natural waterway along the north edge. The creek bank is quickly eroding. In order to prevent flooding and reclaim some land, Mr. West would like to replace, extend and then cover the existing drainage tube through to the north edge of the property. He is asking the village to help pay for these improvements with TIF money. Mr. West intends to invest a lot of money into 109 10th Avenue, and does not want his improvements to be damaged by regular flooding. The village will need to replace the tube under the right-of-way eventually. It is unclear when the tube was installed, but they typically need to be replaced every 50 years. Further, it did not make sense to install such a small tube in the first place.

Mr. Cooper believes that the village may be responsible for fixing this drainage issue, because it permitted the installation of undersized tubes on private property all along the railroad right-of-way. Mr. Cooper wonders whether the village would be liable for damage caused by flooding on 109 10th Avenue. Mr. Drucker objected to Mr. Cooper's use of the word "liable." The board should not assume that the village was involved in any way in the installation of drainage tubes on private property in the past. Mr. Drucker also noted that Mr. West is trying to reclaim more useable land on his property. The village is not responsible for improving the value of private property. Mr. West stated that he was not aware that the property regularly flooded when he purchased it, and he paid "full price." Mr. Mitton stated the board needs to be very careful about setting a precedent

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in cases like this. Mr. West replied that any precedence would be limited to drainage projects on commercial property within the TIF district. Mr. Nelson commented that the village and Mr. West should coordinate the size of any new tubes installed now or in the future.

B. Sewer

Trustee Hickerson had nothing to report.

C. Water

Trustee Drucker reported that approximately 20,000 extra gallons of water is still being pumped per day. Water Superintendent Arnie Sandberg will have the IRWA perform a sounding if the source of the leak is not found soon.

D. Recreation

Trustee Dunlap was absent. Mr. Cooper reported that he is meeting with Mr. Dunlap, Mr. Sandberg, and representatives from the high school next week to finalize the maintenance agreement for the baseball diamond in Love Park.

E. Finance

Trustee Newman set the next regular joint meeting of the finance and human resources committees for March 16, 2022, and the special budget review meeting for March 23, 2022. Both meetings start at 4:00 p.m. at village hall.

Mr. Newman reported that he reviewed the updated list of infrastructure grants available. The proposed sidewalk extension along 15th Avenue may be a good candidate for the Safe Streets and Roads For All program.

Mr. Dahl noted that his new dump truck will probably not be built and delivered by the end of this fiscal year, and asked whether the \$90,000 set aside in the budget for this purchase could be used to upgrade other equipment.

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F. Police

Trustee Newman reported that a couple more cars were stolen in Silvis and Coal Valley last week, and encouraged residents to stay vigilant.

G. Buildings & Grounds

Trustee Mitton reported that the village is still waiting for a decision on its Rebuild Illinois Main Street and Downtown Capital Grant application.

Mr. Mitton reported that the bandshell's floor is starting to rot and will need to be replaced. The clerk reached out to the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency to inquire whether composite flooring can be used on a listed structure. According to Chief Architect Anthony Rubello, said that as long as no state or federal grant money is used, the village may make any desired alterations to the bandshell. Mr. Sandberg is currently researching the cost of installing a composite floor.

The Christmas tree in the bandshell will be taken down on Sunday. Members of the high school football team have volunteered to help.

H. Human Resources

Trustee Dunlap confirmed that the next joint meeting of the finance and human resources committees will be on March 16, 2022. The clerk provided Anne Gustus, director of the high school's co-op program, with a description of the new deputy clerk position for distribution to prospective participants. Interested students can file their applications at village hall. Mr. Drucker also emailed Ms. Gustus with ideas for a student volunteer project, but has not heard back.

IV. PRESIDENT'S AGENDA

A. Issue proclamation declaring April 7, 2022, as Junior Achievement Day in the Village of Orion

Mr. Cooper read the following proclamation into the record:

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WHEREAS, the Village of Orion will observe Junior Achievement Day on April 7, 2022, as an opportunity to recognize and celebrate Junior Achievement of the Heartland for empowering our young people to own their economic success.

WHEREAS, Junior Achievement of the Heartland's educational and contribution equips our young people to become the next generation of productive employees and self-sufficient citizens to ensure the economic prosperity of Orion.

WHEREAS, it is fitting for parents, educators, businesses and other members of the community to join in Junior Achievement's effort to ensure the future success and economic health of our young people and the communities in which they live.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, James Cooper, Mayor of Orion, do hereby proclaim official recognition of April 7, 2022, as Junior Achievement Day in the Village of Orion.

B. Set spring schedule for landscape waste site

Mr. Cooper announced that the landscape waste site will be open to the public this spring on Saturdays, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., on April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, and May 7, 14, 21, 28. It will also be open every other Monday, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., on April 18, and May 2, 16.

C. Discuss possible volunteer project for Orion High School co-op program

This discussion was continued until Mr. Drucker hears back from Ms. Gustus.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, Mr. Mitton moved to adjourn. Mr. Drucker seconded the motion, and the board voted without discussion as follows:

Ayes: Drucker, Hickerson, Mitton, Nelson, and Newman

Noes: None

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Absent: Dunlap.

The meeting was duly adjourned.

Erin Lange
Village Clerk