

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
VILLAGE OF STEGER, WILL & COOK
COUNTIES, ILLINOIS

The Board of Trustees convened in regular session at 7:00 P.M. on this 20th day of June, 2023 in the Municipal Building of the Village of Steger, Illinois. Mayor Peterson led all in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

The roll was called. The following Trustees were present; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Mayor Peterson was present. Trustee Perchinski was absent.

Also present: Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen, Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper, Fire Chief Michael Long, EMA Chief Tom Johnston and Community Center Director Diana Rossi. Police Chief Greg Smith was absent.

AWARDS, HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION

MINUTES

Trustee Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 5th meeting as all members have copies. Trustee Joyce seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Ray Oswald of 3522 Phillips came before the board with three issues: The first issue is that we are not patrolling Veteran's Park very often. There are broken benches, I have called and got no response. My second issue regards issues with getting a building permit for my roof. M&M roofing applied for the permit two weeks ago, and there has been no reply. M&M has been calling daily, I have been to Village Hall and still no reply. This in addition to my attempts to contact Dave Toepper regarding a situation in the easement (alley) behind my house. I received no response from him either. The issue in the alley is tree trimmings that a neighbor left against a power pole. Dave Toepper stated that he had not seen the application yet, but will get it approved right away. Additionally, he said public works will look at the situation and see what can be done.

Angie Trevino and Rosanna Trevino of 3144 Wallace Ave. approached the board with complaints associated with a business at 3201 Union Ave. The business has been hosting parties of some sort every Saturday night starting about 9 pm. We have called the police, 1:30 in the morning and there are people running up and down the street screaming and yelling. I fear for my parents' safety with all this drinking and partying going on outside their home. The police have come, the party goers don't listen to the police. Village Administrator stated that she has discussed this with the Police Chief and

he is providing a copy of the Police report. The event planning business at that address does not have a license for liquor or parties. The business license will be revoked. Mrs. Trevino joined in regarding issues with another neighbor threatening her. The neighbor is a tenant in a house owned by Mayor Peterson. Mayor Peterson will look into the situation.

Edgar Rodriguez of 3130 Wallace Ave came before the board and stated that he lives near the Trevino's and every Sunday morning we always have to clean up Solo cups, garbage bags, wrappers. It is very inconvenient when there are that many cars, drivers ignoring the stop sign and being disrespectful. This does need to be addressed. The reason I am here today is because there have been a couple of incidents at Veteran's Park. A couple of my baseball practices have been interrupted by some Rec Board members and coaches. The first time, I was interrupted in the middle of practice by a woman who asked why we were practicing there. My response was, the field is empty. I realize we are supposed to practice at Fireman's Park, but when all the fields there are in use, we needed to find an empty field. I believe we should be able to use a public park field if it is not in use. I should not be harassed or interrupted when I am working with the young people of this community. I have been volunteering for over 16 years, I don't think that I should have a problem playing on a public field. Village Administrator Seehausen stated that she has spoken with Mr. Rodriguez at length about his issues. I reached out to Heather Kunkes to get a better idea of the fields at Fireman's and how the scheduling was. She told me that she had already spoken to Edgar and told him that he needed to practice only at Fireman's. That is why I did not call you back because she said she had already addressed it. Mr. Rodriguez stated that is still not good enough for me because if there is no room for my team to practice at Fireman's, I have to find a place. I understand what Ms. Kunkes is asking me to do, but I still can't get past the fact of being asked to leave off a public field. Trustee Stewart: Were there any other practices going on or a game at the southwest corner of that field? Edgar: Well, when we were practicing on that field there was nothing going on at either diamond or the football field. I have made it clear to Dave Mendez, if you have scheduled practice and you show up, we will leave. At issue here is being asked to leave a field that is not being used. Mayor Peterson stated that he was aware of the first situation that you encountered because we were doing construction, there was some potential issues that could harm a kid, so we were trying keep everyone off the field at that time. We had our landscaping company come in and we spent a fair amount of money to fix the problem to make sure that the field was safe. I was not aware of the other situations that you are talking about. I have talked to Dave Mendez and he and I also had a good conversation where he is like, if we're not practicing and the field is available, he wants to see the kids practicing too. As far as police being called to address the issue, Dave Mendez entered the conversation. He stated that we have been addressing all of these situations. The police were called only because we talked to multiple coaches from Little League. They were told, like I told Edgar, that when there are games going on, they cannot have any other practice going on, on the football field or the other baseball field. There is no home run line, therefore that is all playing territory. In conversation with Heather Kunkes, the

understanding is that everybody who is part of Little League is supposed to be using the fields over at Fireman's Park. Now, when it comes to using the field, I am not in a place to say who can and cannot use a field, all I can say is that since we have not come to any agreement at a board meeting with the two organizations of who is going to use the fields at what time, It takes precedence of whoever has games that are already scheduled on those fields. I understand that you have practices going on, but so do all the other teams we have involved on all those fields. It has been my understanding that with two baseball programs in town, Little League has use of Fireman's Park and the Elite teams have use of Veteran's Park. Edgar: I have been coaching for over 15 years. I have never had issues like this issue at Veteran's Park. I did have an issue a couple years ago in regards to the other softball field, but the understanding was that field is being maintained so we acknowledge that you give credit to the people maintaining it. We do have two parks, I understand we are supposed to be at Fireman's Park, but when there is no more room there, being asked to leave a public field is my issue. Mayor Peterson pointed out that Little League has an agreement with the Village of Steger to use the fields at Fireman's Park that are designed for Little League play. The fields at Veteran's are not geared to Little League. Mayor Peterson is going to talk with Village Administrator Seehausen and Diane Rossi about coming up with a way to post information for the public so that they know when fields are taken and when they are available. Trustee Joyce questioned the two fields closest to the Community Center. Dave Mendez stated that those fields are designed and maintained as softball fields. Mayor Peterson: We have conflicts because we have a lot of kids that want to play baseball, softball, football, soccer; we have a lot of needs for the space that we have. It's to the public, but we have public programs that are utilizing those spaces. Just like Little League is using those spaces we also have other programs that are utilizing those spaces. They are all for the kids. So, we have to come up with a way that allows people to utilize it and go within the programs. So, we never envisioned Little League coming to Veteran's Park because we have an agreement with them. We have designed programs to utilize that space. I don't know why you were asked to leave if they were not being used and I will look into that. Since you asked, I am going to try and come up with an answer to how you can use that space, maybe it is a permit, but I am also thinking that if we can just publicize the information to allow the public to know when the fields are utilized and when they are not. Edgar: and I brought that up. There is no scheduling or signage. Mayor Peterson: There isn't any signage because the intent is if we are not utilizing it, that other people can. This is the first I am hearing of it, as to why you were asked to leave if no one was utilizing that space. I get the point with Jordan yesterday; we would have booked on line that we were utilizing the space. With your situation, I don't know, but I will look into it and I will also look into getting information out so that you can easily access that information so that you can schedule your team to go there when we are not utilizing it. Edgar: What if I wanted to just go there with some kids together to practice on the field? Mayor Peterson: Agreed. So, that information should be out there so that we can utilize spaces the best to the public. Dave Mendez: To answer that as a public field, though, I did run into the same situation with Crete. There is a field at the corner of Haweswood and Steger Road, that field never has a single kid on it. We

were told by the Village over there before we brought the recreational softball team to Steger, that was where we were training at. They told us that with that being a public park you cannot utilize it for teams. I don't know how Crete is different from Steger, but you cannot utilize teams on their property without the proper insurance and making sure the board knows that we are there. If you were to have a party there or a family reunion and having a game with friends, it has to be approved so they know that you are there. Truthfully, they can tell you to leave the field because of safety issues in case the Village is not covered. Mayor Peterson: Liability is definitely an issue which is why when people want to rent out the park, we actually make sure we are covered. There is a process for doing that. A lot of other towns do limit the use of parks. We are trying let it be utilized as we have discussed, if we can. I will look into this situation. Trustee Joyce asked what the dimensions of the field is for this age group. We should remove the backstop from a field that is not meant for baseball and move it to another space. Trustee Stewart: space was lost in construction at Eastview and Saukview where baseball fields were lost. They used to practice even without backstops. There are so many kids in the park, we need to look at the options of what is available, put together a schedule. You can't please everybody, but if there is something available, we want to see people in the parks. Edgar: I appreciate you time. Thank you. I look forward to something in the future done. We are doing our best to stay off the fields they maintain, it's not gated, it's a public field and we have kids we want to keep off the streets.

Kristal Reddick of 32 W 30th St came before the board to discuss trash and school related parking issues along her street. I have come before you before and I have gone to South Chicago Heights regarding garbage that blows into my yard and my neighbors from the alley behind the plaza across the street, which is in South Chicago Heights. It looks terrible every day. South Chicago Heights pays for an extra garbage bin, they fine the plaza every year. I get garbage all the way from McDonalds and Jewel. Most of trash is coming from customers not properly disposing of their food containers. I don't know if there is something that can be done between the two villages since it affects all the Steger residents along my street. Mayor Peterson: We will have to put our heads together and see if there is some kind of solution that we can come up with. Village Administrator Seehausen asked if there were garbage cans in the shopping center, this might help? Ms. Reddick: Yes, in the actual shopping center where you put your cart away. I believe that would solve a lot. The problem is, when they had them, they were often overflowing. Along with this issue, there is an area that was repaved adjacent to the school so that parents can go and park there to pick their kids up. However, between the time of 1:30 and 2:30 on school days, I have to fight with parents to get in or out of my driveway because they are parked in front of my house and blocking my driveway. The entire street is a no parking zone, but everyone parks there to wait for their kids. I have called the Police multiple times because I have gotten in arguments with people because they are throwing garbage on my lawn, they are sitting in front of my house. Mayor Peterson asked Village Administrator to discuss this with the Police Chief. If it is a no parking zone, this should be addressed. We will discuss this with the Police and see

what solution we can find. Mayor Peterson: please give Village Administrator Seehausen your contact information so that we can follow up with you.

REPORTS

Village Administrator Mary Jo Seehausen No report.

Director of Public Infrastructure Dave Toepper No report.

Fire Chief Michael Long No report.

Police Chief Greg Smith No report.

Community Center Director Diana Rossi No report.

EMA Chief Tom Johnston No report.

Village Attorney No report.

Treasurer No report.

MAYORS REPORT No report.

VILLAGE CLERK No report.

TRUSTEES REPORTS

Trustee Thurmond Veterans Park discussion: After the previous meeting, Trustee Perchinski expressed interest in adding a disc golf field and pickle ball court to Veterans Park. I shared additional ideas with the village administrator that could potentially renovate critter crew park and make additions to Veterans Park as discussed. I gave the village administrator information on OSLAD grant programs (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development) which we may be qualified for such projects as pickle ball courts, disc golf courses, playgrounds, walking paths, soccer fields, bandshells, the list is endless. This Grant is time sensitive and should be acted upon soon. I'd like to thank State Rep Anthony Deluca for recommending this program and his time spent to discuss.

SPD town hall meeting: I attended the Steger Police Department Town Hall at the community center presented by the chief. It was great to see so many residents and the entire board show and participate in the discussion. Topics discussed were Trends in crime, crime prevention, police overview, technology and working together. This event was very informative. Thank you to all who put this together.

New Star Vote: I Attended a special meeting on June 13, 2023, for Crete Township which covers the Will County side of Steger. The meeting was held to give the voters the opportunity to Vote on 2 items on the agenda. (1) to purchase the New Star property located at 25930 South Cottage Grove Ave. Crete and authorize finance for the same. (2) authorization to sell current Township Hall located at 1367 Wood St. in Crete. BOTH resolutions were defeated by a 2 to 1 margin.

Although there was overwhelming support for doing more for the Township the uncertainty of finance was the reason for the project's defeat.

School District 194: Just a reminder the school year has ended and is summer break. Please watch out for children and be careful driving.

Additionally, it was brought to my attention that cars are parking on the walking path near the Community Center. There is one sign in the middle of the fenced in area, do we have additional No Parking signs that we can erect please? I have already talked to Dave Mendez and he is going to put out an email to all programs and voice the concerns and the parking restrictions for them.

If we are submitting reports, why are we getting no reports and still going to people that submitted no reports? What is the reason for submitting my report if everybody else is getting a chance to say something without submitting a report? Mayor Peterson: no one did. Administrator Seehausen: I think the mayor just went through them like he normally did. Trustee Thurmond: It has been every meeting since. Village Clerk Zagone: You are talking about department heads? Trustee Thurmond: that's not the way it was conveyed even during Trustee reports. Mayor Peterson: there shouldn't be. Trustee Thurmond: there is no reason to ask them if they have a report if they don't submit a report. Village Administrator Seehausen: I need to get with Sherri so she understands that the only ones that are on here should be the ones that were submitted. Mayor Peterson: but, because it made the agenda, I have to call it out. Trustee Thurmond: so, if mine did not make the agenda, I should still be asked? Mayor Peterson: No. Trustee Thurmond: You are asking for Trustee and Liaison Reports. Administrator Seehausen: that is why there are only two on there. (the two that were submitted) Mayor Peterson: I am not calling anyone else. Trustee Thurmond: but in the past you have asked other trustees who have not submitted reports. Mayor Peterson: no, just you because you submitted reports that did not make the agenda, but I knew you submitted the report, so I still called on you. Trustee Thurmond: that completes my report, thank you.

Trustee Trotier Good evening everyone, First and foremost, THANK YOU Public Works for their time and efforts to make sure we had our country's flag displayed throughout our Village.

I also want to thank our Police Department for hosting both a Business Town Hall Meeting and a Resident Town Hall meeting on Crime Prevention. We appreciate all you and our First Responders do for the Village of Steger and our surrounding community.

Next, I noticed our Veterans Memorial (34th & Halsted Blvd.) needs a few updates.

The visibility of our veteran's service emblems is not currently displayed clearly due to overgrown bushes. I ask that the bushes be trimmed so the emblems are displayed appropriately or replace them with new bushes with on-going maintenance.

Also, on the front side (L & R) could use a few perennials to add color when we host ceremonies.

Next, the park benches at the memorial and the concrete area could use power washing.

We are great supporters of our veterans in our town. I am confident that adding a few affordable upgrades to the area would be appreciated by everyone and by people driving by who could be potential investors.

As an aside, I am ready to start an initiative and/or committee to focus on areas and projects that could potentially add value to our town.

Next, I propose we add Juneteenth to our Village calendar and website moving forward. I am open to discussing this and other ideas to strengthen our community.

In closing, we invite our residents to join us for our Electronic Recycle Event on Sat., June 24, 2023, hosted from 9 am – 11 am. The hours are subject to change depending if the truck is full. I ask that the event be added to our Village website and marquee by the police station at least 5 days in advance if it hasn't already been added.

Please be sure to share the news with your neighbors and those who are not on social media.

We have a decorating event for 4th of July. Alice Peterson is chairing the event for best decorated house for 4th of July. It is open to businesses and residents of Steger and details are available on the Village Website.

Thank you for your time.

BILLS

Trustee Joyce made a motion to pay all bills as listed when funds become available. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Village Clerk Zagone read a note from State Representative Anthony DeLuca announcing that the Village of Steger has been awarded a grant for \$200,000.00 to be used to help with storm drainage and flood issues in the village.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Thurmond opened discussion regarding Village Vehicle Stickers for 2024. We have been battling it back and forth for the last two years. There is a need for raising the sticker price. Nobody seems to want to dive in and suggest what we should raise it to. I provided a lot of information from surrounding communities on how they address the stickers. I took into consideration the size of the towns, the population, the economy of the town. So, I wasn't trying to discriminate one town versus another. There hasn't been any action or movement toward resolving that issue. With that said, the COVID, Rebuild Illinois, funds that helped a lot with the streets and curb repair. Mayor Peterson stated that there were Capital Projects that were funded from both the Federal and State level that allowed us to do some of those projects. Trustee Thurmond: and to my knowledge, these funds are drying up and these won't be available next year. Mayor Peterson: Correct. Trustee Thurmond: and then we are going to be forced to rely on our services through our Village Sticker and MFT funds. Mayor Peterson: that is correct. Trustee Thurmond: so, I really believe, we all know that the price of gas has gone up, utilities have gone up, the price of doing day to day business has gone up, and with that said, our stickers have stayed the same for, how long? Mayor Peterson: last time we raised it, it was a while ago. Trustee Lopez: as I have stated before, my biggest challenge is we keep collecting from the people who do what they are supposed to do. Until we get everyone else on board, I am not going to vote for an additional raise. Trustee Joyce: My question is this: What is the fine for not having a Village Sticker? Village Administrator Seehausen: So, when they are out there, I believe the fine is \$50.00. Trustee Joyce: my question is, if they write the ticket and they come in and buy their Village Sticker, is the fine waived? Village Administrator Seehausen: It should not be because it is failure to display, not failure to purchase. Mayor Peterson: now, what happens in court we can't control. Sometimes, the Judge will reduce the amount. Trustee Joyce: my question wouldn't be so much for raising the sticker fee right now, but how can we help the Police Department to better enforce the ordinance. Discussion continued on how the Police enforce the ordinance, where they can go and where they can't go. They are enforced during traffic stops, but we no longer have foot patrol checking for stickers on the streets. Police are not allowed on private property without cause. Trustee Trotier: Is there a rule where you can only increase if your village sticker is \$20 and your fine is \$50 what is the big deal. What if the fine is \$200 then reduced to \$100 in court? Mayor Peterson: The Illinois statute determines what the ticket amounts are. We are not Home Ruled, so we have to go by Illinois State Statutes. Village Clerk Zagone: How about communities that

are building it into their utility bill? Mayor Peterson: We have talked about that. Getting rid of the stickers and just adding a charge to the utility bill. Trustee Joyce: You will have a bunch of people in town especially seniors that don't have cars that are going to go ballistic. Trustee Trotier: it's no different than people who pay the school tax on real estate and they don't have kids in school. Trustee Thurmond: I don't know how many levels we have in stickers, but I agree with Trustee Lopez, if we are not able to enforce throughout the entire town, I also question why we would raise it. I believe if we can enforce it and everyone is paying, I still support a slight bump in the sticker price. I would go as far as to say all three levels would warrant a \$10.00 bump and the rest stay the same. Trustee Joyce: I don't think the discussion right now should be raising the rate, but rather how to better enforce them. Village Administrator Seehausen reminded the board: The Village Sticker program generates about \$54,000.00. Some of you are very in tune to what it costs to repair/replace streets. At the end of the day, your MFT funds and your Village Sticker funds go into Bridge and Streets, so if we have to patch, your road projects are going to be smaller. I want that to be a big picture as well. Mayor Peterson: even if I doubled the sticker fee, that \$100,000 doesn't buy us anything when replacing roads. Administrator Seehausen: but added to the MFT funds you would get something. Eventually it is going to need to be questioned when we figure out how to get the non-compliers on board. Mayor Peterson: it is virtually impossible to ticket each and every vehicle that does not display a Vehicle Sticker. Following further discussion on this and Dog and Cat licenses and how the funds are used Trustee Lopez recommended that it be sent to Committee for further discussion. A final thought from Trustee Thurmond was to post signs throughout the village like is done in Crete.

Trustee Joyce made a motion to cancel the July 3rd Board Meeting due to the July 4th holiday. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried

Trustee Joyce made a motion to approve and authorize the paying of standard and recurrent bills in the absence of a July 3rd Board Meeting. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Roll was called. The following Trustees voted aye; Thurmond, Lopez, Stewart, Trotier and Joyce. Mayor Peterson voted aye. Motion carried

Trustee Joyce made a motion to approve a request by St. Liborius Church to conduct their Parish Picnic on Sunday August 13, 2023 including the closure of southbound Halsted Blvd between Steger Rd and 35th St. Trustee Lopez seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

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Being no further business:

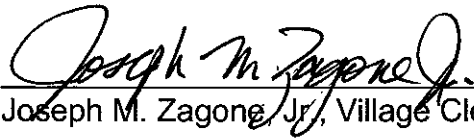
Trustee Joyce made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Trustee Thurmond seconded the motion. Voice vote; all ayes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.



Kenneth A. Peterson, Jr., Village President



Joseph M. Zagong, Jr., Village Clerk