

**VILLAGE OF LAKE BLUFF  
JOINT PLAN COMMISSION & ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 1, 2018**

**APPROVED MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

Chair Kraus called to order the regular meeting of the Joint Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals (PCZBA) of the Village of Lake Bluff on Thursday, February 1, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. in the Village Hall Conference Room (40 E. Center Avenue).

The following members were present:

Members:     Sam Badger  
                  Leslie Bishop  
                  David Burns  
                  Mary Collins  
                  Elliot Miller  
                  Gary Peters  
                  Steven Kraus, Chair

Absent:        Ben Schuster, Village Attorney

Also Present:  Glen Cole, Assistant to the Village Administrator (AVA)  
                  John Scopelliti, Administrative Intern

**2. Non-Agenda Items and Visitors (Public Comment Time)**

Chair Kraus stated the PCZBA allocates 15 minutes during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the PCZBA on any matter not listed on the agenda. Each person addressing the PCZBA is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three minutes.

There were no requests to address the PCZBA.

**3. Approval of the October 26, 2017 PCZBA Special Meeting Minutes**

Member Collins noted that she had provided minor corrections in writing to Staff.

Member Collins moved to approve the October 26, 2017 PCZBA Special Meeting Minutes as amended. Member Bishop seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

#### **4. Comprehensive Plan Workshop – Annexation Areas**

Chair Kraus provided an overview of the proposed policies document prepared by Staff, as well as of the process the PCZBA has used for each section of the comprehensive plan. He noted that, after the two subjects presently under consideration, only economic development and infrastructure would remain before the PCZBA has discussed each major topic included in the Village's 1997 Comprehensive Plan.

Member Burns discussed the formatting of this section of the Plan, noting that there are clearer ways that the PCZBA may be able to convey its position regarding the annexation of each area. A discussion ensued. Chair Kraus noted that the Plan could still include an annexation evaluation matrix similar to the 1997 Plan.

Chair Kraus read aloud the Annexation Goal and asked if reflects the consensus of the PCZBA. Member Burns said that he liked the goal and that it was set in realistic terms, but the PCZBA may desire to be more visionary in its language. There may be parcels that will make sense to annex in the future. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole described his conversation with a Knollwood resident the prior week regarding reports in the newspaper that the Village was discussing the annexation of Knollwood (e.g. at the last Comprehensive Plan workshop). Member Collins suggested eliminating the first five words of the Goal, such that it read that the Village's "attitude toward future annexation should reflect [...the ensuing items...]." After a discussion, the consensus of the PCZBA was to adopt Member Collins' suggestion.

Referring to Policy 1.1, Shoreacres, Chair Kraus said that the Policy should assert why the Village should annex Shoreacres. He asserted that it was advantageous for the Village to control any future change in use or future development.

Referring to Policy 1.2, Arden Shore, Chair Kraus summarized the previous conversation of the PCZBA and said that the key concept is the Village being held financially harmless for annexation and infrastructure upgrades, rather than for the area's residents to bear the cost. The PCZBA discussed the costs intrinsic to annexation. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole described the influence that the Village could have on development and subdivision in unincorporated areas. Member Bishop asked if Lake County would, for example, prevent a clear cut of any trees in the area. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole responded that he did not know, but would be surprised if they did as his experience is that such regulations are uncommon in unincorporated areas.

Member Collins said that the map should be keyed to the policy numbers in the final plan. The PCZBA discussed the formatting of the plan.

Referring to Policy 1.3, the ComEd Parcel near the Public Works Facility, Chair Kraus introduced the item. After discussion, the consensus of the PCZBA was to include language stating that the Village should pursue ownership of this parcel by donation in addition to annexation.

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 1.4, the Route 41 / Route 176 Corridor, and summarized the PCZBA's prior conversations as reflected in the draft policy language. Their goal was to reflect a positive attitude towards annexation in this area as land use changes due to the interchange reconstruction project. Member Collins noted that areas east of Route 41 are likely to be subject to a different process than those west of Route 41 or north of Route 176. After a discussion, Chair Kraus proposed dividing the Policy into two to convey a strong interest in parcels east of Route 41 and a more relaxed posture towards parcels west of Route 41 that reflected the Village's interest in the retail areas along Route 176. The PCZBA noted an interest in enhancing Route 176 as a retail corridor, as well as in improving the aesthetic entrances to the Village. Upon request, Assistant to the Village Administrator provided a brief overview of changes expected due to the interchange project. The PCZBA discussed various parcels in the vicinity of the interchange that would be subject to land use changes due to the interchange reconstruction.

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 1.5, Knollwood. He said that he would state that the Village "should not pursue annexation" rather than "not consider." Member Collins stated that she would not completely close the door. Chair Kraus said that the language may be that the Village should not pursue annexation unless conditions substantially change.

**5. Comprehensive Plan Workshop – Development Areas**

Chair Kraus provided an overview of this section. He asked if the PCZBA was generally comfortable with this level of detail, which tries to balance the PCZBA's desire not to prescribe the future of privately owned parcels with a desire to plan proactively. The consensus of the PCZBA was to support the general level of detail provided.

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 2.1, Stonebridge. The PCZBA discussed the current status of the Stonebridge development; Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole reported that there were no new substantive developments.

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 2.2, the Metra Parking Lot. Chair Kraus noted that this is a new item that may or may not be feasible, and the policy merely says that the possibility should be investigated. Member Collins believed it was unlikely for a developer to pursue development of such a parcel here as compared to more urban areas of Chicago where it was more feasible. She stated that a developer might be more interested in the isolated parcels across Sheridan from this area, north of the Central Business District. She noted that the Sheridan Road greenbelt is already interrupted in this area. There was some discussion as to if this should be incorporated into Policy 2.2 or set aside as a separate Policy. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole reported on similar development of vacant land near Metra lots in other communities, as well as Metra's past studies to support development.

Member Peters asked if the Plan should incorporate a height limitation or other guidance for would-be development. The PCZBA discussed the idea and, generally, how general versus how defined the Plan should be on these and other ideas. Member Collins noted that prior developers had encountered difficulties in obtaining approvals for projects in this area; she believes that, in part, this is due to a lack of guidance or boundaries established

by the Village. Administrative Intern Scopelliti discussed how other comprehensive plans and Metra studies have dealt with this issue. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole noted that other communities have used design guidelines to bridge the gap between high-level guidance in the comprehensive plan and zoning; these were considered, but not adopted, in the Village's Central Business District. Member Collins stated that such guidelines would represent a massive undertaking and a separate effort. Chair Kraus suggested that the Policy could include language about the consistency of scale with the Central Business District. Member Burns said that the plan can focus on high-level disposition. Chair Kraus asked that Staff prepare a new formulation of the policy language that includes the phrases "transit oriented development" and "appropriate scale" and reflects the amenities that need to be maintained were a development to occur (e.g. the bike route).

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 2.3, the area east of CLCJAWA. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole said that, in Staff's drafting the document, he was least sure of the PCZBA's desires as to this area. Chair Kraus stated that the Village has sufficient open space in this area, and that he believes the Village should indicate a strong preference for residential development that is not single family homes in this area. Members Bishop and Collins compared this idea to similar developments in the Village (e.g. Armor Woods) and the need for more housing options in the Village. Chair Kraus stated that this area was previously identified for senior housing.

Member Peters said he was not comfortable with this idea, and that this area should be preserved as green space. He stated that traffic would increase on Route 176 if this development were pursued. Chair Kraus stated that he disagreed. Member Collins concurred that the residents may be concerned, but that development of new housing types must occur somewhere in the Village. Member Peters suggested that parcels north on Green Bay Road would be more appropriate for such development.

Chair Kraus stated that the plan could contemplate multiple housing or development types. Member Peters stated that he would only support green space in this area; Member Burns said that Lake Bluff Open Lands controls the area to the west and that, while he enjoys green space, he enjoys green space that is usable and not overgrown. A discussion ensued regarding the exact boundaries of the subject area and the history of development proposals for the area.

Chair Kraus reiterated his preference to indicate a policy affirming a specific area for alternative housing development in the Plan. Member Peters reiterated that he would not support a future use of this land that was not open space. He is uncomfortable with this proposition as well as the past proposal for senior housing.

Member Burns stated that, recently, he reviewed the survey and asked if Lake Bluff, as a community, prioritizes open lands and open space. He does not believe it does. Nothing in the community survey expressed a need for more open space, and he believes Lake Bluff Open Lands is not prominently known or recognized in the community. He discussed Lake Bluff Open Lands' programming and volunteer opportunities. He believes some open

space in Lake Bluff is unplanned and sits idle. Nothing tells him that this particular area east of CLCJAWA is valued as open space, and he believes we should focus on using this parcel for development to meet expressed community needs for alternative housing. Member Peters said that Stonebridge has still not been developed and that he is not eager to add more possible development land that will take many years to build out. Member Bishop stated she would recommend a mix of cluster housing and open buffer.

Summarizing the discussion, Chair Kraus asked Staff to prepare two statements regarding the area east of CLCJAWA. One would be specifically development oriented towards non-single family housing, potentially with a pocket park. The other would commit to passive open space. Member Peters said that he would find more active use acceptable if the Park District was willing to engage with the site.

The group discussed the phrasing of the Development Goal, and the use of the word “significant.” The consensus of the group was to change the phrasing to “Maximize the limited opportunities for appropriate development [...]”

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 2.4, the former Arden Shore Child and Family Services Property. Chair Kraus asked if the PCZBA would want to require the provision of municipal utilities. Member Burns said that not requiring utilities would exacerbate the issues in this area, but that no one may ever want to develop if utilities are mandated. A discussion ensued regarding the utility situation in the area and the feasible development intensity. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole provided a review of recent development proposals considered in this area and stated that, under the code, they would require relief to build without municipal water or sewer. The consensus of the group was to rephrase the goal as “[...] ; and recognizes the limited availability of water and sewer [...].”

Chair Kraus introduced Policy 2.5, the Green Bay Estates. He provided a description of the properties this area includes and their history. He suggested that the goal be broader to discuss the various estates on Green Bay or, perhaps, throughout the Village. The consensus of the PCZBA was to do so. Member Collins asked if the PCZBA should discuss Crab Tree Farm. The consensus of the group, later, was to discuss Crab Tree Farm in the Open Space area of the plan. A discussion ensued, including regarding the status of conservation easements in this area and the likelihood of future land use changes. This discussion transitioned into a review of parcels along Sheridan Road, particularly the fencing north of Blodgett Ave.

The PCZBA returned to a discussion of development areas that may merit inclusion along the east side of Sheridan Road where the green belt is already broken south of Blodgett Avenue. Member Bishop said that this space is barely used and that this is a perfect area for transportation focused development consistent with the neighborhood. Member Peters said that development here would negatively impact neighbors to the east. Member Collins said that these concerns emphasize the need for appropriately sized and scaled development. A discussion ensued regarding the appropriate scale of development here

and the need to retain the single subject block as green space. Member Peters said that he philosophically cannot support giving up green space for a small incremental benefit.

## **6. Comprehensive Plan Workshop – Open Space, Parks, and Recreation**

Chair Kraus noted that it was about 8:15 p.m. He asked that the PCZBA focus on beginning the Open Space, Parks, and Recreation discussion for the final half hour of the meeting. Chair Kraus and Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole provided an overview of the presented materials and noted that more would be forthcoming at the PCZBA's next meeting. Member Burns asked the group to consider the extent that the PCZBA should plan for lands governed by the Park District, which operates an independent planning process. Chair Kraus referred to the existing Plan's goal and discussed this in the context of the Village's abundance of public land, the Plan's call for an institutional zoning district, and the potential for other actionable steps in the new Plan.

Referring to the Park District's Public Land Use Advisory Committee, Member Bishop asked what the PCZBA's plans were for public outreach regarding the new Comprehensive Plan. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding techniques such as workshops, focus groups, and other outreach methods. Assistant to the Village Administrator Cole concluded the conversation by saying that Staff can work to develop ideas for public engagement that can be considered as the PCZBA continues working through each section of the plan and continues to build its draft. Member Collins said that such outreach would be important given some of the ideas proposed.

As the conversation shifted from public engagement back to the plan area under discussion, Member Burns discussed the concept of inventorying the available open space in the Village based on use and how this can inform a community conversation about the best use of various areas. He said that, today, some areas left idle do not benefit the community. Chair Kraus provided an overview of the inventory performed by the Park District's Public Land Use Advisory Committee, which he served upon. Member Burns said he would like to investigate this inventory further to plan more effectively for some of these areas and compared their potential to Forest Preserve lands he visits with his family. Member Collins noted that Lake Bluff Open Lands' mission includes native preservation and ecological diversity, but perhaps not active recreational space that is a focus of the Park District or some Forest Preserve facilities. Member Bishop told an anecdote of finding a rare bird in her backyard unique to the North Shore which she ascribes to the diversity of Lake Bluff. Chair Kraus discussed how the new institutional zoning district would help ensure oversight of changes in these areas. Member Collins said that she would like to explore eliminating the redundant platted areas in the nature preserve south of CLCJAWA, which the group discussed.

Chair Kraus noted that the hour approached 9 p.m. Assistant to the Village Administrator Glen Cole provided a review of the February regular meeting agenda and stated that the PCZBA may be able to hold its next workshop during the regular meeting. The PCZBA agreed to start a public workshop to continue its Comprehensive Plan discussion at 6 p.m. the night of their February regular meeting.

7. **Adjournment**

A motion was duly made and seconded to adjourn and passed by a unanimous voice vote.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Glen Cole  
Assistant to the Village Administrator