The Village of Lake Bluff Board of Trustees met as a Committee-of-the-Whole (COW) on Monday, June 26, 2023, President Charlot called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and Deputy Village Clerk R. Drew Irvin called the roll.

The following were present:

Village President: Regis Charlot

Trustees: Mary Cole  
Taryn Fisher  
Shana Fried  
Katharine Hatch  
Stephen Rappin

Absent: Susan Rider, Village Trustee

Also Present: Peter Friedman, Village Attorney (VA) 
R. Drew Irvin, Village Administrator  
Clara Gable, Assistant to the Village Administrator

Non-Agenda Items and Visitors  
President Charlot stated the COW allocates 15 minutes for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the COW on any matter not listed on the agenda. There were no requests to address the COW.

COW Sets the Order of the Meeting  
President Charlot stated the COW will entertain requests from anyone present to modify the order of business. There were no requests to change the order of the meeting.

Consideration of the Minutes from the May 8, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Trustee Fisher moved to approve the May 8, 2023 COW minutes as submitted. Trustee Hatch seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Discussion Regarding LGBTQ+ Pride Flag Request  
President Charlot introduced the agenda item and said after reading a Proclamation designating June 2023 LGBTQ Pride Month he has had conversations with residents and the Village has received requests from residents (Christine Klawitter and Sue Ulrey) to display an LGBTQ Pride Flag in prominence in Lake Bluff and he listed areas of example including Grace Church, downtown, Public Library. President Charlot said he was also made aware that the LGBTQ community consider the flag to indicate a place to be a safe and welcoming community. President Charlot read the Lake Bluff 2023
Strategic Plan Guiding Principles and Staff discussion points regarding the request then opened the floor for comments from the COW.

Trustee Fisher said she was pleased to receive community feedback because there is more to saying we are committed to inclusivity and diversity, we need to show it as well. The communities who have chosen to fly the pride flag as a visual representation to those who are othered shows they are in a welcome and safe place. Trustee Fisher said it seems several neighboring communities have elected to fly the pride flag and she is very excited about the possibility of the Village taking the next step. President Charlot commented on the alternatives outlined in Staff memorandum: Maintain current level of celebration, adopt a policy that includes pride flag or consider other ways to celebrate pride month. Trustee Fisher said she would like to see community leaders support its community members. She expressed concern regarding possibly placing the onus completely on community members and other organizations to step forth with requests.

Trustee Hatch said she supports adopting a flag policy inclusive of the pride flag because she thinks it is important to support individuals that are often overlooked in the community.

Trustee Fried said adopting a flag policy would be a good approach then she commented on the support she noticed in various communities while riding the train to Chicago.

In respond to a question from Trustee Rappin, Village Administrator Irvin said Staff did not research all neighboring community flag policies. A discussion followed.

Trustee Rappin said his personal values are completely aligned with the request and he would love to do it; however, it is important for the Village to do its due diligence relative to the community. He said he thinks there is an element of fairness to consider a flag policy and he thinks it is incumbent on Staff to draft a policy exploring the holistic approach for all flags or alternative ways to celebrate pride month in a visual matter. In response to a comment from Trustee Rappin, Village Administrator Irvin said he thinks encouraging other to celebrate is always an alternative and if the desire is to draft a flag policy Staff could examine surrounding communities polices. A discussion followed.

Following a comment from Trustee Rappin, Village Attorney Friedman commented on First Amendment rights in regarding to private and government speech, legality associated with flag policies, and the Supreme Court ruling regarding the City of Boston flag policy. He said a community may decide on the type of flags to display; however, if the list is too broad it could be considered a public forum but if the list is limited First Amendment rights generally would not apply.

Trustee Fisher said she does not want to create an environment where the Village decides which flags should be flown and Staff needs to thoughtfully do its homework drafting a flag policy so as not to create controversy.

Trustee Cole agreed that adopting a flag policy makes sense because it would signal that Lake Bluff is an accepetve and supportive community. A discussion ensued and it was the consensus of the COW to direct Staff to draft a flag policy for consideration at the next meeting.
Continued Discussion Regarding Possible Updates to the Village’s Affordable Housing Plan

Following an introduction from President Charlot, Village Administrator Irvin provided background/history and an update of the Village’s draft Affordable Housing Plan which included:

- Updates to the history of affordable housing in Lake Bluff and related zoning code amendments;
- Latest affordable housing data from the Illinois Housing Development Authority;
- Status updates of the Village’s Affordable Housing Targets and Goals;
- Updates to the identified lands and structures to reflect recent development activity; and
- Inclusion of the Lake Forest affordable housing investment opportunity.

Village Administrator Irvin commented on previous meetings discussing updates to the Village’s affordable housing plan, changes in the plan reflecting a memorialization of the Village’s zoning code amendments since the adoption of the 2005 plan, and options consider that would benefit the Village’s affordable housing, targets and goals. Village Administrator Irvin continued by stating the Village has received inquiries regarding Village owned properties south of Route 176, west of Sunset Terrace, east of the CLCJAWA, and north of West Sheridan Place for development as a Senior Living Facility. The Village issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2007 for this same purpose and received proposals; however, the Village ultimately chose not to work with a developer to develop that site as senior housing. He said should the Board desire to issue a new RFP it needs to be community driven and could be drafted to state the Village would consider different types of housing.

Trustee Rappin said it is his understanding the Village plan has approximately 40 affordable housing units and would require a big leap to meet the State’s requirement (10%). It is his opinion that an attempt to add 70 affordable units would be a shotgun approach; however, making material improvements of 20, 30 or maybe 40 units seems reasonable. Trustee Rappin commented on why the Village need to control its own fate in regards to affordable housing and said issuing an RFP specifying affordable housing, not solely, would be a smart approach. A discussion followed.

Following an invite from Village Administrator Irvin, Mark Dewart came to the podium and shared information regarding the senior housing advocate group and previous RFPs. He said one of the underlying premises was to retain seniors in our community and the objective is to consider the matter from an affordability and social structure standpoint. Mr. Dewart commented on why the COW should consider reviewing the 2007 untenable RFP structure.

Trustee Fisher expressed her thanks to Mr. Dewart for the background information then shared her opinion that housing options for empty nesters and retirees desiring to stay in the community continues to be an issue. A discussion followed.

Following a comment from President Charlot, Village Administrator Irvin said identifying the missing middle, different types of land use and dwellings will be a strategy discussed as part of the upcoming Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update discussions. He stated if, the Village is going to be successful in creating diversified housing it must consider every available level of housing. Village Administrator Irvin shared information regarding his conversation with Catherine Czerniak, Lake Forest Director of Community Development regarding the bids received for the proposed cottage project and noted their intent to rebid the project.
Trustee Rappin said the proposed Lake Forest cottages are Capital “A” Affordable Housing for people with income at 60% Area Media Income (AMI) or less which satisfy the State requirement. The Village’s affordable housing discussions refers to middle market, missing middle or individuals desiring to remain in Lake Bluff and he thinks many people aging out of their homes may not meet the AMI income qualification. He said he thinks the Village should consider both Capital “A” Affordable Housing and more affordable smaller footprint and smaller priced homes. President Charlot commented on why he thinks it is important to have a strategy that encompasses both alternatives, affordable housing and missing middle. A discussion followed.

In response to a question from Trustee Cole, Village Attorney Friedman said the State Statute is aspirational then he commented on the consequences associated with the statute. He said if a developer request to develop affordable housing in a nonexempt community and was denied, the developer could appeal the decision with the State Housing Appeal Board which theoretically could reverse the local zoning decision.

Trustee Cole asked what immediate steps are needed to make affordable housing a more viable option. Village Administrator Irvin said the possible next steps could include updating the Village’s affordable housing plan and issued an RFP. He said Lake Bluff is a small community, largely built out and does not have a lot of opportunities to create affordable housing. Following a brief discussion, Village Administrator Irvin summarized the COW direction as: recirculate the 2007 RFP and updated the Village Affordable Housing Plan for consideration at the next COW meeting.

**Adjournment**
As there were no further comments from the Public or COW, a motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Cole and seconded by Trustee Hatch. The meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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R. Drew Irvin
Village Administrator