

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES SPECIAL MEETING  
THURSDAY—JULY 18, 2019  
VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: Village President Hofeld called the special meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. There were more than 150 members of the public and three press representatives present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: President Hofeld led trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Clerk Marilyn Thomas called the roll. Those present were Village President Richard Hofeld, Trustee Barbara Dawkins, Trustee Lisa Purcell, Trustee Karen Washington, Trustee Lauren Roman, and Trustee Larry Burnson. Trustee Jay Heiferman was absent.

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF: Village President Hofeld introduced staff members in attendance: Village Manager Jim Marino, Village Attorney Christopher Cummings, Deputy Fire Chief Steve DeJong, Police Chief Bill Alcott, Director of Public Works John Schaefer, Director of Finance Dennis Bubenik, Director of Community and Economic Development Angela Mesaros, Marketing Director Jennifer Quirke and Assistant Village Manager Napoleon Haney.

President Hofeld welcomed the community to the special meeting to discuss the proposed plans for the redevelopment of Calumet Country Club at Dixie Highway and 175th Street.

He introduced Angela Mesaros, director of economic and community development, who gave a presentation for the audience. She said there are approximately 130 acres for development. The property has been a golf course since 1901, and annexed to the Village of Homewood in 1980. The Village has been negotiating over many months with Walt Brown of Diversified Partners. The company is now running the golf course.

Attorney Cummings explained that the property is still owned by equity partners from the golf course who have organized as CCC Investors LLC. The property owners have filed a petition in the Circuit Court of Cook County to disconnect from Homewood. To disconnect, the property owners must prove each of the following requirements set by state law:

1. The site is greater than 20 acres.
2. The site is located on Homewood's border.
3. If disconnected, no part of Homewood will be isolated.
4. If disconnected, it will not impact Homewood's growth or plan and zoning ordinances.

5. If disconnected, it will not disrupt village services.
6. If disconnected, the village will not face significant loss of tax revenue (estimated at \$28,000).

Cummings said Homewood does not have a strong case, and the law favors property owners, provided they prove the six requirements set by law. After disconnecting, the property would revert to unincorporated Cook County property. It is assumed the owners would then seek to annex into the Village of Hazel Crest, which surrounds the property on three sides.

Director Mesaros resumed her presentation outlining various plans the developer presented to the Village over many months. These included a light industrial park with anchor retail, such as IKEA, and a hotel; an all-industrial park; an age-restricted senior housing community; a rock crushing site with a truck fulfillment center.

The Village found the housing proposal acceptable, but the developer withdrew those plans saying his consultant told him it wasn't going to sell well. One of the final plans presented to the Village included rock crushing, a truck fulfillment center, and trailer stacking up to five-high. Village staff was able to get the developer to remove the rock crushing and the stacked trailers removed from the plan. The developer also agreed to construct a berm along 175th Street to screen the residential neighborhood.

President Hofeld said the Trustees found this plan to be unacceptable. It is too intense a project for a residential neighborhood. The developer estimated 300 truck movements per day.

Attorney Cummings said the Village has not officially received notice of the suit; he received a copy from the attorney involved in the suit. President Hofeld has sent a letter to the mayor of Hazel Crest asking that the village stand in opposition with Homewood. He has not received a response. Attorney Cummings said Hazel Crest does not have as strong or diversified a tax base as Homewood's, and Hazel Crest may be interested in improving its tax base through the proposed trucking development.

President Hofeld opened the floor for questions. Residents raised numerous issues:

- *What are the environmental impacts?* The village doesn't know because the plan was rejected, so no studies have been done.
- *Has the developer asked for tax incentives?* Not at this time.
- *Is there any data on what the affects would be to property values?* Not at this time. President Hofeld said there is no formal assessment, but it is understood a terminal such as is being proposed will have a great detriment to home values and residents' health.

- *Is the Village prepared to argue on the criteria?* Village Trustees are looking at all options.
- *What impact will this development have on flooding? Are there studies showing putting asphalt over open space will move the water into the neighborhood?* The Village has no studies. The Village has a storm water connection on the property.
- *Why doesn't the Village buy the property? It is essential that we save open space. Once it's gone, you can't get it back.* The Village doesn't have the money to buy the property. It could ask residents to approve a bond sale in the March 2020 election. That will raise Village taxes. And, there is no commitment from the property owners that they would be willing to end the agreement they have with Diversified Partners.
- *This golf course has great historical significance in the world of golf. Does the golf world care?* One Calumet Country Club equity partner said Brown assured them he would keep it a golf course.
- *Can the Village use eminent domain to take the property?* The board will discuss all options.
- *Will the Village continue to negotiate with Walt Brown?* President Hofeld said it seems the developer has given the final plan – the fulfillment center. The Village has tried to offer other ideas, but he isn't willing to hear them.
- *Does the site have historic significance? Can the property be designated a historic site to prevent this development?* The Village would look into that.
- *Can the Village set truck weight limits on roads adjacent to the property?* No. Dixie Highway and 175th Street are state roads under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Transportation.

President Hofeld thanked all present for their input and ideas. He also thanked Village staff for their efforts. The Village can fight the disconnect, but there's no guarantee that the Village will win. If that happens, the Village loses all control of the property, and it is likely Hazel Crest will be deciding the fate of the site that directly impacts Homewood residents. If Homewood accepts Brown's plan, then it has control of the site.

Trustees assured residents that they are willing to fight this industrial use in a residential community. The noise and truck movements will likely be unbearable, and the fumes will have a detrimental health impact. Trustees said they all believe in Homewood and want to keep it a thriving community. The Village was sued because it refused to accept what the developer had to offer.

President Hofeld said development plans have not officially been presented for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Residents will be able to keep track of future discussion and actions through the Village website, and upcoming Village Board meetings.

A motion was made by Trustee Burnson and seconded by Trustee Roman to adjourn the special meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas  
Village Clerk