

Village of Peoria Heights  
Departmental Meeting  
May 26, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sherryl Carter, Diane Mariscal, Beth Khazzam, Jeff Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Trustees Carter, Mariscal, Khazzam, and DeVore attended by phone. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Village Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, Village Clerk Stephanie Turner, and Village Counsel Attorney Mark Walton.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 5, 2020. Trustee Wisenburg seconded the motion. The Board voted 6-0 to approve the minutes as submitted.

Mayor Phelan opened the meeting to public comment. Hearing no public comments, Mayor Phelan moved on to old business. Hearing no old business, Mayor Phelan moved on to new business.

Trustee Carter explained the Board would soon be voting on the annual sealcoating and spray patching MFT projects for the Village. Superintendent of Streets, Mr. Michael Casey, noted that the projects, which had been bid out, both came in under the engineer's cost estimates. Trustee Carter made a motion to move the item to the next Board meeting for final action, and Trustee Goett seconded. The Board voted 6-0 to move the item to the next meeting for action. Mr. Casey updated the Board that Public Works had hung congratulatory banners for the high school graduates, and the students would receive them after they were displayed two weeks. Trustee Carter asked about the rain received over the weekend. Superintendent of Water, Mr. David Marfell, explained there had been a few drainage issues he'd addressed, and a couple Public Works employees had spent the day cleaning up debris. Mr. Marfell noted that hydrant flushing had recently been completed. Mayor Phelan asked for an update on flooding, and Mr. Casey stated Public Works was monitoring it, and he hadn't received requests for more sandbags. Mr. Marfell stated the barricades are still in place, but the river appears to be receding. Trustee Carter cautioned residents not to play in the flood waters down by the river.

Trustee Wisenburg invited Fire Chief Greg Walters forward to provide an update on the department's response to COVID-19. Fire Chief Walters stated that the Fire Department had responded to some potential infection calls, but none of the firefighters had been directly exposed due to diligence in following procedures. Fire Chief Walters stated that the Fire Department had immediately drafted a plan, updated guidelines, and offered training so all volunteers were up to date on the latest directives from the EMS office. Fire Chief Walters stated that the PHFD had received a lot of support from MABAS and other local agencies in the form of protective gear. He noted that residents have also supported the Fire Department including a donation of full face shields made on a 3D printer, dinners, and homemade masks. Fire Chief Walters also spoke of the PHFD's work helping local children celebrate their birthdays during the stay-at-home orders. He complimented the PHFD who also participated in the celebrations. Fire Chief Walters was pleased to report that there had been minimal impact on the PHFD as yet, but the volunteers were prepared should a surge manifest. Trustee Wisenburg thanked Fire Chief Walters for his and the firefighters' service.

Mayor Phelan asked Trustee Carter to speak about a proposed lane closure on Prospect Road during Reopening Illinois Phase 3. Trustee Carter noted that some municipalities are closing down streets to facilitate outdoor dining at restaurants. She proposed road closures on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday for a month. Trustee Carter noted she had spoken to business owners who had advocated the idea. Trustee Khazzam noted her support for the businesses and expressed safety concerns. Trustee Goett shared Trustee Khazzam's concerns noting the amount of traffic on Prospect. Trustee Wisenburg asked about extending seating on the sidewalks. Mayor Phelan noted that could possibly violate alcohol sales laws. Chief Sutton shared that his conversations with the business owners leads him to believe there is a sense of solidarity, and the businesses would cooperate in sharing the sidewalks. Chief Sutton expressed that closing the road entirely could potentially lead to a compliance and enforcement issue. Chief Sutton noted that staff were researching the cost of barricades and appropriate safety equipment to block off one lane of traffic, but it was costly. Chief Sutton stated that public safety was the most important issue, and enforcement would require more of the police department's time. Mayor Phelan stated he'd been receiving calls, and there was already interest in how the Village would handle the issue. As such, he's concerned about the amount of traffic the Village could receive. He noted that any plan will need to balance safety in closing a busy street and making sure people coming to the Village weren't subject to exposure from large crowds. Mayor Phelan asked Village Counsel Mark Walton to speak about possible legal complications. Attorney Walton stated that the mayor, as liquor commissioner, has authority to expand a restaurant's service area. Mayor Phelan questioned public easement on sidewalks, and Attorney Walton recommended getting the agreement of neighboring businesses before allowing expanded service areas. Attorney Walton stated that legally the Board could shut down Prospect but cautioned the Board to consider capacity issues. He noted that under the law the restaurants have compacity limits, and there's also capacity issues of people waiting for a table. He suggested making plans for capacity problems. He noted there would need to be creativity and suggested involving the business owners. Attorney Walton stated easing into the reopening might be for the best. Chief Sutton agreed noting that by waiting to see what crowds come during the first weekend it would allow staff to make a more detailed recommendation. Mayor Phelan asked Chief Sutton to start working on getting permission from the businesses to share the sidewalk spaces and to bring several options to the Board at the next meeting. Chief Sutton asked the Board to spend the next week considering how they'd like to see the matter handled.

Trustee Wisenburg asked about the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on June 1, 2020. He asked if it would be open to the public, and Mayor Phelan answered that Village Hall would be reopening on that date. Chief Sutton provided more information on the Village's plans to allow for social distancing and still make the meeting accessible to the public. Trustee Carter asked if the ZBA would be addressing the zoning at 1201 / 1203 E Kingman Avenue, and Attorney Walton stated they would. Mayor Phelan explained the issue of zoning and the issue of the subletting at the property would both be addressed by the Board of Trustees after the ZBA's recommendation.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee Wisenburg seconded. The Board voted 6-0 to adjourn at 6:46 pm.

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Michael Phelan, Mayor

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Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk