

Village of Peoria Heights
Public Hearing – Business Development District No. 1
August 20, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

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

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Diane Mariscal, Elizabeth Khazzam, Jeffrey Goett, Brandon Wisenburg, and Sarah DeVore. Trustee Sherryl Carter was absent. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Administrator and Chief of Police Dustin Sutton, and Clerk Stephanie Turner.

Mayor Phelan invited Mr. Steve Kline, of the Economic Development Group, forward to open the meeting. Mr. Kline explained the purpose of the hearing was for public comment on the expansion of the existing Business Development District, BDD No. 1, from its current boundaries northward along Prospect Road and to the west along Glen Avenue.

Mr. Kline explained the criteria for establishing a BDD as well as the differences between Tax Increment Financing, or TIF Funds, and BDD Funds. Mr. Kline explained the majority of the properties included in the expansion were also included in TIF No. 1 and TIF No. 3. Mr. Kline emphasized that BDD taxes must be spent in the geographical area where they were generated. He also explained the Rock Island Trail had been included as an important part of the Village's plan to attract business and visitors to the area.

The meeting was opened to public comment.

Hearing none, Mayor Phelan asked the Trustees if they had any questions regarding the expansion of Business Development District No. 1.

Trustee Khazzam asked why certain properties had been exempted. Mr. Kline noted that the properties in question were newer buildings which would not benefit from the BDD which was one of the criteria for inclusion.

Trustee Mariscal questioned if inclusion in the BDD was voluntary for the business owners. Mr. Kline replied the Village had the sole authority to create and set the boundaries of the Business Development District and had strived to include businesses which wanted to be part of the district. He noted the BDD helped encourage retail development and retail retention. Mr. Kline explained the expansion was at the behest of the Business Development District Advisory Committee which had requested the district expand up Prospect Road for a more cohesive approach to future projects.

Trustee Wisenburg asked if any business owners had objected to the expansion. Both Trustee DeVore and Chief Sutton explained some businesses had asked to be included. Chief Sutton explained the Village currently had a different relationship with the businesses than when the BDD was first established. He explained that the Chairman of the BDDAC, Mr. Kevin Shields, had spoken to business owners in the proposed expansion and had not reported any opposition. Trustee DeVore asked Ms. Andrea Huprich, a member of the BDDAC and President of the Peoria Heights Chamber of Commerce, forward to speak. Ms. Huprich reported she wasn't aware of anyone who did not want to be included in the BDD expansion.

Trustee Wisenburg stated opposition to including any businesses in the BDD expansion that don't wish to be included.

Trustee Carter entered at 5:22 pm.

Chief Sutton asked Mr. Kline to speak about the original determination of BDD No. 1's boundaries, and Trustee Mariscal asked if the south boundary was at Lake Avenue. Mr. Kline stated that the boundary was at Lake Avenue with the exception that O'Reilly's located just south of Lake. Mr. Kline noted the BDD was originally drawn with the intention to enhance development in TIF No. 1, and BDD funds were a necessity for the Trefzger's project. The tone and temperament at the time was to proceed cautiously and conservatively due, in part, to concerns of some of the restaurant owners. Mr. Kline explained the BDDAC has provided transparency and guidance on how to use the BDD funds which changed the attitude of business owners toward the BDD. Mr. Kline noted it had been the consensus of the BDDAC to expand the BDD north. Chief Sutton stated that two of the more vocal business owners who did not want to be included originally now want to be included.

Trustee Khazzam asked Ms. Huprich if the current meeting was the appropriate time for business owners in opposition to speak, and Ms. Huprich agreed. Ms. Huprich also noted that the expansion had been discussed repeatedly by the BDDAC without public comment.

Trustee DeVore asked if all the business owners in the expansion had been notified. Mr. Kline stated that the summary of the expansion and the map was included twice in the newspaper as well as being on the Village's website. Trustee Wisenburg stated most people don't read the newspaper and asked if there had been alternate notifications. Mr. Kline stated that BDD did not require individual notification, and, in his experience, most people used the Village's website as a source of information for meetings and news.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn the public hearing, and Trustee Khazzam seconded the motion. The motion passed 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:30.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Stephanie Turner, Village Clerk