

Village of Riverwoods
Plan Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes June 1, 2023

A meeting of the Village of Riverwoods Plan Commission was held on Thursday, June 1, 2023 at Village Hall. Chairperson Laurie Breitkopf called the meeting to order at 7:39 PM.

Present:

Laurie Breitkopf, Chairperson
Karl Blalock
Sherry Graditor
Stephen Levin
Carey Rothbardt

Absent:

Jay Datt

Also Present:

Henry Hollander, Village Trustee
Vivian Hofeld, Village Building Coordinator

1. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Rothbardt moved to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2023 Plan Commission meeting as corrected. Commissioner Blalock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission

There were no visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission on non-agenda items.

3. Old Business

There was no old business presented.

4. New Business

A. PUBLIC HEARING: Consideration of proposed text amendments to the Riverwoods Zoning Ordinance, involving sections 9-2-3 (Definitions) and 9-4-1 (Home Occupations) and potentially other sections. The purposes of the text amendment, as proposed, are to revise the descriptions of uses that constitute permitted home occupations while prohibiting certain uses. The amendments, as proposed, would provide that a permitted short term rental is a residential occupancy of a dwelling unit for a term greater than four (4) consecutive weeks and distinguish that use from “transient occupancy”, which would mean the accessory use of a dwelling unit for an occupancy period of less than four (4) consecutive weeks, including any rental use reserved through online marketplace services that facilitate lodging by overnight guests. The ordinance would allow such permitted short-term rentals as a permitted home occupation

while prohibiting transient occupancy and prohibiting accessory use of swimming pools, playing courts or other amenities by persons who are not primary residents of the dwelling or not occupying the dwelling pursuant to a permitted short-term rental.

Ch. Breitkopf noted that in the absence of the Village Attorney, the Public Hearing should be continued, but that discussion could still take place.

Commissioner Graditor moved to continue the Public Hearing to the July 6, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Rothbardt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

A discussion was opened on the draft short-term rental ordinance by Ch. Breitkopf.

Commissioner Graditor suggested adding a limit to the number of occupants allowed per rental.

Commissioner Blalock requested to more clearly define the term “short-term rental”. The ordinance as written does not distinguish when a rental property changes from a short-term to a long-term rental. Commissioner Rothbardt added that short-term rentals are typically less than a year and long-term rentals would be a year or more. Ms. Hofeld commented that currently the Village has registrations for one-year and two-year rentals. Commissioner Graditor concurred with the need for transient occupancy, short-term rentals and long-term rentals to be more explicitly defined to avoid confusion.

Commissioner Blalock commented that in Section E.2 the requirement that a primary resident has to occupy the home for at least 60 consecutive days seems low. Commissioner Rothbardt agreed that 60 days is low and suggested it could be changed to as high as 90 to 120 days.

Commissioner Rothbardt questioned if there will be licenses and guidelines for short-term rentals. Ms. Hofeld explained that the Village requires rental properties to register, but to date no properties have been registered as short-term rentals. Ch. Breitkopf agreed with the need for parameters and registrations. She also stated that the requirements should include notifying the neighbors, as discussed previously. In addition, she stated that language should be added clearly stating that rentals must be four consecutive weeks to the same tenant and potentially a maximum rental period. Commissioner Graditor commented that there should not be a maximum rental period for one continuous tenant, however it would be fine to limit the total number of days in a year.

Commissioner Levin commented that the Commission needs to determine what outcome is desired from the short-term rental ordinance. Do we want to encourage or discourage short-term rentals? Commissioner Rothbardt agreed that the Commission needs to decide how strict it wants to be. Riverwoods is a different environment than tourist/vacation locations. He agreed with Commissioner Graditor that Riverwoods

residents would be interested in renting out their homes while away for an extended time during the winter.

Commissioner Levin questioned if a resident whose relative moved in and paid rent would be subject to this ordinance. Commissioner Graditor commented that there is an exclusion for immediate family members. Commissioner Levin asked what the parameters would be for someone coming to Riverwoods to work. Commissioner Rothbardt said that instance may be more of a long-term rental. The purpose of the ordinance is to try to avoid the party house situation. The owner is responsible for their house when rented.

Ch. Breitkopf will ask the Village Attorney to revise the draft ordinance reflecting this discussion for the July 6, 2023 meeting.

Ms. Hofeld asked if it's accurate to inform those inquiring that purchasing a home in Riverwoods for the sole use as a short-term rental is not allowed. Ch. Breitkopf confirmed that after the revised ordinance goes into effect, a property may not be used solely as a business for short-term rentals. The property owner will be required to live at the property for a specified period of time. Commissioner Blalock clarified that an investor could purchase a property with the purpose of using it for long-term rentals.

Commissioner Rothbardt asked if a property could be long-term rental one year and short-term rentals another year. Ch. Breitkopf agreed that would be a possibility if the owner complies with the short-term rental regulations

B. Discussion of possible subarea plan amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the area encompassing the Wolters Kluwer site, to consider any land uses other than office and research uses.

Trustee Hollander shared that he and others met with Wolters Kluwer representatives about a week ago. His impression from the meeting was that Wolters Kluwer was concentrating on residential development proposals. Wolters Kluwer is aware of the uniqueness of the property including the wetlands and woodlands. Wolters Kluwer has a strong commitment to the environment and would prefer to sell to a developer who shares their environmental consciousness. Trustee Hollander does not believe they have a buyer yet. There was no follow-up meeting scheduled at that time.

Ch. Breitkopf added that Wolters Kluwer is interested in suggestions from the Village on potential development concepts that can be presented to its realtor. Trustee Hollander said he mentioned the possibility of healthcare facilities at the meeting last week but he reiterated it appears that Wolters Kluwer is looking at residential proposals. There were no discussions of commercial possibilities at the meeting. Commissioner Graditor mentioned she would like to see a senior community on the property. Ch. Breitkopf agreed that senior housing along with ranch style single family cluster homes would be ideal.

Ch. Breitkopf commented she would like to see the existing Wolters Kluwer building repurposed. Trustee Hollander said at the meeting preserving the building was discussed. Wolters Kluwer is willing to consider the possibility and bring in consultants to look into it.

Commissioner Rothbart asked if affordable housing would be required. Ch. Breitkopf confirmed that there is a Village goal of 15% affordable housing units with every new residential development in the Village. Commissioner Rothbart asked if a nonprofit would be brought in to handle the affordable housing component. Ch. Breitkopf confirmed that a nonprofit with this type of specialty would handle the affordable housing component.

Commissioner Levin asked if the Commission should have Lexington wait until more is known about the Wolters Kluwer sale and then ask the two entities to cooperate. Lexington could possibly build at the Wolters Kluwer property. Ch. Breitkopf suggested that townhomes might not be the best use of the Wolters Kluwer property. With the greater amount of space, other types of housing could be considered.

Trustee Hollander added that the Village and Wolters Kluwer discussed at last week's meeting whether Wolters Kluwer might donate part of the wooded area on the north portion of the property to the Village.

Commissioner Graditor asked about the impact on Riverwoods from the loss of federal protection of wetlands resulting from the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. Trustee Hollander said the fairly strong protections that Illinois has will take precedence.

4. Comments by the Chairman

There were no comments from Ch. Breitkopf.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Commissioner Graditor moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rothbardt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission is July 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Litwin