



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Niles 2040 Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

Wednesday, March 24, 2021
7:00 PM

FINAL Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Project Steering Committee: Colin Baker, Michael DeSantiago, Tom Kanelos, Adam Konopka, Janet Lee, Joe Maccione, John Murphy, Craig Niedermaier, Scott O'Brien, Mike Shields

Village Staff: Kate Lockerby, Staff Liaison/Recording Secretary, Charles Ostman, Nathan Bruemmer, Hadley Skeffington-Vos, Rich Wlodarski

Consultants: N/A

Other Attendees: N/A

Absent: Steering Committee Members: Denise McCreery, Dennis McEnerney

Trustee Niedermaier called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

A roll call was taken.

Trustee Niedermaier asked for a motion to approve the March 3, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Shields made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Lee seconded. All were in favor. The March 3, 2021 Minutes were approved.

Trustee Niedermaier discussed the "New Business" section on the agenda. Ms. Lockerby went into more details explaining the format of the meeting – 30 minutes devoted to "Public Outreach Opportunities" and one hour devoted to "What does your ideal Niles look like in 2040? What types of changes does that entail to the current development patterns?"

Mr. O'Brien suggested partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and partner with restaurants. Perhaps providing a survey that people fill out while waiting for their meals at a restaurant, which could include a discount off of dinner for filling it out. He also suggested a raffle.

Mr. Maccione agreed and suggested incentivizing through using a 50/50 Raffle or a Queen of Hearts Raffle. A monetary incentive with links to the survey and for participation at an event.

Mr. O'Brien said that QR Codes are a good idea – people are getting used to using them. Maybe complete a survey and get a coupon off at a restaurant once complete.

Mr. Kanelos suggested not doing anything until we can be in person. There are too many segments of the community that won't participate that way. He suggested that the Village could perhaps incentivize participation for example by giving \$5 off the vehicle stickers, garage sale permits, etc. He likes incentives.

Mr. Shields suggested reaching out to schools to get the younger population involved. Can we utilize a few schools to get feedback as an extra credit assignment?

Ms. Lee suggested having surveys at the events so they can be filled out right away, that would be great. Perhaps at Park District events and when the pool opens up this summer.

Mr. Murphy suggested getting representation from ethnic groups to participate, perhaps creating ambassadors who would introduce the plans to their ethnic groups. He also agreed that bringing in younger voices into the mix. Ms. Lockerby stressed that getting every voice heard in Niles is very important ...

Mr. DeSantiago talked about different mottos of villages. Ms. Lockerby stated that the current motto of Niles is "It's Possible Here," which is also in the Village's logo. He also stated that he likes the old motto – "Where People Count". He thought a motto contest would be an idea, too. Ms. Lockerby mentioned the Village went through a re-branding recently. Ms. Skeffington-Vos stated it was in 2014-2015.

Mr. Baker re-stated that he agreed with what was previously suggested. He thought getting signs advertising the project in high-traffic areas (grocery store lines, gas station pumps, etc.) would be beneficial. He stated that social media will always be important for his age demographic. Survey links on social media will be the best way to reach people his age. He mentioned Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat.

Mr. Shields said Niles needs to think seriously about sustaining the contacts we make with members of the public year-round. Perhaps a goal should be a process where we routinely get feedback from various groups within the Village.

Ms. Lockerby mentioned that we've discussed creating series of videos to talk about the project. She asked for volunteers again. Trustee Niedermaier offered to participate.

Ms. Lee referred to the television show "Wild Chicago" to showcase businesses in the Village. She also noted that the readability of the yard signs for the Comp Plan signs is difficult and that it is not a fresh/modern look. The green is hard to read.

Trustee Niedermaier would like to reach out to do whatever is possible to reach out to people that don't typically get engaged in projects. Mr. Shields said many people likely don't speak up because their opinions have never been asked for before.

Mr. Baker mentioned he wouldn't have heard about the committee if it wasn't for his parents who read about it in the newspaper. He wondered how true that was for the majority of the residents of the Village. Ms. Lee mentioned that people want to volunteer, but the advertisement for participation needs to be posted about in highly visible areas. Trustee Niedermaier mentioned that schools have been less inclined to work with the Village and other organizations, which would be a bonus. Each member should recruit 3-4 people to get opinions.

Ms. Lockerby stated that the Village Staff has discussed asking the Committee to seek feedback from friends/neighbors/acquaintances via a predetermined list of questions. Mr. Kanelos stated that the Staff's idea was the best idea he has heard and he thinks the Committee should talk to 5-10 people to get feedback. He would be willing to talk with 10-15 people. Mr. Shields stated he would ask 10 as well.

Ms. Lockerby stated that there are two things we want people to do – give feedback and attend the events as part of phase 2. Ms. Kanelos suggested that the committee encourage the people they interview to participate in the phase 2 events in the future.

Mr. Konopka thought everything he heard was great. His main concern is leaving someone out. He thought we should think about incorporating Zoom attendance into any of the in-person events that we plan.

Discussion on the Village's reliance on Zoom moving forward.

Ms. Lockerby introduced the second section of new business, asking each of the members to spend roughly 3 minutes answering the following questions: What does your ideal Niles look like in 2040? What types of changes does that entail to the current development patterns?

Ms. Lee gave a presentation using a PowerPoint presentation (attachment #1) and discussed the information presented on the slides. She also presented a "vision board" that included discussion on different generations, ideas to bring into Niles, including open spaces for fresh food shopping, outside eating, experiences, dog parks, music parks, etc.

Mr. Maccione talked about three core ideas: community building, finding a place for a town/center, and future-focused development/redevelopment. He also talked about what 2040 will look like, which, in his opinion would probably be more technologically-advanced, more reliant upon artificial intelligence. This being said, he believes people may have more time for recreation and there will likely be more people in service-based jobs. He believes the plan needs to be broad, but more focused. He'd like the Village to have a place where facilities can go and hang out. He'd like to turn retail into the retail of the future.

Mr. Murphy talked about having a community-focused area. He mentioned open-air markets/food vendors that can be found in the downtowns of Milwaukee, Cincinnati and Cleveland. Also having more flexible zoning regulations to allow for different housing types within Niles.

Mr. DeSantiago talked about different parts of Chicago and what he personally likes about the areas: "cool" restaurants, it would be neat to attract restaurants that people would travel to Niles for, also, dog-friendly

areas. He'd like to see a performing arts venue at Golf Mill, similar to the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie. Adjacency to forest and river should be celebrated and perhaps utilized strategically. He believes the Cook County Forest Preserve District would be interested in promoting this too. He also believes promotion of the Leaning Tower should be utilized, perhaps with grass areas for outdoor music venues.

Mr. O'Brien talked about his ideas for Niles. He believes experiences, not just retail, for people and families at Golf Mill will be very important for the future. He suggested adding a Ninja Gym at Golf Mill. He believes the plan gives Niles a chance to strategize to retain long term residents and provide a higher-class living. He suggested appearance improvements to storefronts. He'd like to see: mid-range restaurants, healthy/trendy groceries, higher-end shopping/boutiques, walkability, and experiences.

Mr. Kanelos agreed with his fellow committee members. He believes walkability is more important than the bike lanes. He also believes the housing in Niles should be updated with contemporary buildings, much like what is going up in various areas in Chicago. He talked about reasonable architectural guidelines for the Village. He'd like to see things more friendly for developers. He likes what is happening in Morton Grove on Dempster.

Mr. Konopka agreed with Mr. Kanelos. He believes that the housing stock is the most important thing in Niles. The programs that help Niles homeowners should be advertised more. He believes Niles should have something for everyone. He also talked about the "community feeling" of Niles.

Mr. Baker talked about the age and size of the housing in Niles. He also talked about the programs for homeowners. He also feels Niles is always behind what other communities are doing. He believes people don't spend their money in Niles.

Mr. Shields took a very high-level. He believes the 2040 plan should start with a vision statement with items that we care about. He stressed that Niles is a multi-pronged organization. He also believes that Niles' core character should not change – we don't want to be another community, we want to be Niles. He outlined that Niles should include quality housing for everyone, commercial corridors should be regional destinations, we may need to re-imagine areas, well-maintained Village infrastructure, high Village image and identity, arts and culture, state of the art industrial areas, better transportation network to get people into Chicago and to O'Hare, a higher level of civic engagement, and the community needs a place to come together where there are opportunities to come together to meet (teenagers, etc.). He stressed that he doesn't think the "idea" of Niles should change.

Trustee Niedermaier made a presentation, outlining ideas in a PowerPoint (Attachment #2). He talked about figuring out "who we are" and function vs. emotion. He outlined his suggested tenets for Niles (progressive-minded, value-minded, mobile/active, care for our own, and celebrate our diversity). He talked about the following: he'd like to define Niles' identity, he believes Arts and Culture needs to be "supercharged" and how Niles can be different from Evanston and Skokie, he talked about a case-study: Carmel, Indiana Arts and Design District, he'd like to define Niles' experiential retail style, he gave "big ideas" for suggested changes in Niles, he'd like to bring families back to Niles, and promote neighborhoods. He also gave a case study on neighborhood engagement.

Discussion ensued throughout the entire presentation about the points made by Trustee Niedermaier.

Ms. Lockerby talked about the next meeting, outlining that it will be on April 14, 2021 and to prepare for a discussion on Image and Identify and Economic Development from the 2030 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Shields asked that the Committee wrap up tonight's conversation at the next meeting, coming to a consensus on the best path forward for the Comprehensive Plan. It was agreed that Staff would meet with the co-chairs and send out the next meeting's agenda. It was also agreed that the PowerPoint presentations that were made at the meeting will be shared with the Committee.

Ms. Lockerby noted that no public comments were received before or during the course of the meeting.

Trustee Niedermaier asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kanelos made a motion and Mr. Shields seconded. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 pm.