

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MORTON GROVE
RICHARD T. FLICKINGER MUNICIPAL CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AUGUST 22, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER

- I. In the absence of Village President Dan DiMaria (absent with notice), Village Clerk Eileen Harford
& II. called the Regular Meeting of the Village Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Village Hall and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance. She then asked the Board for a motion to approve one of their colleagues to serve as President pro-tem for tonight's meeting.

Trustee Travis moved to name Trustee Witko as President pro-tem for this meeting, seconded by Trustee Thill. Clerk Harford called the roll:

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan aye
Tr. Thill aye

Tr. Minx aye
Tr. Travis aye

Tr. Shiba aye
Tr. Witko aye

Village Clerk Eileen Harford called the roll. Present were Trustees Saba Khan, Rita Minx, Ashur Shiba, John Thill, Connie Travis, and Janine Witko.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee Minx moved to approve the Minutes of the August 8, 2023 Village Board Meeting as presented. Trustee Travis seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.**

IV. SPECIAL REPORTS

NONE

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

NONE

VI.

PLAN COMMISSION REPORTS

NONE

VII.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)

President pro-tem Witko noted that on this evening's agenda is **Resolution 23-29, Approving and Adopting the 2023 Village of Morton Grove Strategic Plan Update.**

She said a number of residents are present this evening to comment on the Strategic Plan Update. She asked that each limit their speaking time to four (4) minutes, and asked them to try not being repetitive in their statements.

1. **Janice Cha, 8924 Olcott.** Ms. Cha is a 20-year resident and is on the leadership team for Vision Morton Grove. She said her husband is Asian—a Korean American—who grew up in Quincy, IL, so he knows first-hand how it feels to live in a community where diversity and inclusion do not exist. She said she was glad to see that diversity is a part of Morton Grove's Strategic Plan. In the section titled "Long Term—Routine," the plan notes the Village's intention to continue to embrace diversity and promote a unified community by maintaining and increasing community engagement from all ethnic groups, cultures, and residents; and further, will implement and support programs and activities.
 - a. Ms. Cha said she's asking that the Village act on those points by signing on to Cook County's "United Against Hate" campaign. This initiative disrupts discrimination by providing pictorial, verbal, and education examples of how to stand up against all forms of hate. Neighboring communities that have already joined this campaign include Arlington Heights, Glenview, Glencoe, Wheeling, and Wilmette. The website www.CookCountyUnitedAgainstHate.com has more information.
2. **Bob Raccuglia, 7439 Arcadia,** is a 19-year resident and a member of Vision Morton Grove's leadership team. He said he was happy to see the Strategic Plan includes a goal of continuing to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the Village. Mr. Raccuglia said he's aware that there can be a "backlash" against terminology like EDI, some see it as being a form of political correctness or as a fad, but it speaks to something more important and substantial than that, something that is neither liberal nor conservative. He explained that "Equity" involves creating a fair playing field so everyone has the same opportunities and rights. "Diversity" recognizes and celebrates our differences. "Inclusion" creates an environment where everyone has a place at the table and is valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives.
 - a. Mr. Raccuglia hoped that "EDI" was not just a cosmetic catchphrase in the Strategic Plan document, and encouraged the Village to keep the goal of equity, diversity, and inclusion as a guiding principle in implementing all of the objectives in the Strategic Plan. He also urged the Board to make EDI an important element of the Village's hiring practices, of Village policy-making, in the planning of Village events and celebrations, and in the Village's distribution of services and resources.

VII.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only) (continued)

3. **Jon Cole, 6023 S. Park Ave.** Mr. Cole said he is a 30-year resident, a member of the Village's Ad Hoc Strategic Plan Committee and he also serves on the leadership team of Vision Morton Grove. He thanked everyone who had played a role in the development of the new Strategic Plan. After the first draft was released, he submitted some comments to the members of the Committee and the Village Board, and said he appreciated that some people took the time to respond back to him. When the second draft of the plan was released, he was pleased to see that some changes had been made based on the input the Village received.
 - a. Mr. Cole said his comments tonight have to do with the next phase of taking the goals of the new plan and developing and implementing action steps and strategies in the coming months and years. He said he was not speaking just for himself, but on behalf of all the members of Vision Morton Grove and over 200 individuals, businesses, and organizations who signed on to this request last year. One of the specific actions they are all advocating is to have EDI plans for recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees in all Village departments and in appointing individuals to Village Commissions. Mr. Cole said that some efforts and actions have already been made towards this and applauded the Board for those, adding, "We hope to see these built upon and expanded in an organized and comprehensive manner and we look forward to collaborating with you to make this happen."
4. **Bob Burkhart, 6034 Grove Ct.** Mr. Burkhart is a 16-year resident speaking about EDI as part of the Strategic Plan. He said he appreciated the dialogue that he and some others have had with Mr. Czerwinski and the changes that resulted from those talks. He also thanked the Board for keeping everyone informed. He said his comments are directed more to the implementation of the plan rather than the plan itself.
 - a. Mr. Burkhart said Vision MG hopes EDI will be kept continually in mind as the Strategic Plan unfolds. He said, "There's a saying: If something is everyone's responsibility, it ends up being no one's responsibility." He said he is aware that every member of the Village staff has a full plate and that there is no particular commission or committee set up to implement EDI. As it stands, EDI could very easily fall through the cracks.
 - b. Mr. Burkhart said EDI developments don't happen merely by saying so. EDI is a complex matter with numerous underlying sociological and economic practices. Most municipalities and companies that take EDI seriously set up specific groups or hire staff specifically skilled in EDI practices. That said, Mr. Burkhart said he hoped the Village would either hire or designate a specific staff member to be an EDI officer, even if only part-time.
 - c. Mr. Burkhart said, alternatively the Village could set up an EDI Commission, as they did with the recently established Environmental and Natural Resources Commission (ENRC). He felt that, given the size of the total Village budget, it should be possible to find dollars to assist in accomplishing this goal. His experience is that when a group decides to do something, it will find the money to do it.

VII. **RESIDENTS' COMMENTS (Agenda Items Only)** (continued)

5. **Beverly Copeland, 9323 Olcott Avenue**, is a 58-year resident who said she has seen many changes. She said she likes the new Village "tagline" of Incredibly Close. Amazingly Open. She also likes how diversity within the Village has been evolving, but, she said, she would also like to see more diversity in the various Village departments and commissions. She asked the Village to sign on to Cook County's "United Against Hate" campaign and to also consider EDI in all matters.

6. **Akhter Sadiq, 5736 Main Street** is a 33-year resident commenting on the proposed updated Strategic Plan. He said there are mentions of EDI but he did not see a concrete plan or commission to deal with it. He noted that there are over 125 people serving on various Village Commissions, Committees, and Boards, such as the Advisory Commission on Aging, the Appearance Commission, the Cable and Telecommunications Commission, the Community Relations Commission, the Economic Development Commission, the Environmental and Natural Resources Commission, the Fire and Police Commission, the Plan Commission/Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Traffic Safety Commission. He asked the Board, speaking as a minority, why is there not an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission, or failing that, an EDI Officer?

7. **Jim Szczepaniak, 8525 Lillibet Terrace**. He said that he's a 31-year resident, and he and his wife find the Morton Grove community warm and welcoming, with excellent level of municipal services. He thanked the Board and the Ad Hoc Committee, and said it's great to see the Village acknowledge not only the varying weaknesses and challenges of this diverse community, but also its strengths and opportunities. Regarding EDI, he said, lots of people have good intentions, but they're busy or they're employed. He was the Community Relations Director for Niles Twp. Dist. 219 for 15 years, and said there were various efforts under way to try to get racial equity, social justice, and ethnic diversity ingrained in the local culture. It wasn't until an Equity Director was hired that things began to move.
 - a. Mr. Szczepaniak said he's impressed with the points of the Strategic Plan, but it struck him that, in the "Overall Themes Based on All Focus Group Feedback," there are some very specific things, which include "Recruiting and retaining quality employees who are representative of the community" and "Continuing efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Village." But when he moved to the "Goals" section, which sometimes looks and feels like a "checklist," he found it to be much more general. He said the Village should want EDI in a checklist so that important work doesn't get lost. Especially given the fact that Morton Grove's population is over 33% Asian; that we have so many immigrant families we can't assume they are proficient in English, or that they know how to access Village services. We can't assume they would "know" to pick up a phone and call the Village, or the Library, or Niles Twp. Government.

 - b. Mr. Szczepaniak said he doesn't really expect the Village to hire another staff member for EDI, but he did hope that, at the least, the Village would consider an advisory commission on EDI, so they can say they are doing everything possible to make sure they're reaching out to those people, so that all the great services and efforts the Village is making to serve residents really will be serving all residents.

VIII.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1. President pro-tem Witko said she was proud to report that the Morton Grove Police Department has won first place in the 2023 Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge for municipal police departments with 36 to 50 sworn members. This is the third time the MGPD has won the challenge, having also prevailed in 2019 and 2021. The Police Department also won the Rail Safety Specialty Award for the third year in a row. President p-t Witko said the Illinois Traffic Safety Challenge is a friendly competition between law enforcement agencies of a similar size and type, sponsored by the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. Departments submit a very detailed application highlighting the community's traffic safety program and the effect it has on reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The Board joined her in congratulating Chief Simo and the MGPD on these accomplishments.
2. Next, President p-t Witko presented **Resolution 23-29, Approving and Adopting the 2023 Village of Morton Grove Strategic Plan Update.**
 - a. She said, in 2015, the Village Board adopted a strategic plan to assist the Village in formulating and prioritizing its goals, strategies, and direction, and to provide a framework for the allocation of its resources for the next five to seven years. In 2022, the Village engaged Northern Illinois University Center for Government Studies to assist the Village in updating the Strategic Plan. An Ad Hoc committee of 11 residents was appointed to ensure the Strategic Plan was reflective of the Village's unique needs and desires. The process included numerous opportunities for residents, business owners, elected and appointed officials, and other internal and external stakeholders to share their vision for the future of Morton Grove through community meetings, workshops, targeted focus group discussions, and interviews.
 - b. The Plan is organized into four strategic categories: Character, Community, Governance, and Economy, and sets forth strategic goals to accomplish positive change and community improvement over the next five to seven years. The Strategic Plan is not designed to be a static document and will be continually assessed and adjusted to reflect the changing environment and evolving needs of the community.
 - c. President p-t Witko said the draft strategic plan was introduced for consideration at the July 25th Village Board meeting, and, at Mayor DiMaria's request, the resolution was tabled to tonight's meeting to give residents additional time to provide comments and suggestions. The draft plan has been posted on the Village's website since early July. She said the Village is grateful for the many positive comments received, and also appreciates and has taken into account the constructive criticism and suggestions offered, and refined the Plan accordingly.
 - d. The revisions to the Plan include highlighting the importance the Village places on serving all residents. One of Morton Grove's greatest strengths is our diversity, as we welcome and use our efforts to respond to the needs of all ages, genders, races, national origins, and cultures. Key emphasis has been and always will be focused on our seniors, as they are a very important part of our community. The revised Plan identifies 20 strategic goals sorted by category, timeframe, and complexity. Based on comments from residents and direction from the Board, priority rankings which were included in the first draft of the Plan have been removed, because the Village believes all of the identified strategic goals are important and can be achieved.

VII.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

President pro-tem Witko asked the Board for a motion to approve Resolution 23-29. Trustee Travis so moved, seconded by Trustee Shiba.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan aye
Tr. Thill aye

Tr. Minx aye
Tr. Travis aye

Tr. Shiba aye
Tr. Witko aye

- e. Trustee Thill commented that, this past Saturday, he had attended the Assyrian Food Festival and then an event at the Muslim Education Center. Seeing all the families enjoying themselves at both events, he couldn't help but feel like he was actually witnessing diversity.

IX.

CLERK'S REPORT

1. Clerk Harford announced that the September Senior Luncheon will be at the Civic Center on September 1, 2023. Seniors should call 847-868-5928 to reserve a spot.
2. Clerk Harford also announced that free blood sugar and cholesterol screenings for seniors will be taking place the third Thursday of every month at 10am at the Civic Center. The Village's senior programming has recently engaged with Oak Street Health (a division of CVS Health) to be able to offer these screenings to local seniors. Health progressions will provide the service and no appointment is necessary. The screenings are free.
3. Lastly, Clerk Harford promoted the Senior Ride Share Program. This program is supported by funds through the SafeLIGHT Foundation and private donors. The program offers free Lyft rides to registered residents who are at least 65 years old. A total of 60 Morton Grove senior "households" are currently registered and receiving services. As of the end of July, a total of 171 rides have been provided since the program's inception in late 2022. Scheduled rides are provided to grocery stores, pharmacies, and medical appointments within Morton Grove. Rides are also available to medical appointments at most area hospitals and medical buildings. The program will continue as long as funds are available.

X.

STAFF REPORTSA. Village Administrator:

Village Administrator Czerwinski wanted everyone to be aware that the National Weather Service has issued an Excessive Heat Watch from Wednesday, August 23 at 11:00 a.m. through Thursday, August 24, at 8:00 p.m. and an Excessive Heat Warning from Wednesday, August 23 from 11:00 a.m. through 9:00 p.m.

X.

STAFF REPORTS (continued)

a. Cooling center will be available during regular business hours at the following locations:

- American Legion Memorial Civic Center, 6140 Dempster Street, 847-470-5223, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Prairie View Community Center, 6834 Dempster Street, 847-965-7447, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, closed Sundays
- Morton Grove Public Library, 6140 Lincoln Avenue, 847-965-4220, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Fridays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays; and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays

Mr. Czerwinski noted that seniors can be particularly susceptible to the effects of extremely hot weather and encouraged neighbors of elderly folks to check in on them. The Village website also contains best practice reminders for the public with this in mind; see www.mortongroveil.org.

- Drink plenty of water.
- Air conditioning provides the safest escape from the heat.
- Go elsewhere to get relief during the hottest part of the day if you have no air conditioning.
- Stay indoors as much as possible, on the lowest floor out of the sun. Keep heat outside and cool air inside by closing any doors or windows that may allow heat in.
- Plan to check on family, friends, and neighbors (especially the elderly) who do not have air conditioning or who spend much of their time alone. Be a friendly neighbor—make sure they're safe.
- Eat small meals of carbohydrates, salads, and fruits, and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein because they increase metabolic heat.
- Slow down. Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activity. If you must engage in strenuous activity, do so during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Stay in the shade.
- If you experience an emergency, dial 911.

B. Corporation Counsel:

Corporation Counsel Liston had no formal report this evening.

XI. TRUSTEES' REPORTS

A. Trustee Khan:

Trustee Khan had no formal report this evening.

B. Trustee Minx:

Trustee Minx had no formal report this evening.

C. Trustee Shiba:

1. Trustee Shiba encouraged everyone to “mark their calendar” for the upcoming Morton Grove Sustainability Expo on Saturday, September 9 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Morton Grove Civic Center, 6140 Dempster Street. Enjoy family-friendly activities, kid’s crafts, and connect with eco-friendly vendors! New this year will be a “Recycling Fest” at the Expo—a convenient one-stop drop-off recycling event for various items. For more information, see the Expo webpage on the Village’s website.

D. Trustee Thill:

Trustee Thill had no formal report this evening.

E. Trustee Travis:

Trustee Travis reminded everyone that the Summer Photo Contest will end on September 1. Please submit your photos of people having summer fun in Morton Grove to Village Hall or via the Village website. Photos must be submitted by September 1, 2023.

F. Trustee Witko:

Trustee Witko presented four (4) Ordinances this evening.

1. **Ordinance 23-17, Approving a Special Use Permit for a Nonboarding School and House of Worship on a Lot Less Than 3.5 Acres at 7800 Lyons Street in Morton Grove, Illinois.**

XI.

TRUSTEES' REPORTS (continued)

Trustee Witko moved to adopt Ordinance 23-17, seconded by Trustee Minx.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Witko	<u>aye</u>

2. **Ordinance 23-18, Approving a Special Use Permit For a Drive-Through Facility Associated with a Financial Institution in a C-1 General Commercial District with Select Waiver for the Property Commonly Known as 6210 Dempster Street in Morton Grove, Illinois.**

Trustee Witko moved, seconded by Trustee Travis, to adopt Ordinance 23-18.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Witko	<u>aye</u>

3. **Ordinance 23-19, Approving a Special Use Permit for a Full-Body Massage Establishment in a C-1 General Commercial District for the Property Commonly Known as 9231-35 Waukegan Road in Morton Grove, Illinois.**

Trustee Witko moved to adopt Ordinance 23-19. Trustee Minx seconded the motion.

Motion passed: 5 ayes, 1 nay.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Witko	<u>nay</u>

4. **Ordinance 23-20, Approving a Special Use Permit for an Assisted Living Facility in a C/R District for the Property Commonly Known as 5520 Lincoln Avenue in Morton Grove, Illinois.**

Trustee Witko moved, seconded by Trustee Shiba, to adopt Ordinance 23-20.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Witko	<u>aye</u>

XII.

OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

XIII.

WARRANTS

Trustee Khan presented the Warrant Register for August 22, 2023 in the amount of \$700,889.56. She moved to approve the Warrant Register as presented, seconded by Trustee Thill.

Motion passed: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan aye
Tr. Thill aye

Tr. Minx aye
Tr. Travis aye

Tr. Shiba aye
Tr. Witko aye

XIV.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

Rudolf Vilks, 7508 Emerson, said he had received a letter from Mr. Czerwinski dated July 5, 2023 which was in response to 11 letters sent by Mr. Vilks to the Village. He said the administrator is a liar and the Board Members are liars when they say "justice for all" in the Pledge of Allegiance because he is not getting justice. He said he has asked for meetings with the mayor and the mayor has only granted him one meeting. He said the Village is treating his letters as though they are a joke.

XV.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business being brought before the Board, Trustee Minx moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Khan. **Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.**

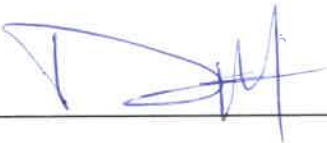
The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

PASSED this 12th day of September, 2023.

Trustee Khan
Trustee Minx
Trustee Shiba
Trustee Thill
Trustee Travis
Trustee Witko

Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye
Aye

APPROVED by me this 12th day of September, 2023.



Daniel P. DiMaria, Village President
Board of Trustees, Morton Grove, Illinois

APPROVED and FILED in my office this 13th day of September, 2023.



Eileen Harford, Village Clerk
Village of Morton Grove, Cook County, Illinois

Minutes by Teresa Cousar

