

MINUTES FROM NORTHFIELD VILLAGE CAUCUS MEETING (8/13/2024)

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by Chair Beverly Smith in the Village Park District conference room. A motion duly made and seconded by a Caucus member to approve the minutes of the 6/13/2024 was unanimously approved by a majority of the Caucus members present. Those members present were John Donnelly, Becky Newport, Carol Ritchell, Nancy Blake, Adam Lefebvre, Kathy Estabrooke, Yvonne Hurlbutt, Al Chircop, Patti Morrell, Amanda Alpert Knight, David Woodyatt, Beverly Smith, Keith Reed and Ericka Foster. Guests present were Tracey Mendrek and Charles Orth (Village Trustees), Alicia Bellar, Karen Roth and Fred Steinenman.

Treasurer's Report—the Caucus' bank balance is still \$836.36 as reported the last few meetings.

Platform Committee Report and ratification of 2024 Platform changes—before the meeting Caucus members were given the changes made in the 2020 Platform that now appear in the 2024 Platform. Such changes were as follows: In part B3 the last sentence was changed to read-- "Pedestrian safety is the priority as more sidewalks are created to enhance walkability throughout the Village." Part B5 was added and now reads-- "The Village Board should be committed to protecting Northfield's ecosystem and natural resources and to working with neighboring jurisdictions on environmental sustainability and green initiatives. The Village Board should explore establishing commissions and/or committees to create climate action plans that will serve our community in the years ahead." Part D was added to show how our residents ranked in 5 colors the importance of certain issues that were listed in the most recent Caucus survey of Northfield residents. Part E "Standards of Professionalism" was added and reads-- "The Village President and Village Trustees should be committed to the necessary civility and professional conduct. They should elicit the variety of viewpoints in all their interactions with residents, Village board members and staff which are needed to make the best decisions for the future of our Village." Upon motion by Amanda Knight and second by Kathy Estabrooke, these Platform changes were approved by a majority of the Caucus members present.

Oversight Report-- David led the discussion regarding recent Board activity and mentioned that the Trustee Committee on Sidewalks put together a 25 page report which identifies and prioritizes numerous Village sidewalk needs; that the Village has voted to add another full time policemen to the staff; and the Board is considering methods that it can use to evaluate the performance of the new Village Manager.

Happ Road Project and Roundabout Plans—there were several Caucus members and guests present to partake in the discussion of these two Village projects. The Happ Road Project was the most discussed with residents Karen Roth and Fred Steinemann presenting a very detailed 16 page analysis on the "Happ Road Homeowners Concerns about Happ Road Project". They had several supporters in the meeting and the overall objections seemed to be that the "early" objectives for the Happ Road business district improvements were considerably less than what the Village and Cook County eventually proposed/considered; that the Happ Road homeowners would be far more impacted than what Cook County had originally proposed; that there seemed to be a lack of advocacy by our Village in supporting the positions of our Northfield homeowners; that the project should focus more on making Northfield a better place to LIVE (as opposed "to DRIVE in"); and that there should be a "town hall" meeting on this issue to provide local residents the opportunity to ask questions and hear the Village and Cook County defend their drastic proposals on a "possible roundabout and central turn lanes."

The Village Board Trustees present at the meeting addressed several of the concerns raised and indicated that many of these issues had been raised by residents and discussed at past Village Board meetings and that Village residents should continue to appear at these meetings and express their concerns. Some residents present stated that they had raised these concerns at Board meetings but it seemed that there was nothing done about them—there was also concern about residents not being informed regarding the role of Cook County in these projects and whether or not the County has already approved the plan it wants.

Nominating Committee Report—Ericka is the chair of this committee and she reported that they have met several times and taken other actions such as announcing their search for new Board Members on line, Facebook page and Google. So far they have 107 “followers”. Flyers have been created and are being passed out in several Village locations. Candidate interviews are scheduled at the Clarkson Park Building on the evening of October 8, 9, 10 and probably the 11th if we have an unusual amount of candidates. The interviews will start at 5:30 on the 8th and 10th and at 6:30 on the 9th. Caucus members need to attend all these interviews in order to vote on all the final candidates.

Library News---Chaya Rubenstein announced that there is a presentation by State Senators Laura Fine and Julie Morrison on September 5 at the Winnetka Library and the public is invited. There was a “fullhouse” at a similar meeting last year where local residents were able to learn more about Illinois State politics. Patti Morrell reported that our Caucus should have one or two representatives on the Winnetka/Northfield Library Board as we have had in the past and that the Library Board will soon be distributing its “library caucus survey”.

NEW CAUCUS CANDIDATE—Ed Elfmann who lives on Middlefork Road was introduced as a potential new Caucus member. He has filled out his application and has attended two Caucus meetings, among his many local activities are that he and his wife have lived in Northfield at least 4 years, he has extensive experience in the banking business and in dealing with politicians, he has children in the local schools and coaches football and rugby at New Trier. Upon motion made by Al Chircop and second by Yvonne Hurlbutt, the members present unanimously approved Ed as a Caucus member.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Upon motion duly made and seconded, the majority of Caucus members present voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:00.

MINUTES PREPARED BY KEITH REED

Keith A. Reed