

VILLAGE OF ST. JOSEPH  
VILLAGE BOARD MEETING  
December 12, 2023

Mayor Fruhling-Voges called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all present.

Roll call was taken.	Fruhling-Voges	Present
	Page	Present
	Vallee	Present
	Painter	Present
	Wolfersberger	Present
	Cummings	Absent
	Rapp	Present

Others in attendance: Joe Hackney, Village Administrator; Mike Sennert, Village AV; Marc Miller, Village Attorney; Nicholas Rademacher, Clark Dietz; James Arndt, Arndt Municipal Support; Stan Harper, Champaign County Board Member; Sandpiper Holdings, developers of the proposed storage facility; Don Wauthier, engineer for the developers; Nora Maberry, The St. Joseph Record.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Stan Harper, Champaign County Board Member, talked to the Board about pulling their protest on the zoning issue with Champaign County. He discussed how the County has the most stringent setbacks and guidelines for wind farms of anywhere in the State. He has fielded 100s of phone calls against the wind farms. The Champaign County Zoning Board voted 7-0 against the State's infringement on the Village's 1.5 mile control. The next step was to go to the Champaign County ELUC committee. The next step was to go to the Champaign County's Environmental Land Use Committee. This did not happen. It is vital that the Village stick with the rural communities. This will allow the control to stay local.

He noted that there is there a rumor that new wind farms wanting to come to the area want to increase the height of the towers significantly. He is going to other village meetings and township meetings to garner support from every rural community. Harper wants the control to stay local in this zoning issue. Rapp: asking if farmers that own the ground that solar and wind farms are going on supporting this. Harper reported that the wind farm companies are targeting absentee landowners when trying to purchase land for the wind farms.

**CONSENT AGENDA (\* indicates action item, omnibus motion):**

1. Regular Village Board Meeting Minutes – November 28, 2023\* - Exhibit #1
2. Treasurer's Report – December 2023\* – Exhibit #2
3. Investment Recommendations- December 2023\* - Exhibit #3
4. Approval of bills in the amount of the \$65,514.45\*- Exhibit #4
5. MFT Resolution \$144,600\* - Exhibit #5

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6. Bond Abatement Ordinance Series 2023A\* - Exhibit #6
7. Bond Abatement Ordinance Series 2023B\* - Exhibit #7

Painter motioned and Vallee seconded to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Roll call vote was taken: Page – Aye, Vallee – Aye, Wolfersberger – Aye, Painter – Aye, and Rapp - Aye. Motion passed 5–0.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1) **Consideration of approval of acceptance of a gift of real estate for the Village:**

Fruhling-Voges reported that the Village has been offered a gift of property. It is the Baptist Church located on South Main Street. It can be used for the new Village Hall, everything can then be under one roof. There will be room for senior citizens and gatherings. There is plenty of room for parking and additional land. It is a very generous gift that will be very beneficial to the Village. Fruhling-Voges would like to set up a time to accept the property and acknowledge the family. Rapp motioned and Page seconded accept the gift of real estate at 407 South Main Street by the Faith Missionary Baptist Church as presented. Roll call vote was taken: Vallee – Aye, Painter – Aye, Wolfersberger – Aye, Rapp – Aye, and Page – Aye. Motion passed 5-0.

2) **Arndt Municipal Support – Economic Development Update:**

Mr. Arndt gave an update on the work he has been doing on behalf of the village. He went to Chicago to attend a business conference. He said that his contacts that he made at the conference were well received and he has reached back out to them for follow-up. He also had a breakthrough with a retailer that is wanting to come to St. Joseph. They are working on contract with a property owner. There is also some interest from a hotel developer and restaurant developers. He also talked to someone that is interested in office development in the village. Arndt has also pushed the north side of I-74 when they were in Chicago. He also talked to an interested party for senior development within the village.

Arndt reported that he has put in 48.5 active hours meeting and talking to potential businesses. He will be attend the business conference in May in Las Vegas to make more contacts to get the Village's name out there. The Board will all get copies of his reports. Hackney added that some businesses were shocked why they aren't already in St. Joseph. It is important for the Village to market ourselves and what we have to offer. Increased costs for buildings have made developers are more cautious. Arndt, discussed how the TIF district will be good for attracting businesses.

3) **Hotel Feasibility Study\* – Exhibit #8:**

Arndt talked about a conference he attended in Kansas City and talked to a hotel developer about developing in St. Joseph. Arndt noted that Illinois is a challenging

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state for the company because of tax laws. The company's first step is to require the community to do a hotel study first. If the hotel is built they could put in the contract to reimburse the Village for the cost of the study. Hackney, discussed how the study wouldn't be for just the one hotel, it could be taken to multiple hotels in the future. Arndt, talked to Champaign County and they feel there is room for more hotel rooms in the county.

Trustees had many questions for Arndt. Rapp had many questions such as: what the expected occupancy rate would be; if this company had other hotels in the state; and what are the cost of the informational signs are on the interstate. Arndt responded: 60% occupancy rate is average; yes, the company had multiple locations in Illinois; and that IDOT takes care of informational signs on the interstate. Hackney reported that when Arndt was in Effingham, they installed the Coming up soon Effingham on the interstate.

Vallee asked Arndt if he was only talking to one hotel company. Arndt confirmed that there was just one company. Page asked how large the hotel would be, such as the number of potential rooms. Arndt responded that the company has 3 different models that vary between 40-80 rooms. Rapp asked if previous study on traffic flow can be used by the hotel company. Arndt responded that data will be used for the hotel and also is used to attract restaurants also.

Wolfersberger asked if other hotels ask for this type of study. Arndt responded that some do, but communities do this study to give to hotels when reaching out to them.

Page asked how serious the company is before we spend the money for the study. She questioned if there were other factors that the Village should also be looking at. Arndt, responded there is no guarantee and there is a risk involved. Arndt said that he felt that since they have already looked at the sites that they wouldn't ask for the study if they weren't serious.

Painter said we have been stagnant for a while and feels we should spend the money to move forward. Vallee questioned how many communities are they looking at in Illinois or is this a generic request to many communities. Hackney feels that if they weren't interested they wouldn't have continued to talk to Arndt.

Fruhling-Voges discussed how we are in a good spot to host overflow hotel guests from Champaign for big events. She noted that the Rantoul sports complex could send hotel guests our way.

Rapp motioned and Painter seconded to approve the Hotel Feasibility Study. Roll call vote was taken: Painter – Aye, Wolfersberger – Aye, Rapp – Aye, Page – Aye, and Vallee – Aye. Motion passed 5-0.

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4) **Adding Gas/Electric Service to WWTP\* – Exhibit #9:**

Hackney said the Nicholas Rademacher from Clark Dietz was here to explain why this is necessary. Rademacher reported that since the Village is doubling the size of the plant, there is a greater need for power.

There is a letter (in the packet) from Ameren to the Village stating the cost for the upgrade at \$7,714.81. Rademacher followed up on this with Ameren to determine how this number was determined and what was included in the amount. Ameren has to set a new pole along with other material/labor costs. An email in the packet from Ameren shows that the total cost of the job is \$23,621.19. Ameren is offsetting part of that cost due to higher bills in the future as mentioned above. That amount is \$15,906.38. This leaves the amount due at \$7,714.81.

Painter wanted to know if Ameren would actually follow through with the charge for the installation. Hackney said he would be willing to reach out to Ameren to ask about not charging for the pole upgrade.

Rapp questioned what the gas will be used for at the plant. Rademacher responded that it would be used for heat in the office and other buildings. Painter asked if it would be better to go with all electric heat thus eliminating the need for the gas service. Rademacher is going to look into it.

Rapp questioned whether the solar people had been given the new electrical demands were for the sewer plant. Hackney and Rademacher said that it had been given to the solar people.

No vote was taken at this time.

5) **Adding Cedar Drive Entrance off of Hwy 150\* - Exhibit #10:**

Fruhling-Voges noted that with the Rail Trail completion through the Village, this would be a good time to put in the entrance to Cedar Drive south of Route 150. Fruhling-Voges noted that the cost of the entrance would be greatly increased once the Rail Trail is put in. Hackney reported that the Forest Preserve is in favor of it and was willing to put in as an alternative bid. This way if the costs were too high, the Village would not have to go through with the project. There will be some design costs with Farnsworth. Hackney reported that the engineer's estimated cost was \$50,000. The Village would pay the invoices directly to the contractor when the work was done. Rapp suggested that the Village needs to plan for four lanes on Route 150 in the future.

Rapp motioned and Wolfersberger seconded to work with the Forest Preserve District's and Village engineers to prepare the bid for the Cedar Drive entrance off of Route 150. Roll call vote was taken: Wolfersberger –

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Aye, Rapp – Aye, Page – Aye, Vallee – Aye, and Painter – Aye. Motion passed 5-0.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1) Public Hearing Continued – Special Use Application – Storage Units in Commercial District - Exhibit #11:**

Fruhling-Voges reported that the Board has the information and recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission. Fruhling-Voges reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approving the permit. The Board will consider this as part of the evidence in their decision whether to approve the development

Wauthier, engineer for the Sandpiper Holdings, summarized the materials presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The developers are asking for a Special Use Permit. The developers want to build several hundred units. He also reported that they have not finalized the design until they get the full Village Board's approval. He noted that until they have the Board's approval or conditions of approval the final drawings would not be made due to the expense of the drawings.

Wauthier stated that the developers feel that they have identified and addressed some of the fundamentals of the Special Use Permit. They are as follows:

- There is demand for self-storage units in the community.
- There is demand for handicap accessible self-storage in the community at this time.
- As far as traffic, it is highly unlikely that there would be more than two vehicles entering the facility at one time. The driveway is setup for no traffic backup on Route 150. This is for traffic and safety issues.
- There are emergency services available from the community.
- The site is compatible with the neighboring properties. There is flood plain and wooded area around the property. So there will not be adverse impact as it would if there were houses behind the property. The property to the sides is agricultural currently but are zoned commercial. There is no problem with the property being next to agriculture as far as the chemicals used by the farmers. This development will not impact the commercial properties.
- There will be landscaping around the facility so the view of the development will be broken up.
- There will be the required drainage for the area. There will be a detention basin for stormwater detention. The basin will also be landscaped.
- The site is suitable will not impact any residential properties.
- The unit will be built in a block formation with the outside walls serving as the barrier to the facility so there will not be a fence for the property.
- The developers checked with the Historical Preservation Agency and there is no problem with developing the property.

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- The main line for Illinois American Water runs at the front of the property so there will be fire hydrants on the property in compliance with the fire code.
- It does not conflict with public commitments or public facilities. There are no plans for facilities there.
- This will not alter population density or impact residences in any way.
- There are no endangered species in the area per the Illinois Department of Conservation
- There is no long-term environmental issues from the development.

Wer stated other considerations for the property that the developers have looked at are:

- The site has been zoned for commercial use for many years with no development. The developers feel that the storage units are a good fit. One of the problems with development in the area is that there is no wastewater available. This is not a problem for this development.
- There will be tax revenue from the development with to the local taxing bodies with no expenses to the same bodies, for example, there will be no children for the schools or any use of municipal services.
- This development will increase property values in the area.

There is one portion of the property that is in the 100 year flood plain. This is a portion of the stormwater basin. It is in the fringe of the floodplain not the floodway. (The is flood fringe is where water overflows, sits, and then recedes. A floodway is where floodwater flows.) You can develop in the flood fringe. So it will be fine for the Stormwater detention basin to be in the floodplain fringe.

There will need to be a subdivision of the property as it is currently several hundred acres. It goes from Route 150 to Interstate 74. The developer will requesting breaking out other commercial lots.

Ten percent of the units will be handicap accessible. The entrance and the driveway to the gate will be concrete or another hard surface. The interior of the site will be gravel or oil and chip except for the handicap area which will be a hard surface and fully accessible. There will be dark sky lighting that is on motion detectors for light only when someone is there and the light will shine downward to reduce the amount of light spreading outward. The lighting will be solar powered. There will be security cameras to provide for security.

Fruhling-Voges reported that this addressed everything brought up at the Planning & Zoning Commission. She noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission had voted to recommend the approval of the development. She asked Trustees if they had any questions.

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Rapp asked the length of the driveway. Wauthier stated that it was 80 feet or so. Wolfersberger referred to the drawings and said that it looked like it was at least 105 feet. Rapp brought up when Wauthier had mentioned fence besides the building and asked if there would be a fence outside of the building. Wer noted that in the back of the development there is an area that the building does not connect due to the high voltage power lines. This area will have a fence but the rest of the development, the building will serve as the barrier. Page questioned if all lights were motion detection lights. Wauthier answered yes. It is good for two reasons, it will allow for the lights to be powered by solar batteries and if the lights are in at odd hours, it will alert law enforcement to someone being on the property.

Rapp questioned approving the Special Use Permit before the final plans have been approved. He noted that he was not against the development, he wants to make sure that everything is done properly.

Painter motioned and Vallee seconded to approve the findings of fact document and accept the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Commission that the Board approve a Special Use Permit for the 5.28 acre tract on Route 150, west of the Village and north of Route 150. The GIS PIN is 28-22-10-300-009. Roll call vote was taken: Rapp – Aye, Page – Aye, Vallee – Aye, Painter – Aye, and Wolfersberger – Aye. Motion passed 5-0.

**2) Solar Review at WWTP: Purchase vs. PPA – Exhibit #12:**

Fruhling-Voges noted that everyone has more information on the solar in their packets. If Trustees have any questions, please send them to Hackney so he can forward it to the consultant. This is the consultant that the Village has received an opinion from. Hackney followed up on this with inviting Board members to send him the questions. He will either get them answered or set up a time for them to meet with the consultant. Hackney also asked that Board members take time to look at the new proposal that the Village has which is in the packet.

Painter discussed his reasons why he feels that it is better to buy vs rent the solar equipment. Painter does not agree with the PPA and would like for the Village to consider a proposal from his contact in the industry. He thinks that we can pay off the equipment within 5 to 10 years. Then all the solar power produced will be ours a great discount due to the power produced. The other way, Ameren can increase set the rate at whatever it decides for up to 30 years. He feels that it would be to the Village's financial benefit.

Rapp expressed his approval for purchasing the solar equipment. He felt that there was a lot of State and Federal incentives that the Village could take advantage of and that it would be to the Village's benefit. He stated that he feels that the equipment is much better now.

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Fruhling-Voges explained why she felt that it was better to rent. Fruhling-Voges has a major concern with committing that much of the Village's resources.

Hackney stated that he will set up having the contractor present to the Board. The Board is getting to the point where they need to make a decision.

**VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR:**

- Hackney reported that the lift station on Third Street has been replaced. Fruhling-Voges stated that this is the one that has had the most problems. Hackney agreed. Hackney noted that it took 5 months from the order date to get it built and installed. This is why the Village does not want to wait until one is dead to have to replace.
- Staff Report – Exhibit # 13

**STAFF UPDATES:**

- **Village Attorney** – Nothing to report
- **Village Clerk** – Nothing to report
- **Public Works** – Staff Report – Exhibit # 13.

**MAYOR'S DESK:**

- Fruhling-Voges wanted to thank everyone for the success of the events the last few weekends.
- Fruhling-Voges wanted to thank the Public Works staff for their hard work with the Christmas decorations.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

- Painter noted that tonight is the last night for signup for the Santa run.
- Page noted that Experience CU had listed some of the Village's Christmas events on their calendar.

**OTHER:** Nothing.

At 9:30, Rapp motioned and Page seconded to adjourn the meeting.

These minutes are respectfully submitted.

  
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Tiffany McElroy-Smetzer  
Village Clerk

Approved: January 9, 2024