

1 **APPROVED**

2 **MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHBROOK**  
3 **DOWNTOWN ZONING STEERING COMMITTEE**

4  
5 **Village Hall Terrace Room**  
6 **September 30, 2014**  
7

8 Members Present: Chairman Scott Cyphers, Susan Elfant, Steven Elisco, Selwyn Marcus,  
9 Lori Jordison

10  
11 Members Absent: None

12  
13 Staff & Consultant Present: Tom Poupard (Director, DPS), David Schoon (Assistant Director, DPS),  
14 Michaela Kohlstedt (Senior Planner) Leslie Oberholtzer  
15 (CodaMetrics), Tony Manno (RTA)  
16

17 **Call to Order & Introductions**

18 Chairman Cyphers called the meeting to order in the Terrace Room of Village Hall at 7:05 p.m.  
19

20 **Public Comment- Hear from the Audience**

21 None  
22

23 **Review of October 24, 2014 Meeting**

24 Member Elisco moved, Member Elfant seconded, to approve the October 24, 2014, minutes as  
25 submitted. On voice vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.  
26

27 **Presentation & Discussion of Proposed Form-Based Regulations for Downtown**

28 David Schoon, Assistant DPS Director, along with the assistance of Leslie Oberholtzer,  
29 CodaMetrics, and Tom Poupard, DPS Director, walked the Committee through the current draft of  
30 the proposed form based code amendments for the downtown.  
31

32 Schoon started his PowerPoint presentation regarding the draft form based code amendments by  
33 briefly summarizing the proposed new zoning regulating map and six new zoning districts for the  
34 downtown. In response to a question from Member Elisco, Oberholtzer explained why the  
35 Northbrook Shopping Center was zoned VG3 - Village Green Commercial Center District rather  
36 than the VG 2 – General District.  
37

38 Schoon then summarized the development approval process. He stated that under a form based  
39 code, all reviews are handled administratively unless an applicant is requesting a deviation,  
40 variation, or exception to the proposed rules, or some other zoning relief. Then either the  
41 Architectural Control Commission or the Board of Trustees would be involved with the review of  
42 the project. Committee members then discussed the concept of minor deviations for certain  
43 specified items, which are handled administratively by staff. Committee member expressed  
44 support of this concept and even though it is something we may want to have available for other  
45 items in the Zoning Code.

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2 Schoon then reviewed the section of the proposed regulations regarding building forms. He  
3 reviewed the five proposed building types (storefront, cottage, stoop, row, and civic). In response  
4 to a request by Member Elfant, Schoon and Oberholtzer explained why certain building types were  
5 allowed in certain zoning districts and not others. They also explained how a certain building type  
6 (e.g. a storefront) may have different requirements depending upon the district.

7  
8 Schoon then began to explain the different requirements (e.g. building placement, parking  
9 placement, height, uses, and street façade requirements) that give each building type its form.  
10 Regarding building placement he summarized requirements such as build to zones, occupation of  
11 corner, minimum front line coverage, minimum setbacks, and location for parking. He discussed  
12 height & use regulations such as minimum and maximum height of the building as well as  
13 individual floors, allowed uses by story, occupied space, and location of parking within a building.

14  
15 During discussion of height, Member Elisco questioned whether the range between the minimum  
16 and maximum height for each floor was too great thus not ensuring a continuity between  
17 buildings along a block frontage. Oberholtzer stated you could definitely decrease the range, but  
18 by doing so you reduce flexibility. Member Marcus stated that you may want to have a narrower  
19 range to ensure such sites as the C1 properties and the rest of the properties on the former  
20 Northbrook Garage block develop in a compatible fashion. Cyphers suggested that we may want  
21 to provide greater flexibility, but may want to require all projects in the VG1 go through the ACC.  
22 The Committee members discussed how limiting do the regulations need to be in order to achieve  
23 the look and feel we want for our downtown. Staff suggested that as the Committee continues its  
24 review of the rest of the regulations to keep that question in mind.

25  
26 Schoon then reviewed the street façade requirements (e.g. front façade entrance type, principal  
27 entrance location, horizontal and vertical divisions, transparency, and roof type).

28  
29 Having reviewed the general building form requirements for a storefront building, Schoon then  
30 walked the Committee through an exercise of how these requirements would be applied to the  
31 vacant lot at 1200 Meadow Road, which is located on the southwest corner of Meadow and  
32 Cherry roads.

33  
34 Regarding building form requirements, Schoon and Oberholtzer also briefly noted other façade  
35 design requirements such as blank wall limitations, interior side and rear façade treatments,  
36 materials and colors, windows, awnings and shutters, and balconies.

37  
38 Schoon then pointed out the proposed land use section as well as the street and block section of  
39 the proposed code amendments. The proposed land use section would not use the SIC Manual  
40 classification as the remainder of the Zoning Code currently uses, and which the Village has talked  
41 about getting away from. The street and block section discusses the standards in creating a new  
42 street through the Meadow Plaza property, the purpose of which is to create an additional  
43 vehicular and pedestrian realm that would connect the core part of the downtown with the north  
44 part of the commercial area in the downtown.

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1  
2 Schoon reviewed the proposed parking regulations, which would base the number of required  
3 parking spaces for a use based upon the Village’s standard parking requirements for uses but  
4 would allow for adjustments. In the VG1 Core District, a property owner could use the parking  
5 standards that currently exist for the special parking area in the Village Green Overlay District. For  
6 the remainder of the downtown, the required number of parking spaces could be adjusted  
7 downward by such factors as shared reduction, cooperative reduction, on-street parking credits,  
8 public parking credits, transit credits, and car-share credits. Member Marcus stated that seemed  
9 to be an appropriate approach as some of these factors were considered in the granting of the  
10 recent parking variation for his project at 1312 Shermer Road.

11  
12 Schoon concluded the review of the proposed form based code regulations by stating the sign  
13 regulations would remain the same except that projecting signs would be allowed throughout the  
14 VG districts, as they currently are only allowed in the core area, and a new type of pedestrian-scale  
15 pole-mounted sign would be allowed in all VG districts.

16  
17 Schoon then asked Committee members to reflect on the Village’s recent review of the building at  
18 1312 Shermer Road. Based upon that experience using the Village’s current zoning and design  
19 regulations, what are their thoughts about a form based code approach? Members Elfant,  
20 Jordison, Cyphers, and Elisco all expressed the opinion that Member Marcus’ building was  
21 consistent with the draft form-based code regulations. The Village was very fortunate for that  
22 fact; because a different developer may not be so thoughtful in with its design. Member Jordison  
23 stated that she thought having the form-based code regulations would have provided the  
24 applicant a more clear picture of what was expected and could have possibly saved time and  
25 effort.

26  
27 Schoon concluded his presentation by suggesting the Committee focus on the following questions:  
28

- 29 • Does the Committee still support pursuing an overall form-based code modification for the  
30 downtown, or should we explore amending existing zoning regulations & design guidelines  
31 to encourage redevelopment?
- 32 • If the form-based approach is desired, does the proposal contain a proper balance between  
33 requirements (“shall” do) and guidelines (“should” do)?
- 34 • How would the Committee like to approach the Board regarding its preferred approach?  
35

36 Member Elisco stated that the form-based code approach is on the right track. We need to create  
37 a clearer picture of what we want for the downtown and the form-based code will do that.  
38 Member Marcus stated that there are challenges owning property and operating a business in the  
39 downtown, but he believes the proposed standards could create more certainty for developers  
40 and create a more exciting downtown. Member Cyphers stated that the form based code will set  
41 expectations for development and is the right approach. We need to be thoughtful and strategic  
42 regarding how to approach the Board with the proposal. He stated the proposed regulations  
43 aren’t about being the “pretty police” but are about encouraging economic development and  
44 prosperity in the downtown. Other members voiced their agreement. Member Elisco stated in

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1 presenting the form based code we need to focus on our vision for the downtown. He added we  
2 need to increase residential density and need something to make this happen. Member Elfant  
3 agreed and stated the form based code will allow us to increase overall density in the downtown  
4 in a way the community can support. The form based code is about creating a vision. Committee  
5 members stated that thought has to be given to how the proposal is rolled out to the public and  
6 how the development community and property owners are involved in the process. The  
7 Committee members also agreed that it would be important and beneficial that they all attend a  
8 meeting in which the plan is presented to the Board of Trustees so that the Board can see the plan  
9 has the support of the committee.

10  
11 **Schedule and Next Steps**

12 Committee members will forward their comments regarding the draft code amendments to  
13 Schoon, and Schoon will work with Oberholtzer and staff to refine the code amendments. Staff  
14 will then bring the draft code amendments back to the Committee to review one more time prior  
15 to the Committee making a recommendation.

16  
17 **Other Business**

18 There was none.

19  
20 **Adjourn**

21 On motion made by Member Elisco and seconded by Member Elfant, the meeting was adjourned  
22 at 9:05 p.m.

23  
24  
25  
26 Respectfully Submitted –  
27 David Schoon