

*MINUTES OF MAYOR NELSON AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE VILLAGE OF FLOSSMOOR, ILLINOIS HELD ON JULY 15, 2024*

VILLAGE HALL

JULY 15, 2024

7:30 PM

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm.

Village Clerk LoGalbo took roll.

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson, Trustees Bradley-Scott, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, Mustafa

ALSO PRESENT: Village Manager Bridget Wachtel; Fire Chief Bob Kopec; Acting Chief of Police Keith Taylor; Director of Public Works John Brunke; Director of Building & Zoning Scott Bugner; Finance Director Ann Novoa; Community Engagement Manager Stephanie Wright; Assistant to the Village Manager/Communications Manager Nicole Castagna; Village Attorney Kathi Orr; 46 community members, media, and others.

Mayor Nelson reminded everyone that the Village Board meeting was being streamed via Zoom for the convenience of those unable to attend the meeting in person. She noted that public comment on agenda and non-agenda items would be welcome after a Proclamation. Public commenters who signed up to speak would be called from the list they signed in on, and they should go to the podium to speak at that time. Mayor Nelson asked that speakers observe the Village's public comment policy of introducing themselves, acting with decorum, addressing their comments to the public body at large and not directly to a member of staff, and limiting their comments to five minutes per person for a maximum of thirty minutes of public comment time.

Recognitions and Appointments:

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #1 – A Proclamation Declaring July 2024 as Disability Pride Month. Mayor Nelson welcomed Lisa Drzewiecki with the South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA), Mike Gianatasio with the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District and some friends that they brought along who are also participants. Mayor Nelson explained that the SSSRA is an organization that serves all of the South Suburbs, and if anyone has a friend or a family member who needs their services, they are very happy to help and walk people through the options that they have available. The SSSRA has events coming up in August, such as a putt-putt night fundraiser and a family picnic where folks are invited to join them and learn more about their wonderful organization. Mayor Nelson noted that Mr. Pitts and Ms. Miller were also in attendance.

Mayor Nelson read a Proclamation Declaring July 2024 as Disability Pride Month.

Lisa Drzewiecki thanked the Village of Flossmoor for allowing and inviting the SSSRA to all-inclusive activities in the community. They participated in Plant the Gem and had a nice volunteer group that came out and worked with Stephanie Wright. It was fantastic, and they truly appreciate all the support. She noted that they are closing the loop with all of the unity they have and the support from the Village of Flossmoor and the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District. Drzewiecki thanked the Village for including them, for the all-inclusive programming, and noted that she looked forward to their future together.

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No vote was required.

Citizens Present Wishing to Address the Board:

Citizens Present Wishing to Address the Board on an Agenda Item & Non-Agenda Item

(It should be noted that in reporting these comments, the Village has not researched the accuracy of any comments.):

Flossmoor resident Warren Engelberg's comments, in summary, were regarding worker co-ops and why it matters whether government taxpayer money goes to worker co-op contracts. Engelberg discussed how giving taxpayer money to capitalist corporations reproduces the inequalities that haunt society, that the government could decide to help develop the worker co-ops and the benefits of same, how society should broaden the conversation on government spending, and that a way to get beyond the inequalities in society is by not giving all contracts to capitalist corporations and build on developing a worker co-op sector so that it can get the job done for what the government needs.

Flossmoor resident Andrea Perry's comments, in summary, were regarding her being a thirty-year resident of Flossmoor who was in pursuit of the truth behind the firing of former Police Chief Jerel Jones. Perry obtained answers and information from the court documents, Jerel Jones as the Plaintiff versus the Village of Flossmoor, Illinois, and Bridget A. Wachtel, in her individual capacity and Michelle Nelson in her individual capacity. Perry referenced the Defendant's Answer to the First Amended Complaint as her sole source of information that she had access to about the specific reasons given for terminating Jones. Perry's comments made at the June 17th board meeting regarding Flossmoor Fest 2023 were referencing the preliminary statement of the Defendant's Answer to the First Amended Complaint and that due to the five-minute limitation for public comment her commentary was being presented in installments. Perry read excerpts from pages one and two of their preliminary statement: Wachtel identified glaring deficiencies in Jones' preparation and management of the fest, and that multiple lapses reflected poorly on Plaintiff and put the Village in a bad light. Perry questioned whether the 2023 Flossmoor Fest actually put a bad light on Flossmoor. Perry discussed her social media search results about the Flossmoor Fest and that her FOIA from the Flossmoor police that requested reports of any incident on September 9, 2023, during Flossmoor Fest revealed no incidents. Perry stated that information she obtained revealed that the 2023 Flossmoor Fest placed a positive light on Flossmoor, with the positive light best summarized in the September 12, 2023, Homewood-Flossmoor Chronicle article, Cozy Flossmoor Fest brings community closer together, noting that people positively noted the additional security measures and police presence and contrasted it to incidences that occurred in previous Flossmoor Fests in 2022 and 2018. Perry discussed 'bad light' headlines from Flossmoor Fest 2018, noted that it was under the watch of former Police Chief Pulec, questioned whether the Village Manager deemed him deficient in his performance and management of Flossmoor Fest 2018, and questioned whether she deemed it as a main reason to call for his termination. Perry noted that she asks, seeks answers, and appeals to Flossmoor citizens to get engaged, critically examine, and fact-check what is being done and said.

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Flossmoor resident Barbara Karstrom's comments, in summary, were regarding the Village's reported problem on July 11th with the computer control system at the water pumping station and that it malfunctioned, interrupting the flow of water to residents in Flossmoor. She stated that there was an announcement the next day that the problem was fixed, and there was a brief mention at the board meeting that the pump was being replaced in next year's budget. Karstrom asked for clarification on the amount of that pump replacement or upgrade as she could not find the information.

Mayor Nelson responded that it was not the pump that malfunctioned, that she believed it to be a software issue, and that the pump was not being replaced.

Karstrom inquired whether the software issue was being addressed.

Public Works Director John Brunke answered that it was being addressed.

Karstrom noted that Mayor Nelson showcased a new construction home in unincorporated Homewood, which has led to many questions about the differences between incorporated Flossmoor and unincorporated Homewood because the homes are across the street from each other. Karstrom inquired whether the Village could do something similar to Homewood's Citizen Civics Academy, which has educational sessions where participants learn about the responsibilities and the functions of the Village, the relationship between the Village Departments and the community, how services are provided and explain generally how everything works and what the Board has to vote on/ not vote on. She opined that it would be very helpful to do something similar.

Mayor Nelson answered that she thought it was definitely something to consider for the future and that the Village would have to weigh staff time and see who is available. She noted that the Flossmoor Police Department is starting their police academy classes for residents on August 28th and encouraged folks to sign up for that, too.

Flossmoor resident Ingrid VanDrongelen's comments, in summary, were regarding her being present for item number four on the consent agenda. She explained that she was a twenty-three-year resident and really loved Flossmoor because of her big, peaceful, and quiet backyard. She has a screen porch and a dining table in the backyard, and if all of the plans go through, then there will be a basketball court thirty feet from that dining table, and she will not have quiet time to read, a quiet dinner, or a quiet lunch while people are playing basketball over there. VanDrongelen noted that it was her third time voicing her concerns and she also had a couple of questions. Is there a concrete plan written by a company that is qualified to do drainage systems in the backyard? She stated that the neighbor was supposed to have a drainage proposal. She also asked if there was a written plan already and who made the plan.

Mayor Nelson answered that yes, her neighbor submitted the drainage proposal as part of the plan submitted by the contractor P & S Concrete Plus Construction in the agenda packet.

VanDrongelen explained how she wanted a professional company to make the plans and the previous two drainage options previously discussed and that she was concerned about the option of a water pit, which

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could lead to flooding in her backyard if it overflows and there is already a problem with flooding in Flossmoor, especially in her backyard. She noted that her neighbors on the west side of her neighbor's property had just put in a whole new draining system for \$35,000.00 and that it was really helpful. She explained that if her neighbor puts in a 30 x 30 concrete slab, she does not want any more flooding than what she already has. VanDrongelen also inquired about plans for some trees that are in her neighbor's yard that are on the fence line and who is making sure that the work is done according to the plans.

Mayor Nelson stated that it looks like there is going to be a lot of vegetation surrounding the court to buffer it, and that her neighbor could walk them through the plans. Mayor Nelson also explained that the head of the building department is Scott Bugner, and he would be overseeing the permit.

Flossmoor resident Lindsey Felker's comments, in summary, were regarding a couple of unanswered emails she has from a couple of different Departments within the Village. One email is regarding a late FOIA request from the Administrative Department, and the other email is regarding improper service and notice from the Building Department and that email was sent to Scott Bugner. Felker stated that one email was sent approximately one week ago, the other email was sent over a week ago, and both emails were about the Village not following the law, asking for accountability and both emails have been ignored. She stated that she followed up on both emails that day as well and I had not heard back on either one.

Mayor Nelson stated that the Village would be sure to follow up with Felker.

Village Manager Bridget Wachtel stated that Felker's FOIA request had been answered.

Felker added that the emails being ignored and disregarded reinforced the messaging heard from other people who have spoken at Village Board meetings, going all the way back to Madeline Miller, the chief, the new job that was created for the person the Village wants to be chief, and the basin, and it is a lot of the same where the Village does whatever it wants without accountability, total disregard, and residents being ignored. Felker added that that mindset is enabled throughout the Building Department and that she glanced at Scott Bugner and watched him get a smile on his face. She asserted that no one cares, that her complaints were not an isolated incident, that it was not the first time she had received a late FOIA response from the administrative office, that it was not the first time she had improper notice of service from the Building Department, that it was that type of total disregard that adds to the unplanned litigation, not in the budget, and that it affects everyone.

Flossmoor resident Ashley Giddens' comments, in summary, were regarding her proposal for an initiative to increase transparency and rebuild trust within the community through educational seminars about the Village's inner workings. She stated that transparency is a cornerstone of a healthy democracy and that it ensures that citizens are informed about the decisions being made on their behalf and understand the processes that affect their daily lives. Giddens stated that in recent times, there had been a noticeable decline in trust between residents and the local government, that the mistrust could hinder the ability to work together effectively make progress as a community, and that to address the issue, she proposed that the Village organize a series of seminars aimed at educating residents about the inner workings of the Village. She suggested that the seminars could cover topics such as how decisions were made, the budgeting

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process, the roles and responsibilities of different departments, and how residents can get involved and have their voices heard. Giddens asserted that residents would gain a better understanding of the complexities and challenges involved in governing the community, leading to more informed and constructive participation and that by demystifying government processes, the Village could encourage more residents to attend meetings, participate in public forums, and engage in community initiatives. Giddens also asserted that openly sharing information and educating residents could help rebuild trust as transparency fosters accountability and demonstrates a commitment to serving the community's best interests. Giddens suggested details for how the seminars could be organized and executed and urged the Village Board to consider her proposal and take the necessary steps to implement it to work together to build a stronger and more trusting relationship between local government and the residents it serves.

Mayor Nelson stated that Ms. Karstrom also requested something very similar to Ms. Giddens' proposal and that it was definitely something to consider as staff time allows and that it would be very useful. Mayor Nelson noted that in the short term, a document she found extremely helpful to her when first getting involved in local government was the Village's annual operating budget. She noted that there is an excellent write-up in every section that gives the history of the funding and the work that has been done on that piece of the budget. Mayor Nelson recommended that the source of information for the immediate future is a great place to start learning more about the Village government and the services that the Village provides.

Flossmoor resident Pam Jackson's comments, in summary, were regarding her wanting to put a bow on what she had observed over the past couple of months she had been coming to Village Board meetings. She noted that there had been a ton of fantastic suggestions, questions, and inquiries and that she strongly urged the Board to treat the residents with the respect that the Board is treated with. Jackson stated that she had suggested a questions and answers page on the Village's website about three months ago, which is a simple solution. She stated that it is an issue that a lot of organizations fail at, and that is just being transparent with what they can be transparent with. Jackson noted that she talked with the Board about these issues. She noted that the Village has a transparency website and that many questions had been asked, and that many people at the Village Board meetings probably feel like their questions have not been answered publicly. Jackson acknowledged that questions may have been answered one-on-one, but when questions come up from others, she is curious about the answers, and she thinks it would be easy to put the answers on the Village's website so that everyone can know the answers and feel heard since public comment is not a two-way dialogue. Jackson stated that they deserve to have answers and that with the climate and the feel of how things are occurring in the community, it would go a long way, and it is a simple fix.

Mayor Nelson referred to the Consent Agenda (which encompassed Agenda Items 2-5):

- 2. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on July 1, 2024*
- 3. Presentation of Bills for Approval and Payment as Approved by the Finance Committee (July 15, 2024)*
- 4. Consideration of an Ordinance of the Village of Flossmoor, Cook County, Illinois, Approving a Special Use for a Sport Court at 808 Argyle Avenue*
- 5. Consideration of a Contract Award for FY25 Parking Lots Patching and Seal Coat Project*

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Mayor Nelson called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Driscoll.

Mayor Nelson stated that she was going to pull off from the Consent Agenda item #4 - Consideration of an Ordinance of the Village of Flossmoor, Cook County, Illinois, Approving a Special Use for a Sport Court at 808 Argyle Avenue.

Trustee Bradley-Scott requested that item #2 - Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on July 1, 2024, be pulled off of the consent agenda. She noted that she thought Clerk LoGalbo did her absolute best in getting the Board the minutes, but they were delivered that afternoon and because of the length of the minutes, Trustee Bradley-Scott wanted to have some time to go through them thoroughly.

Mayor Nelson called for a motion to approve items #3 and #5 of the Consent Agenda. Trustee Lofton so moved, seconded by Trustee Bradley-Scott.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on Consent Agenda items #3 and #5. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: Trustee Daggett

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #2 – Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on July 1, 2024. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to table the Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on July 1, 2024, to the next board meeting on August 19th. Trustee Mustafa moved, seconded by Trustee Bradley-Scott.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: Trustee Daggett

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #4 – Consideration of an Ordinance of the Village of Flossmoor, Cook County, Illinois, Approving a Special Use for a Sport Court at 808 Argyle Avenue. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to Approve an Ordinance of the Village of Flossmoor, Cook County, Illinois, Approving a Special Use for a Sport Court at 808 Argyle Avenue. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Driscoll.

Director of Building & Zoning Scott Bugner explained that on May 16 and June 20, 2024, the Flossmoor Plan Commission held a public hearing to consider requests for a special use permit for a sport court. The

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request was submitted by Rudell Christian, owner of the subject property at 808 Argyle and Bugner noted that the subject property is an interior lot located on the west side of Argyle Avenue in the R4 residential district. The property is improved with a two-story single-family dwelling with an attached garage with an accessory deck, and the lot has an approximate area of 19,006 square feet or .44 acres. Bugner noted that the petitioners proposed construction of a sport court with a single basketball hoop with dimensions of 30 feet x 30 feet in length and width and that the existing swing set and playground would be replaced by the sport court and would be located approximately 12 feet from the south lot line and 12 and 21 feet from the west/rear lot line. The Petitioner indicated that locating the court any further from the south lot line would require the removal and relocation of portions of the existing sprinkler system. Bugner explained that while the Petitioner had requested the installation of court lighting, staff advised that the Plan Commission had not recommended it in the past nor approved sport court lighting. During the public hearing on May 16th, several neighbors raised opposition to the sport court, citing concerns about court noise and potential drainage issues. During the public hearing, the same concerns on June 20th were raised in opposition related to the sport court noise and drainage specifically, and following deliberations, the Plan Commission recommended the petitioner provide additional trees and landscaping along the south and west lot lines to provide both a noise buffer as well as assist in managing stormwater runoff, and provide a drainage system around the perimeter of the court to mitigate the impact of that new paved service. To close the public hearing, the Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval of the special use to permit the installation of the sport court subject to the following conditions: planting of trees and shrubs along the south and west lot lines, installation of a drainage system around the court perimeter, limit the hours of use of the court between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m., and prohibit the installation of any illumination. Bugner explained that a revised site plan had been submitted and that he and Public Works Staff had reviewed it as well, and it follows the recommendations of the Plan Commission, which recommended unanimously that the sport court be approved.

Mayor Nelson asked Dr. Rudell Christian to approach the podium and noted that there were a few questions for him, including what types of vegetation he would be planting.

Dr. Christian stated that he was the owner of the property at 808 Argyle and answered that he would be planting arborvitaes, large flowering shrubs, and in some cases, may use evergreen trees and that since there are power lines in the area, they are not going to plant really tall trees and will plant between forty and sixty trees along the south and west lines. He addressed the plans for the broached noise and drainage issues, additions made to the plans in the last couple of weeks and noted that the sport court would actually be located fifty to sixty feet from his neighbor's home.

Mayor Nelson asked about the planned special noise deadening surface that he was going to install.

Dr. Christian answered that the sports court would be a rubberized coated plastic on top of the concrete that many schools use it for their school basketball courts and that the sound of the ball bouncing is reduced. He also cited examples of other sports courts located in Flossmoor and noted that they do not have any restrictions on them.

Trustee Mitros noted that restrictions are always put on the approved sports courts.

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The Board inquired about and discussed the 808 Argyle property features, the choices made for the plantings, the planned usage of the sports court, and that there is precedent that is followed in the Village with sports courts.

Dr. Christian answered that he hired a landscape architect to provide guidance on the chosen trees and plantings, and that the sports court was for personal use for his HF High School aged son and himself,

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: Trustee Daggett

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Reports of Committees, Commissions and Boards:

Mayor Nelson thanked the Art Commission for the pop-up sculpture tour that they gave the previous Saturday.

Mayor Nelson announced that the Art Commission's silent auction fundraiser was currently happening until July 20th, and she encouraged residents to check out the offerings on the Village's website. She noted that Clerk LoGalbo had some submissions to the art auction as well. Mayor Nelson noted that there were some expensive maintenance items that the Board saw in the list of bills, which are all covered through donations. She thanked everyone who had generously bid on auction items to help keep the Village's Sculpture Park looking great.

Mayor Nelson also thanked the Green Commission for recently working with Homewood-Flossmoor High School students in the outdoor garden over at HF High School.

Action Items:

None.

Discussion Items:

None.

Other Business:

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #6 – A Motion to go into Executive Session to Discuss the Employment of Specific Individuals, Property Acquisition and Litigation.

There was no need to enter into Executive Session.

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Trustee Mustafa thanked resident Gloria Lippert and the National Council of Jewish Women for their amazing job with the recent Garden Walk, which was very peaceful and inviting. Trustee Mustafa stated that all of the gardens were beautiful, and she thanked the volunteers who helped. She inquired whether Village employees assisted at all. Trustee Mustafa thanked everyone else who participated and noted that the event brought the Village together as many of the events do and encouraged everyone to consider participating next year if they have never been to the Garden Walk.

Mayor Nelson answered that the Flossmoor Police Department assisted with making sure folks only parked on one side of the street. Mayor Nelson noted that there were six Flossmoor homes featured, which was in celebration of the Village's 100-year anniversary. Usually, there are just one or two homes on the list from Flossmoor.

Trustee Driscoll stated that on Saturday, July 20th, there will be a fundraiser for Project Fire Buddies at Bourbon Street in Marionette Park and encouraged everyone to attend if they could. His firm is a sponsor for the Fire Buddies, which is like the Make-A-Wish Foundation, where they have their own fire truck and take the kids for their last chemo treatments on the fire truck.

Chief Kopec explained that Project Fire Buddies started out of the Oak Forest Fire Department and is a multi-state organization that puts firefighters in contact with kids battling pediatric cancers. Every year they do multiple fundraisers in the Chicago area to continue to raise money to help all the kids in need around the country, and it is an amazing organization.

Trustee Lofton provided a shout-out to Public Works and John Brunke for including another minority enterprise in some of the Village's parking lot work where they will be a subcontractor to the low bidder.

Clerk LoGalbo noted that her two submissions in the Art Commission auction were made by two of her children and that their birdhouses were currently on display at the Flossmoor Library. She also reiterated how great the pop-up sculpture tour was last Saturday and that it was the first time she had participated. She thanked resident Troy Holmes for advertising the event, too, and noted that he also attended with his family. Clerk LoGalbo stated the tour was about one hour long, covered about eight sculptures, and she came away with more knowledge about the Village's sculptures, their artists, and the Village's art program, for instance, Eternal Flame in Leviitt Park was done with veterans, the nation's military, and what they have sacrificed in mind. She encouraged all residents who had not taken the tour to attend the next one.

Mayor Nelson noted that the Village would be canceling the August 5th Village Board meeting and that the next meeting would be on August 19th. She noted that a lot is happening in the Village between July 15th and August 19th, including two more developer meetings that week so there is a lot going on in the development front.

Mayor Nelson stated that on July 25th, in collaboration with the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, the Village was hosting the fourth annual Chamber Night and thanked the Chamber for fundraising for the event. The Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra was sending a small ensemble to play, and the warm-up act is our very own Bel-Canto Community Choir. Mayor Nelson thanked Public Works, the Fire Department, and

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the Police Department for their assistance in getting the event set up, as well as Stephanie Wright for her work. Mayor Nelson noted that before Chamber Night, there would be four plein air painters who would be painting live scenes throughout the downtown area and that those four paintings would then be available for auction during the Chamber Night event, with the proceeds benefitting Flossmoor's Sculpture Park and Art Commission.

Mayor Nelson announced that the Battle of the Chefs event hosted by Maureen at Dunnings Market would be on July 27th in the downtown area. Funds from that event would go to the I Can Dream Center, which benefits folks with autism. It is always a sellout event and a very good time, and she hoped to see everyone there.

Mayor Nelson stated that August 6th is National Night Out and that Public Works, the Fire Department, and the Police Department would be working hard to get set up for that event. She hoped to see everyone at National Night Out.

Mayor Nelson announced that the Foundation for the Preservation of Flossmoor History would be having an event and tours of Flossmoor Park on August 11th from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Flossmoor Community Church Community House Building and that they would be featuring the first nine homes that were built in Flossmoor Park which are also one hundred years old.

Mayor Nelson noted that it would be back to school time on August 15th for both HF HS sophomores and up, SD 161 students, and that on August 16th is the back-to-school night for SD 161 students.

Trustee Bradley-Scott inquired whether the back-to-school night was from 4 to 6 pm and no longer a movie night.

Mayor Nelson confirmed that the event was earlier and no longer a movie night.

Mayor Nelson wished everyone a safe and enjoyable rest of the summer.

As there were no other items to discuss, Mayor Nelson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Mustafa and passed by a voice vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: Trustee Daggett

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Gina A. LoGalbo
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Village Clerk