

VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON HILLS

Minutes of the Special Meeting January 8, 2008

President Abboud called the Special Meeting to order at 8:03 pm. Roll Call.

Present

Robert G. Abboud, President
*Fritz H. Gohl, Pro-Tem
Steven E. Knoop, Trustee
George L. Schueppert, Trustee
Beth Mallen, Trustee
Robert Kosin, Director of Administration
Elaine Ramesh, Village Clerk

Guests

Joe von Meier, Village Attorney
Joe Ahern, resident
Nate Palmer, resident

President Abboud provided the background on the matter of the Canadian National Railway's purchase of the E J & E line, currently before the Surface Transportation Board for approval. The E J & E line is currently used as a short line. CN wishes to purchase the E J & E line to run freight traffic around Chicago rather than through Chicago. For CN's purposes, the trains may include about 155 cars, wherein since the cars are inter-modal, each car will be even longer than normal freight cars. About 20 trains a day could be run through our area if the deal is approved.

The proposal will have many effects on properties in the Village including: noise, vibrations from the trains which may cause damage to homes or other infrastructure such as bridges; traffic jams as vehicular traffic could be halted at multiple intersections simultaneously due to the length of the train; and trains would have to slow down to go through the Barrington area due to curves of track, so intersections could be blocked for long periods of time. Additionally, the effect of the purchase on property values hasn't yet been addressed.

Procedurally, the Surface Transportation Board has required a full environmental impact study in order to analyze the proposed purchase. There will be a scoping meeting tomorrow in Barrington, as part of the full environmental impact study process. The scoping meeting is to inform the public and to take comments on the draft Scope of Study. Comments may be submitted to the STB until February 1, 2008.

* Trustee Gohl departed at 9:36 pm

The Village Board should decide what the Village wishes to accomplish with respect to opposition of the purchase and how or to what degree to participate in the regional effort. BACOG member municipalities may all be involved in opposing the purchase, but BACOG, as a whole, may not be directly involved in the effort. It is estimated that our area has already amassed a seven hundred and fifty thousand dollar war chest. Some communities have contributed ten thousand dollars, some have contributed fifty thousand dollars and others have contributed even more.

The Trustees discussed the options, including whether or not contributing money to the effort is worthwhile. Trustee Knoop cautioned that amount of Barrington Hills' contribution should be correlated to the level of the Village's direct involvement in coordinating efforts. Trustee Schueppert advised that the Village's direct contact with CN may lead to an acceptable outcome.

There could be four possible outcomes from the STB review: 1) no deal (although the STB usually doesn't deny such requests); 2) requirement for the regulation of the number of freight trains on the E J & E; 3) mitigation of increased noise due to the additional train traffic by sound proofing or 4) mitigation by grade separation. As to the fourth possible outcome, President Abboud noted that even if there was some concession by CN to provide grade separation in certain locations, it might also lead to an unanticipated increase in vehicular traffic through the Village trying to reach those grade separations.

President Abboud acknowledged the invitation of CN Representative to meet regarding the proposed purchase and its impact on the Village.

President Abboud indicated that one course of action could be to pursue an intergovernmental agreement between Barrington and Barrington Hills regarding the management of the opposition. It may even be possible to have a draft intergovernmental agreement for the trustees approval at the next regular Board meeting. The trustees agreed that President Abboud should contact Mayor Darch immediately regarding the potential intergovernmental agreement.

Trustee Schueppert motioned that the Board authorize expenditure of up to \$15,000 to permit the President to engage advisors to obtain an understanding of the steps, analysis and actions necessary that the Village needs to take in order to make known to the STB our concerns about the impact of the possible acquisition of the E J & E by CN and that further this be done in a sufficiently timely manner such that the Village can meet the currently known deadlines for the submission or submissions to the STB. Trustee Knoop seconded. Roll Call.

Ayes: 4 (Mallen, Schueppert, Knoop, Abboud)

Nays: 0

Absent: 2 (Smithe, Gohl)

Motion Approved

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A special committee or task force of residents may be formed to work on this issue in the future.

Trustee Knoop motioned to adjourn the Public Session at 9:54 pm. Trustee Schueppert seconded. All present said aye.

Meeting Adjourned

Approved _____