

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023  
VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: President Hofeld called the session to order at 7 p.m.

PRESENT: Trustees Anne Colton, Vivian Harris-Jones and Jay Heiferman, Clerk Marilyn Thomas, President Hofeld.

Department Heads: Finance Director Amy Zukowski, Economic and Community Development Director Angela Mesaros, Fire Chief Ray Grabowski, Attorney Chris Cummings, Assistant Village Manager Tyler Hall, Village Manager Napoleon Haney, Public Works Director John Schaefer and Police Chief Denise McGraff.

DISCUSSION ITEMS: Downtown speaker extension project; village hall lighting project; Tivoli light extension program; passageway lighting project.

President Hofeld, Manager Haney and Assistant Manager Hall presented information on the amenities in downtown that add to the charm of Homewood's downtown. They said the downtown hosts various events to draw people to the downtown, and the amenities are important. President Hofeld listed several, including the fire pit, benches, flower baskets and fountains, that all help make downtown Homewood beautiful.

SPEAKERS: Assistant Manager Hall explained the history of the downtown speaker system and how the Village intends to expand the project east along Ridge Road to the post office, and south along Dixie Highway to Olive Road. It would add 10 new speakers and greatly improve the hardware for the system. This is a \$30,000 improvement.

After negative comments about the music were made at a recent Village Board meeting, Hall said several speakers were disabled and the time the music plays has been reduced. It was noted the speakers can also be used for emergency messaging.

TIVOLI LIGHTS: The proposal is to extend the lighting system north on Martin to Chestnut. The lighting would be an improvement on Martin Square, to the block where the Farmers Market is held in summer, and is space used by the Homewood Science Center for events. Plans are also being worked on to improve the Homewood Auditorium and once that venue draws crowds those activities could spill into Market Square. The Public Works Department is looking at two different options. The improvement would also include laying cable underground, adding 10 new poles and bringing power to the street. This is a \$200,000 improvement.

VILLAGE HALL LIGHTING: The Village Hall is lit in the evenings with a system that's been in place since 2013. It was the first generation of LED lighting and it shines light upward on the building. The plan is to put a new system in place, and to reverse the lighting so that it shines from above downward. A new system would also give the Village more options on pulse, colors, etc. This is a \$50,000 improvement.

PASSAGEWAY LIGHTING: When the new Harford Building was constructed, it left a gap between that building and the neighboring building. The passageway has a paved sidewalk, but it needs lighting. This is a \$10,000 improvement.

Finance Director Zukowski said funding for each of these projects will be paid for from Homewood's share of the American Rescue Plan Act, federal money distributed to help communities through the pandemic. These projects would total 11.4 percent of the total \$2.5 million Homewood received. Originally there were restrictions on how the funding could be spent, but rules have been relaxed and now allocations can be made by the Village where needed.

In addressing the issue of the sound system, several residents said the changes made to the length of music playing and the locations of speakers, while appreciated, are not enough. They are still bothered by the music selection and what seems like perpetual sound invading their space. Several suggested a survey of downtown residents would be helpful to learn whether there really is the support for the music system from those most impacted.

Trustee Colton asked if the Village, in planning these improvements, is looking at the "big picture" and what the future vision is for downtown Homewood.

Ms. Mesaros said Homewood has a downtown master plan, and that work is being done to update it now. She said residents volunteered to serve on the committee that is receiving guidance from the Regional Transportation Authority and MUSE Consulting. She said there is a link on the Village's website about the project.

One resident asked about security cameras downtown. Chief McGraff said there are cameras, and the police department is always looking at ways to make improvements.

Another resident asked if the Village would consider lights in the trees downtown. That would put more lighting in the shopping area to give shoppers a greater sense of security, she said.

President Hofeld thanked community members for coming to the meeting and sharing their input that will help the Trustees make their decisions when the projects are up for a vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas  
Village Clerk