

VILLAGE OF
FRANKFORT
EST • 1855

LAND USE AND POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES
JANUARY 20, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Keith Ogle called the meeting of the Land Use and Policy Committee meeting to order at 6:47 P.M. on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, by remote video conference and in-person.

ROLL CALL

Land Use and Policy Committee members present included Mayor Jim Holland, Village Clerk Brian Feehery, Trustees Adam Borrelli, John Clavio, Margaret Farina, Keith Ogle, Jessica Petrow, and Gene Savaria; Michael DiMaggio, Cindy Heath, Katie Schubert, and Don Schwarz. Staff in attendance included Village Administrator Rob Piscia, Police Chief John Burica, Supt. Terry Kestel, Utilities Director Zach Brown, Finance Director Jenni Booth, Event Coordinator Sue Lynchey, and Administrative Assistant Theresa Cork. Also in attendance were Bill Hardy, Kristin Schoon, Valerie Thelen, Kathleen Littleton, Leah Freeman-Kruse, Ken Riemen, and April Jackson. Member Paul Slade was absent.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (December 9, 2020)

Trustee Petrow made a motion (#1), seconded by Member Heath, to approve the minutes of the Land Use and Policy Committee meeting of December 9, 2020, as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

SEASONAL CLOSURE OF KANSAS STREET

Administrator Piscia reported at its December 9th meeting, the Land Use & Policy Committee discussed the temporary closure of Kansas Street between Ash Street and Oak Street for the 2021 season. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the committee to engage various stakeholders to seek their input regarding the temporary closure of Kansas Street. Two subcommittees were created, and stakeholders were invited to participate to discuss the matter. Members of the business subcommittee included: Kristin Schoon of Lil Surprises; Valerie Thelen of The Wine Thief; Leah Freeman-Krause of Fuse Salon; Michael Shideler of the Bowling Alley; and Kathleen Littleton of the General Store. Members of the resident subcommittee included: Bert Behnke; April Jackson; Ken Riemen; and Mike Kirsch.

Administrator Piscia further reported an informal survey was sent out to the homeowner associations throughout the community seeking their input on four questions: 1) Should Kansas Street be closed; 2) If closed, what should it be used for; 3) What part of the street should be closed; and 4) Should taxpayers pay \$50,000 to change the direction of Oak Street to two-way? Overall,

81% of respondents were in favor of a temporary closure; most wished to see outdoor dining or similar; and the majority did not support the Village spending tax dollars to convert Oak Street to a two-way street.

Administrator Piscia reported each of the subcommittees met publicly via Zoom on December 30, 2020 and January 6, 2021, to discuss the proposal of a temporary closure of Kansas Street from Oak to Ash and rebuilding Oak Street to provide two-way traffic.

The resident subcommittee submitted the following report:

Report to Frankfort Land Use Committee

From: Subcommittee on Kansas Street Closure - Residents Committee

Our committee met via Zoom on December 30, 2020 and January 6, 2021. The following recommendations are from this subcommittee addressing the questions from the survey.

1) Should Taxpayers pay \$50,000 to make Oak Street between Kansas and Nebraska a two-way street.

Our committee agrees with the vast majority of respondents to the survey that Oak Street should not become a two-way street, nor should the village invest \$50,000 to do this. The majority feel it should be left as it is now, the only other consideration would be to reverse the one way directions on both Oak and Ash.

2) Should the village temporarily close Kansas Street from Oak to Ash during the spring and summer?

Our committee unanimously supports the temporary closing. We recommend the dates for this to coincide with the dates the village selects for the Country Market in 2021. (late April to late October) Further, we support there being a sufficient area that is not allocated to the restaurants so there can be an unrestricted walkway to allow residents and visitors to enjoy using the area to wander our downtown.

3) What uses should be allowed if street is closed.

The subcommittee had many opinions on this, but overall, we felt allowing other activities in this area would be great use of this public space. There were concerns with it just being the three restaurants that the space would only help them. Another concern was how this increased capacity at restaurants adheres to ordinance regarding bathroom facilities.

4) Could it practically be closed only on certain days of the week?

Subcommittee recommends street remain closed during the entire time.

5) Should only a portion of the street be closed?

Subcommittee recommends, as stated above, street should be completely closed with a walkway included in the plan.

Additional recommendations from the agenda of the second meeting, include:

- 6) Agree with idea to close outdoor dining areas by 11pm.
- 7) Agree that parking is an issue to be addressed.
- 8) Agree that street decorative lighting would be a good addition.
- 9) Agree that the cement planters would help with the aesthetics.
- 10) Agree that ADA compliance to the closed area should be addressed.
- 11) Agree that a uniform music arrangement is preferable for downtown with loudness being regulated as to not infringe on the residents.

12) Agree that traffic enforcement could be increased due to speeding and wrong way on one-way concerns.

13) Recommend that the village investigate creating a designated delivery area for businesses affected within the closure so remaining streets remain unblocked.

Respectfully submitted by committee members that participated with the village board and staff were downtown residents, April Jackson, Ken Riemen and Bert Behnke.

The business subcommittee submitted the following report:

**Frankfort Downtown Business and Property Owner Sub-Committee
January 6th, 2021**

At this point we cannot give our overall recommendation with regards to the temporary closure of Kansas Street.

The overall closure for what is being proposed has a direct impact to numerous other businesses with all the benefit being handed to three restaurants. We will agree, having this closure did increase foot traffic and had an overall positive vibe for the Village of Frankfort and the Historic Business District. There are just a lot of issues that need to be addressed. The main issue is support to the entire business district as a whole. Sales at all three restaurants were up year over year for 2020, which is amazing given the backdrop. However, when talking to the individual businesses in the area, we are yet to find another business outside these restaurants that saw similar success. This is the main issue and we would like to work more towards a goal to benefit all the businesses in the historic district together.

With that being said we would however be able to support the street closure if the following items are addressed:

Revenue generated by this closure should be used to develop a fund for area improvements for the historic business district. Also, we believe something like 30% of the funding should be directly allocated to special event for the businesses.

Area Improvements:

1. *Lighting Up the Downtown Streets (String Lights)*
 - a. *Benefit would be overall Downtown*
 - b. *Increase safety for employee parking in the back lots.*
2. *Parking*
 - a. *Increasing the timed parking on the side streets*
 - b. *Required Valet Parking Friday and Saturday Evenings*
 - c. *Signage for "Free Parking" off white street for those two large lots*
3. *Use of the "Frankfort Standards" with regards to these outdoor dining areas*
 - a. *Umbrellas*
 - b. *Fencing*
 - c. *Tables and Chairs*
4. *Dress up temporary Closures*
5. *Restroom Access*
6. *Enforcement of Spaces and Laws*
 - a. *Cadets or Community Security at each end of the closure*
 - b. *Use of Parking Spots*
 - c. *Control of the environment*
 - i. *Excessive serving*
 - ii. *Public Safety*
 - iii. *ADA accessibility*
7. *Monthly Progress Meetings*

Moving forward pending these issues are formally addressed, we would agree the closure should only be on Kansas between Ash and Oak Street. The closure should happen yearly in congruence with the restaurants Al Fresco Leases. We do not think this area should be open to any other businesses than these businesses with direct access to the area. Only addition would be Frankfort Specific businesses with no direct competition to the area. Example would be allowing Frankfort Arts Association to put on a couple day event in the open area. The outdoor dining should be allowed to be open as long as their licenses allow. At this point we cannot recommend a changing of the direction of Oak Street, and feel this should be addressed if this closure becomes more permanent.

Leah Freeman-Krause, spokesperson for the business subcommittee, provided a summary of their report to the Land Use & Policy committee members.

Resident subcommittee members, Ken Riemen and April Jackson, shared their support of the temporary closure of Kansas Street.

Administrator Piscia further reported that he reached out to the three restaurants since the last meeting to see if there was interest to lease the space on Kansas Street if the Village determines to temporarily close the street. He noted the current outdoor café seating lease agreement with the three restaurants calls for an annual rent of \$7 per square foot for 2021. He further noted the restaurants expressed some interest but were not willing to commit until terms of the lease to rent the space are established.

Supt. Kestel reported that he contacted Excel Electric to determine the cost of string lighting and improving the current lighting in the downtown historic district. He reported installation of string lighting on Kansas Street is not a possibility with the current streetlights due to load and distance between the lights. He noted the cost for poles designed for string lights would be roughly \$350,000 - \$400,000 for the one block area on Kansas Street between Oak and Ash Street. Additionally, the current streetlights in the downtown district are obsolete and the estimated cost to replace the head of each streetlight is \$4,500, noting there are 93 streetlights in the downtown.

Committee members discussed the concerns identified by the subcommittees. Overall, members felt it was appropriate to address some of these issues regardless and separate from the temporary street closure discussion. Members looked at ways to make the temporary street closure more ADA friendly and provide additional handicap parking spaces on Kansas Street. Members discussed the overall aesthetics of a temporary street closure and were in agreement that tenting of the area should not be allowed and the space should be in keeping with Frankfort standards.

Administrator Piscia noted he would confirm with the building department that the additional outdoor occupancy can be accommodated within the existing bathroom facilities of the restaurants. He also noted that allowing the space to be used by other entities other than the adjacent restaurants would present challenges. Mr. Piscia stated that he would further discuss leasing of the outdoor space with the three restauranters to determine their level of interest and to share the concerns expressed by the subcommittees.

Members expressed their appreciation to the community members for their time and input.

Following discussion, it was the consensus of the committee for staff continue to research issues pertaining to the temporary closure and report back as available.

SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Administrator Piscia reported that over the past year there has been discussion of the Village having a presence on social media. He noted staff has constructed a Facebook page which can be used to provide additional communication and information to our residents. He further noted the Village would use a company called ArchiveSocial to ensure the Village can adequately respond to FOIA requests and any first amendment concerns. The cost of the plan is \$4,788 per year and would also cover the website and elected official social media accounts. He further reported the Village's Facebook page would be managed by current staff members John Burica, Sue Lynchey, Pauline Modjeski, and Rob Piscia. Staff sought direction from committee members on launching the Village's Facebook page.

Members briefly discussed the Village's Facebook page and were supportive of launching the Village Facebook page. Trustee Petrow suggested a launch date of 02-01-2021 and to use the date as a branding tool to market its release.

OTHER BUSINESS

- *Oak Street*

Trustee Savaria suggested to revisit converting Oak Street between Kansas and Nebraska to two-way traffic at a future committee meeting.

- *Clearing of Old Plank Road Trail During Winter Months*

Trustee Borrelli stated that he received an email requesting the Village to snowplow Old Plank Road Trail (OPRT). He noted this item was previously discussed in 2016 and committee members decided not to move forward with snowplowing of OPRT at that time. He referenced a lawsuit against Highland Park and asked staff to look into the matter further.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments and questions were accepted in advance of the meeting by e-mail at publiccomments@frankfortil.org. Administrator Piscia read two written comments submitted relating to the seasonal closure of Kansas Street.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Trustee Clavio made a motion (#2), seconded by Trustee Borrelli, to adjourn the Land Use and Policy Committee meeting of January 20, 2021, at 8:17 P.M. The motion was unanimously approved.