

Report on Meeting With City and County Officials July 20, 1995

Reason for Meeting: This meeting was requested by ROIA Board of Directors in order to discuss several alleged violations brought against ROIA by Mr. and Mrs. James Salyer, Lot 23. These allegations were first brought to the attention of Tom Sinnott, President, ROIA, by Mrs. Amy Salyer and Mr. Joseph Chaplin, Jr., Stream Maintenance Coordinator, Department of Environmental Concerns, Stormwater Management Division, at an unannounced meeting on June 28, 1995.

In Attendance:

Joseph H. Chaplin, Jr., Stream Maintenance Coordinator, Department of Environmental Concerns, Stormwater Management Division
Ron Mentzer, Community Development Director, City of Warrenville
Mark Moore, Vice-President, River Oaks Improvement Association
Chuck Hulse, City Liaison, ROIA; Warrenville Plan Commission
Becky Christiansen, Secretary, ROIA
Brian Lynch, ROIA Director
Paul Koenig, ROIA Director
John Christiansen, Member, Landscaping Committee, ROIA; Chairman, Warrenville Natural Areas Commission

Summary:

In her communication with Mr. Chaplin, Mrs. Salyer alleged that activities carried out by the homeowner's association in River Oaks in their work on the river bank were in violation of several governmental ordinances. Mr. Chaplin performed an on-site investigation on June 28, 1995, while meeting with Mrs. Salyer and later with Mr. Sinnott and Mrs. Salyer. Mr. Chaplin reported his observations in a response letter to Mr. And Mrs. Salyer. Since jurisdiction for the river bank in this area falls to the City, he referred Mr. And Mrs. Salyer to Mr. Mentzer, the City of Warrenville official who evaluates possible City code violations. He sent a copy of this letter to Mr. Mentzer. No violations were found of any City, County, or State ordinances.

Discussion:

The observations enumerated in Mr. Chaplin's response letter to the Salyers were discussed as follows:

1. Mr. Chaplin remarked that the telephone poles and wood at the top of the river bank might pose a potential threat to the river if they were to be washed over the bank by a substantial flood and therefore should be shifted away from the crest of the hill above the outfall pipe. Mr. Moore agreed to alleviate this potential problem by shifting the pile away from this point.
2. Mr. Chaplin noted remains of dumped grass clippings. Mr. Moore explained that this has been a continuing problem in River Oaks and that the Newsletter has contained various articles over the years regarding this unwanted practice.
3. Mr. Chaplin observed that there has been dumping of materials down the river bank at various locations and that he was also shown a bare area at the foot of the river bank as an alleged dump site. Mr. Moore explained that the builder had done this dumping when the subdivision was being built and that the bare area in question was the site of the controlled burning of undesirable undergrowth that had taken place, with the City's knowledge, this spring.
4. Mr. Chaplin noted the presence of the small terraces with gray dogwoods, whose species was pointed out to him by Mr. Sinnott during his on-site visit. He agreed that gray dogwoods

are desirable trees for erosion control. He said a simpler solution would have been grass planted in this area, with a temporary covering of aspen mat to help it start. Mr. Christiansen explained that this hill had already been planted with grass, covered by aspen mat, by the builder, but that this had not been adequate to prevent the erosion. Mr. Chaplin stated that he had not seen any serious signs of erosion during his on-site visit. Mr. Moore explained that the most deeply eroded area was at the top of the bank and was filled in this spring with an estimated 5 cubic yards of fill and that this was, in fact, a seriously eroded area.

Mr. Chaplin saw no violations of any county or state ordinances in the work begun by ROIA. He explained that the State of Illinois has jurisdiction over all building in the floodway and floodplain of the river and would require permits for any building done in that area. He defined this building to mean man-made structures. He explained that natural vegetation may be added or removed from the flood plain without a permit. Citizens are encouraged to remove undesirable growth from the river area, and replant the area with plants appropriate to the ecology of the area. Mr. Christiansen asked what kind of help the County could provide to obtain lists of suppliers of natural vegetation for the ecology of the river bank. Mr. Chaplin said he would send ROIA what information he has on appropriate nursery sources.

Mr. Chaplin explained that the river bank above the flood plain, i.e. above the outfall pipe, falls under City jurisdiction. In response to Mr. Chaplin's question regarding whether the fill put in to stem the erosion needed a City permit, Mr. Mentzer explained that it did not since it was less than the 5,000 cubic foot fill minimum that requires a permit. **No violations of any city code were found by Mr. Mentzer.**

Future River Bank Work:

Mr. Chaplin enthusiastically encouraged ROIA erosion control work along the river bank. He discussed the soon-to-be-implemented Streamline Stabilization project that the County has been working on. He explained the County's concern about erosion and destabilization of the river area and its willingness to assist in plans and designs for the stream banks. He also mentioned the idea of adopting a stretch of the river for clean-up by community groups, much as stretches of highway are adopted by various groups. With such adoption, groups are encouraged to work twice a year for clean-up of the area. Mr. Moore noted that ROIA has already had conversations with the West Branch Project of the Conservation Foundation of DuPage to initiate the adopt a river program here. He noted that our past history of river clean-up, combined with the bank stabilization and planting management, should meet the County's requirements. Mr. Chaplin will be sending additional information.

Mr. Chaplin encouraged homeowners to take action on the river bank clean-up and stabilization, and noted that County resources are available to help with such activities. He said that the county has a program to help community groups remove dead or unwanted trees from the river bank area. The county will provide a contractor to take the tree down and cut it up. The community group must then provide the manpower to haul the pieces to a road where county trucks could pick up the pieces. Mr. Moore mentioned that this is of great interest to River Oaks since there are dead and undesirable trees in the area.

Mr. Moore expressed the strong desire of the Association to continue with its work on the river bank and reassured the City that ROIA will continue to work closely with them on any projects that need City approval. Mr. Moore cited the close work done by ROIA and the City on the formulation of the Parkway Tree Plan, now a model for parkway tree planting in the City of Warrenville, as well as the close cooperation that developed in the Anden lawsuit pursuance

and resolution. In summary, the meeting was very cooperative and productive, and will lead to expansion of the scope and environmental value of the ROIA riverbank project in several areas without requiring significant ROIA expenditures.