

**The City of Lake Forest  
Building Review Board  
Proceedings of November 1, 2023 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Building Review Board was held on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., at the Municipal Services Building, 800 Field Drive, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Building Review Board members present: Chairman John Looby and Board members, Joanne Bluhm, Sally Downey, Eric Lohmueller, Scott Renken and Justin Stamer

Building Review Board members absent: Board member Timothy G. Franzen

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development  
Jennifer Baehr, Planner

**1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures –  
Chairman Diamond**

Chairman Looby reviewed the role of the Building Review Board and the meeting procedures followed by the Board. He asked the members of the Board and staff to introduce themselves.

**2. Consideration of the minutes from the September 6, 2023 Building Review Board meeting.**

The minutes of the September 6, 2023 meeting were approved as presented.

**3. Consideration of a request for approval to demolish the existing single family residence at 890 Oak Knoll Drive due to its deteriorated condition. Plans for the replacement residence have not yet been prepared. Plans for the replacement residence will return to the Building Review Board at a future date.  
Property Owner: Charles T. Pick Trust (Charles T. Pick, 100%)  
Project Representative: Charles T. Pick**

Chairman Looby asked the Board members for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Pick stated that in May 2023, the Board approved the demolition of the residence and a replacement resident for a previous property owner. He stated that the previous property owner did not proceed with the project and put the property on the market "as is". He explained that since the previous owners received approval to demolish the house, no maintenance was done. He stated that he bought the property knowing that a demolition was previously approved. He stated that the house is a ranch style, constructed in 1957. He stated that the house is not historically significant. He stated that because the previous owners, in anticipation of demolishing the house, turned off the utilities, the pipes burst. He stated that the floors are buckled, and the basement is full of water. He stated that despite the current condition, he explored restoring the

house but noted that due to the serious disrepair in combination with the layout being functionally obsolete, he is pursuing demolition and new construction. He noted that the Board recently approved demolition of the house to the north, down to the foundation and construction of a new home. He stated that although he has preliminary concepts for a new house, the plans are not yet prepared. He acknowledged that the plans for the new house will need to be presented to the Board for review and approval. He stated that he and his family would like to move into a new house on the site in the first quarter of 2025. He stated that in the meantime, the existing house is an eye sore and is rotting from the inside out. He stated his intention to clear and restore the site with grass until he is ready to move forward with construction of a new house. He stated that the new house will be two stories, simple and in scale with other homes in the neighborhood. He noted that the property is three acres and could accommodate a much larger home than he is proposing.

Ms. Baehr reviewed that the previous owner received approval from the Board in May for demolition of the existing house and a replacement residence. She stated however because the ownership of the property has changed, a new petition is before the Board. She acknowledged that the Board usually sees a replacement residence concurrent with a request for demolition however in this case, the condition of the house has resulted in complaints and concerns from neighboring property owners. She stated because the new owner is not prepared to present plans for a new residence at this time, a recommendation in support of the demolition is requested due to health and life safety concerns. She stated that in the present condition, the house is a nuisance. She stated that after demolition, the property will need to be restored, backfilled, graded, and seeded and blanketed until construction on a new home begins.

Chairman Looby invited questions from the Board.

In response to a question from Board member Lohmueller, Mr. Pick stated that after demolition, the site will be backfilled with clay.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Baehr stated that City staff was not aware that the previous property owners turned off the utilities in anticipation of proceeding with the demolition of the house.

In response to questions from Board member Downey, Ms. Czerniak acknowledged that in most cases, demolition and the proposed replacement structure are presented for Board consideration at the same time. She noted however that the Code allows demolitions to proceed particularly in situations like this where the house is a nuisance in the neighborhood. She reiterated that the proposed replacement house will be presented to the Board for review and action at a later date.

Board member Renken stated that the demolition request meets the criteria.

Board member Bluhm agreed that the demolition criteria are satisfied.

In response to questions from board member Downey, Mr. Pick stated that he intends to properly maintain the property after the demolition and restoration of the site is completed.

Board member Renken stated that during the demolition activity on the site, special care should be taken to preserve and protect the oak trees.

In response to Board member Renken's comment, Mr. Pick stated that he has a permit to remove four dead oak trees from the site. He stated that he intends to protect the trees and preserve as many as possible through the demolition process. He added that the site plan for the new house will be designed to preserve as many trees as possible.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Looby invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final comments from the Board. Hearing none, he invited a motion.

Board member Bluhm made a motion to recommend approval of the demolition of the residence based on the findings presented in the staff report which are adopted by the Board and subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. Prior to demolition of the existing residence, utilities shall be disconnected in accordance with City requirements and all necessary abatement shall be completed. After demolition of the residence, the site shall be backfilled, graded level, and seeded with grass to stabilize the site. In addition, the driveway must be completely removed, and the area restored. The trees should be protected during the demolition and restoration process.
2. The plans for the replacement structure must return to the Board for review and action. The design of the replacement residence and site should align with the City's Design Guidelines.
3. A plan for parking and staging related to the demolition shall be submitted for review and will be subject to approval by the City's Certified Arborist, City Engineer and Director of Community Development. Every effort shall be made to preserve and protect healthy trees during the demolition process.

The motion was seconded by Board member Downey and approved by a 6 to 0 vote.

#### **4. Opportunity for the public to address the Building Review Board on non-agenda items.**

No additional public testimony was presented to the Board.

#### **5. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Baehr presented the proposed 2024 Building Review Board meeting schedule. Chairman Looby invited a motion to approve the meeting schedule as presented.

Board member Downey made a motion to approve the 2024 Building Review Board meeting dates.

The motion was seconded by Board member Bluhm and approved by a 6 to 0 vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development