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Commissioner Gorman Addresses the Orland Park Village Board Regarding the “Ninety7Fifty” Apartment Development

For Immediate Release

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Remarks delivered by Cook County Commissioner Elizabeth Gorman
to the Orland Park Village Board on September 6, 2011

The Village of Orland Park seems to be working hard to convince the public that the Main Street Triangle plan will bring jobs and economic development to our community. It is no secret that 80% of the jobs will go to people who do not reside in Orland Park and those jobs will be temporary and leave upon completion of the project.

But clearly, the people in Orland Park do not believe what they are being told. Is it because the village is not being honest or could it be simply that the village is doing a poor job of conveying the financial facts despite have 4 public relations companies to advocate for this controversial plan.

Clearly, the mission of the village of Orland Park is to provide services to its residents. We are proud of our community. We have wonderful activities, great schools, highly effective and dependable fire and police departments.

We have lots of open space.

But, we also have lots of vacant retail space. We have a community burdened by high taxation and rising expenses in an economic environment that is one of the worst we have faced in generations.

That's why I and other taxpayers in Orland Park are compelled to ask. What is the mission of the Village of Orland Park. Is the village here to provide services or, is the village here to act like a bank? Should the village of Orland Park be extending a line of credit of some \$38 million -- that's \$38 million that was described at the recent open house as a Flaherty & Collins Investment.

It is very misleading when you don't have a clear mission to then assert that the \$38 million is an F&C Investment when in fact it is the Village that will be obtaining the credit

line. It is misleading for the village to also claim that F&C are "partners" when they barely have any skin in this development and the public is left to ask what exactly is it that Flaherty & Collins is actually putting into this lavish, very expensive, and speculative venture.

The public has serious concerns about this venture ... or maybe it is better described as an adventure.

I want to share some housing inventory numbers about our community, housing statistics that every member of the Village of Orland Park Board should be very familiar with: There are 21,000 total housing units in Orland Park. Of that number, 2,100 -- or 10% -- are rentals, mostly 2 bedroom.

9750 will add 14% more to the rental market.

Is that a smart move?

The average rental in Orland Park was \$1,833/month, which includes single family, townhomes and apartments.

Taxpayers in Orland Park have serious questions about this project. Will it bring in the benefits that are being promised? Is it what we need at this time when the economy is on the precipice? Who will be buying these units and will people with incomes that would put them in the upper 20% of the market spend that money at the location that is being proposed, next to a train station?

The public has serious concerns. And when the public is concerned, rather than rushing ahead with these plans, the Village should be following their instincts to protect the interests of the public. They should be moving slowly and carefully and they should be providing more answers, not rushing through public hearings. One hearing is not enough. After tonight, the taxpayers of Orland Park will still have serious concerns and questions about this project.

I think the public is smart. They have learned the very difficult lesson that if it sounds too good to be true, maybe it is not.

I urge the Village Board to postpone their rush on this project, to listen more to the public, provide more information to the public and stand with a public that has been knocked around by this economy. An economy that has no political agenda. An economy that has no political party. An economy that has no concern for the future of our community.

Thank you for listening,

Liz Gorman, Cook County Commissioner

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