

**Winnetka Village Council**  
**STUDY SESSION**  
March 8, 2022  
7:00 PM

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**AGENDA**

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Public Comment
- 3) Seasonal Street Closures for Outdoor Dining Policy Discussion
- 4) Adjournment

**NOTICE**

All agenda materials are available at [villageofwinnetka.org](http://villageofwinnetka.org) (Government > Council Information > Agenda Packets & Minutes); the Reference Desk at the Winnetka Library; or in the Manager's Office at Village Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). Webcasts of the meeting may be viewed on the Internet via a link on the Village's web site: <http://www.villageofwinnetka.org/government/village-videos/>.

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## Agenda Item Executive Summary

**Title:** Seasonal Street Closures for Outdoor Dining Policy

**Presenter:** Kristin Kazenas, Assistant Village Manager

**Agenda Date:**

03/08/22

**Consent:**

YES

NO

Ordinance

Resolution

Bid Authorization/Award

Policy Direction

Informational Only

### Item History:

March 2020 - An expanded Temporary Outdoor Seating Policy was adopted in response to COVID-19.

May 2020 - Village staff assisted restaurants with expanding outdoor seating in response to indoor dining restrictions from COVID-19 mitigations, including the temporary closure of Chestnut Court.

March 2021 - COVID-19 impacts continued, and Village Council approved Temporary Outdoor Seating Permit applications, including the seasonal closure of Chestnut Court.

### Executive Summary:

During 2020, Winnetka and many other municipalities across the United States responded to restrictions on indoor gathering due to the COVID-19 pandemic by expanding outdoor dining options on the public right-of-way. Many communities enacted temporary permits or licenses for outdoor dining on sidewalks and public streets. These outdoor dining areas became popular gathering places and stimulated the local economy. Due to the popularity of outdoor dining that assisted with economic recovery, many cities and towns extended their outdoor dining options in 2021. As the country emerges from the pandemic, communities are considering new policies regarding outdoor dining and street closures.

The Village received both positive and negative feedback regarding the seasonal closure of Chestnut Court for outdoor dining. Positive feedback was received from residents and customers of Tocco and Good Grapes, commending the enhanced vibrancy created by the expanded outdoor dining opportunity. Negative feedback was received from Lakeside Foods regarding the reduced parking for customers, and from Minos and Fred's Garage who expressed concerns that the street closure created an unfair advantage to Tocco since the use of the public street was approved without a fee.

In recommending a new policy, staff balanced the efficiency of any approval process while maintaining the transparency of the approved application. In addition, staff considered the equity of future policy approvals, recognizing there will not be a "one size fits all" approach since some streets will not be suitable for closure due to traffic concerns and access to other businesses. The proposed policy considers only requests to close a public street for outdoor dining. Routine use of public sidewalks for outdoor dining will continue to be approved by the Council with the existing Outdoor Seating Permit process.

**Executive Summary (continued):**

Winnetka's annual 2022 Outdoor Seating Permit (for outdoor dining on public sidewalks) season will run from April 1 – November 30, 2022. Approval of the 2022 Outdoor Seating Permits will be considered at the March 15, 2022 Regular Village Council before the outdoor seating season begins.

Phase 4 of the downtown Streetscape project is planned for mid March through the end of June 2022. The scope of work includes work on Chestnut Court, Chestnut Street and the Village Hall parking lot, and will directly impact outdoor dining on the public right of way for businesses on Chestnut Street and Chestnut Court. Any changes to the process for approving street closures for outdoor dining would need to be approved by Village Council prior to the end of the Phase 4 streetscape construction.

Attached is a power point presentation that staff will present at the study session which outlines four options for next steps related to the approval of seasonal closure of public streets for outdoor dining. Staff is seeking policy direction from the Council about the best option.

**Recommendation:**

Evaluate the approval process for seasonal street closures for outdoor dining and consider implementing Council approval via license agreement.

**Attachments:**

1. Seasonal Street Closure for Outdoor Dining Policy Considerations - Staff Power Point Presentation

**ATTACHMENT 1**



**VILLAGE OF WINNETKA**

**SEASONAL STREET CLOSURES  
FOR OUTDOOR DINING**





# COVID-19 IMPACT ON OUTDOOR DINING

## COVID Dining Trends

- State and County restrictions on indoor dining
- Expanded outdoor dining options on public right-of-way
- Many communities enacted temporary permits / licenses for dining on the sidewalks and public streets
- Outdoor dining areas became popular gathering areas
- Enhanced community vitality and supported economic recovery in 2020 and 2021
- Demand for outdoor dining continuing into 2022



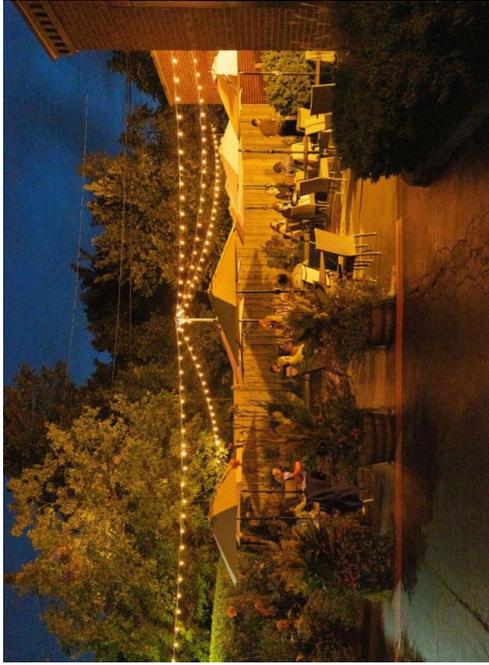


# WINNETKA RESTAURANT RESPONSE



## Expanded sidewalk seating

- 12 new outdoor seating areas were approved on the public right of way in 2020
- 16 new outdoor seating areas were approved in 2021
- Examples:



\*501 Local

\*Stacked & Folded

## Expanded seating on private patios

\*Aboyer/ George Trois

\*Spirit Elephant

\*Tocco





# WINNETKA RESTAURANT RESPONSE

## Request to temporarily close Chestnut Court

- Tocco– south side
- Good Grapes - north side
- Closures approved in 2020 and 2021 via Outdoor Seating Permit process





## POLICY DISCUSSION

5

**Should the Village of Winnetka create a new process in fiscal year 2022 to consider the seasonal closure of public streets for outdoor dining?**

- **Decision making criteria:**
  - Efficiency
  - Equity – not be a one-size-fits-all approach
  - Context of request
  - Transparency





## OPTION #1

**Continue to approve street closure requests as part of the existing (no-fee) Outdoor Seating Area Permit**

### **Positive Implications:**

- Maximizes efficiency
- Utilizes existing approval process from 2020 and 2021

### **Negative Implications:**

- Does not adequately address impacts on neighboring businesses
- Does not address traffic or parking concerns





## OPTION #2

**Discontinue any temporary seasonal use of public streets.**

### **Positive Implications:**

- No individual business would be granted exclusive use of public streets, maintaining equity

### **Negative Implications:**

- One-size-fits-all approach
- Lost opportunity to create vibrancy and gathering on public spaces





## OPTION #3

8

**Create a new Council approval process (License Agreement) specifically for seasonal street closure requests and separate from Outdoor Dining Permit approval.**

### **Positive Implications:**

- New process creates transparency and clarity
- License Agreement identifies specific terms of Use
- Equitable review case-by-case

### **Negative Implications:**

- Additional time required for approvals to be granted





# RECOMMENDATION

9

## Option #3 – Create new License Agreement process

- Seasonal use of public streets
- Stipulate terms and conditions of public street usage
- Village Council approval





## **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

**10**

**If a license agreement is pursued, what terms and conditions should be considered?**

- Insurance requirements
- Duration
- Hours of Closure
- Fee

