

MINUTES OF THE  
CREST HILL PLAN COMMISSION

The April 9, 2026, Plan Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Thomas, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Center, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Roll call indicated the following present: Chairman Bill Thomas, Commissioner Ken Carroll, Commissioner Cheryl Slabozeski, Commissioner Gordon Butler, Commissioner Jeff Peterson, and Commissioner John Stanton.

Also present were: City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi, Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Mentzer, and Administrative Clerk Linda Riha.

Absent were: Commissioner Marty Flynn.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on March 12, 2026, for Commission approval.

(#1) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Carroll, to approve the minutes from the Plan Commission meeting held on March 12, 2026.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Carroll, Stanton, Butler, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSTAIN: Commissioner Slabozeski.

ABSENT: Commissioner Flynn.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Bill Thomas presented the Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions SU-26-4-4-2, and V-26-4-4-2, requests of Francisco Martinez Trejo for an amended Special Use for an Automobile Sales and/or Leasing business and an Automobile Body Repairing/Painting business, and Variations from Section 11.8 Schedule of Parking Requirements of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to decrease required parking spaces for both Automobile Sales and/or Leasing Business and Automobile Body Repairing/Painting business located on the 20,575 sq-ft, B-3 Business Service District zoned property located at 1923 N Broadway St, Crest Hill.

Chairman Thomas asked if the paperwork was in order. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi stated that the necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing for Case numbers SU-26-4-4-2 and V-26-4-4-2.

(#2) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to open a public hearing case numbers SU-26-4-4-2 and V-26-4-4-2.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Peterson, Stanton, Butler, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked the City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi to present the specifics on this case.

City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi presented the case, explaining that Francisco Martinez Trejo owns the property at 1923 North Broadway Street and is seeking to amend and expand his existing 2009 special use permit. The proposal includes changing the auto repair business to include auto repair and painting, continuing the automobile sales business, and seeking relief from parking requirements for both businesses. The business will provide automotive repair, refinishing, and vehicle sales services to the community, with the sales business specializing in pre-owned vehicles that have been inspected and prepared for sale.

The variation request addresses unique circumstances where strict parking adherence would reduce functional space for vehicle display and service operations, creating economic hardship. Staff recommended approval subject to ten conditions including restricted vehicle display areas, limited hours of operation (Monday-Friday 9 AM to 7 PM, Saturday 9 AM to 6 PM, and Sunday closed for auto repair/painting business; Monday-Saturday 9 AM to 6 PM and Sunday closed for auto sales/leasing business), and no outside vehicle repair.

City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi asked Francisco Martinez Trejo to come forward and present his case. Chairman Bill Thomas asked the representatives to sign in at the podium and raise their right hands to get sworn in.

Francisco Martinez Trejo appeared with his translator/friend, Ms. Flor Fuentes, who explained that Mr. Martinez has a family of four children and his wife, and this business is his only means of providing income for his family. He has invested all of his savings into purchasing the property two years ago and has been working for a year to obtain proper licenses. Ms. Fuentes emphasized Mr. Martinez's commitment to working with the city to meet all requirements and his desire to contribute revenue to Crest Hill while improving the property's appearance.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked Mr. Martinez how long he's been operating the business in its current location. Mr. Martinez stated that he bought the business two years ago and worked as a mechanic there. He wanted to add automobile painting but needed to have a Special Use/license through the City.

Commissioner Jeff Peterson inquired about Mr. Martinez's capabilities, learning he can perform all the work himself but plans to hire employees as the business grows. When asked about the car sales component, Ms. Fuentes explained the property previously operated as a car dealership and auto repair, and Mr. Martinez plans to rent dealership space to help pay off the property.

Chairman Thomas expressed support for the business expansion and particularly praised the proposed improvements to clean up the property perimeter, noting the area of Broadway Street needed beautification. Ms. Fuentes confirmed the property already looks much better than when Mr. Martinez purchased it, as it previously had junk cars, a lot of garbage, and even a mobile home in the parking lot.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

(#3) Motion by Commissioner Butler seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to close the public hearing for petitions SU-26-4-4-2 and V-26-4-4-2.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Butler, Slabozeski, Stanton, Peterson, Carroll, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioners Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:18 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked the applicant if he agreed to the ten (10) conditions previously discussed with him by the City Staff. The applicant stated that he agreed.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked for a motion to approve the requests of Francisco Martinez Trejo seeking approval for an amended Special Use permit and Variations for his automobile sales and/or leasing business and his Automobile Body Repairing/Painting business, contingent on the 10 conditions just discussed.

(#4) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to recommend to the City Council the conditional approval of the petitions SU-26-4-4-2, and V-26-4-4-2, requests of Francisco Martinez Trejo for an amended Special Use for an Automobile Sales and/or Leasing business and an Automobile Body Repairing/Painting business, and Variations from Section 11.8 Schedule of Parking Requirements of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to decrease required parking spaces for both Automobile Sales and/or Leasing business and Automobile Body Repairing/Painting business located on the 20,575 sq-ft, B-3 Business Service District zoned property located at 1923 N Broadway St, Crest Hill.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Carroll, Slabozeski, Peterson, Stanton, Butler, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioners Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Plan Commission unanimously recommends City's Council's conditional approval of the amended Special Use for an Automobile Sales and/or Leasing Business and an Automobile Body Repairing/Painting Business; and Variations request from Section 11.8 Schedule of Parking Requirements of the Crest Hill Zoning Ordinance to decrease required parking spaces for both Automobile Sales and/or Leasing Business and Automobile Body Repairing/Painting Business,

subject to the project being implemented in substantial conformance with the ten (10) conditions for approval and application documents referenced in the April 9, 2026, Plan Commission Staff Report for petitions Case # SU-26-4-4-2, and Case # V-26-4-4-2.

Chairman Thomas announced that this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council and to keep in mind that the Plan Commission is a recommendation body only. He informed Mr. Martinez that the recommendation would go to city council with a workshop on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and final vote at the May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, City Council meeting.

Chairman Thomas thanked Mr. Martinez Trejo for his efforts in improving this stretch of Broadway Street and wished him much success with his expanded business ventures.

Chairman Bill Thomas presented the Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions SU-26-3-4-1, and V-26-3-4-1, requests of Jorge Cruz for a Special Use for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, and Variations from Section 15.12.080 Signs in Business Districts, Chapter 15.12 of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances-Sign Code to increase permitted sign area from 50 sq-ft to 89 sq-ft, increase permitted digital sign area from 20 sq-ft to 54 sq-ft, increase permitted sign height from 15 feet to 21 feet, and decrease the required setback from the property line from 10 feet to 3 feet for an existing on-premises free-standing sign, located on the 2.23 acres, B-2 General Business District zoned property located at 905 Theodore St, Crest Hill.

Chairman Thomas asked if the paperwork was in order. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi stated that the necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing for Case numbers SU-26-3-4-1 and V-26-3-4-1.

(#5) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to open a Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions SU-26-3-4-1, and V-26-3-4-1, requests of Jorge Cruz for a Special Use for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, and Variations from Section 15.12.080 Signs in Business Districts, Chapter 15.12 of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances-Sign Code to increase permitted sign area from 50 sq-ft to 89 sq-ft, increase permitted digital sign area from 20 sq-ft to 54 sq-ft, increase permitted sign height from 15 feet to 21 feet, and decrease the required setback from the property line from 10 feet to 3 feet for an existing on-premises free-standing sign, located on the 2.23 acres, B-2 General Business District zoned property located at 905 Theodore St, Crest Hill.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Slabozeski, Butler, Carroll, Stanton, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:24 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked the City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi to present the specifics on this case. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi explained that Jorge Cruz seeks to purchase, renovate, and reoccupy the vacant former Crest Hill Bowling Lanes at 905 Theodore Street, which has been vacant since 2020. Cruz and his family have been Crest Hill residents since 2005 and have been operating their business in a small space in Hillcrest Shopping Center for several years. The proposal includes an indoor soccer sports facility with training, recreational leagues, youth development programming, and community sporting events, plus a restaurant serving American-style bar and grill food to athletes, families, and the general public.

Proposed site improvements include repairing and replacing fencing, installing new landscaping, repaving and restriping parking lots, adding landscaping islands and lighting repairs, repairing the building's awnings, and updating the ground sign with a modern design. City Planner Ghaznawi emphasized this represents adaptive reuse of a vacant commercial building, replacing blighted conditions with an active, well-maintained use that contributes positively to the neighborhood.

The variation request for the existing freestanding sign would allow adequate business visibility without altering the neighborhood's essential character. Staff recommended approval of the requested petitions subject to six conditions including completion of all improvements prior to occupancy, operating hours of Monday-Sunday 9 AM to midnight for the soccer facility and 7 AM to 11 PM for the restaurant, maximum occupancy of 200 people (including employees, players, customers, etc.), prohibition of banquet hall or convention center use, and compliance with Chapter 9.72 Curfews Applicable to Minors of the City of Crest Hill Code of Ordinances.

City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi asked Jorge Cruz to come forward and present his case. Chairman Bill Thomas asked the representatives to sign in at the podium and raise their right hands to get sworn in.

Jorge Cruz testified that he has been a Crest Hill resident since 2005, his father opened the soccer facility at Hillcrest Center in 2010, and after years of seeking expansion space, they found this location in 2024. The facility will accommodate two regular-sized indoor soccer fields, including appropriate flooring, field markings, safety netting, and spectator viewing areas as needed; include a concession stand for players, and feature a restaurant run by Mr. Cruz (who has restaurant experience) and his brother while his father, mother, and sister operate the soccer training and leagues.

Mr. Cruz explained the layout includes two soccer fields separated from the restaurant by a wall with doors, and netting separating the fields from a concession area. He confirmed alcohol would be retained in the restaurant area only and would not be allowed on the soccer fields, with appropriate signage posted.

Chairman Thomas questioned seating arrangements for spectators, learning there would be bench areas for fans and standing room around the fields with protective netting. When Chairman Thomas expressed concern about the midnight closing hour, Mr. Cruz explained their current location operates 2 PM to 11 PM or midnight, with late hours serving people who get off work late and use the facility for exercise. The representative Omar Tahrani offered to amend the hours for the indoor soccer facility to 11 PM initially and potentially request extension later if needed.

Commissioner Carroll asked about restaurant capacity, with Mr. Cruz estimating 10-15 people per hour from soccer activities might visit the restaurant. Commissioner Peterson received confirmation that the restaurant would be open to the general public, not just soccer participants. Commissioner Slabozeski asked Mr. Cruz if the restaurant would be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Mr. Cruz stated that the restaurant is going to serve breakfast and coffee in the morning during the slow times to get things going and also open for lunch and dinner. Chairman Thomas inquired about potential monitors in the restaurant to view the soccer fields, which Mr. Cruz confirmed was planned as a live stream system. Commissioner Butler asked about potential staffing counts. Regarding staffing, the project narrative indicated 10-15 employees for the soccer facility and 6-10 for the restaurant.

Two residents testified during public comments. Robin Phelps, a 60-year resident living near the bowling alley, expressed support for the concept but concerned about midnight hours and the bar component. She recalled problems with the previous bar at the former bowling alley including loud noise, broken bottles, and disturbances, requiring residents to clean up debris. Both Ms. Phelps and other resident present, Carrie Polus, worried about similar issues with people drinking and walking home from the new establishment.

Community & Economic Development Consultant Ron Mentzer provided important context about liquor licensing, explaining he had participated in meetings with Mr. Cruz, his father, and Mayor Ray Soliman (the City's Liquor Commissioner). Consultant Mentzer clarified this would be a restaurant liquor license allowing alcohol service with food, not a bar license for extended drinking. Mayor Soliman was clear that he would only support a restaurant license, meaning customers couldn't simply spend time together drinking for hours but would need to order food. Consultant Mentzer noted Mayor Soliman is very hands-on as the Liquor Commissioner, sets clear expectations, calls in license holders when issues arise, and isn't afraid to revoke licenses when necessary. He emphasized that the family has significant self-interest in maintaining compliance to protect their substantial investment.

Commissioner Stanton inquired about the hours of both the soccer facility and the restaurant. City Planner Atefa Ghaznawi stated that the indoor soccer facility's hours are Monday-Sunday 9 AM to midnight and the restaurant hours are Monday-Sunday 7 AM to 11 PM. Commissioner Stanton then asked if the restaurant would need to be opened after 9:00-10:00PM. The representatives stated that there are people who come to play soccer or work out right from work and might need to eat afterward. Residents Ms. Phelps and Ms. Polus added that they think the idea and concept of an indoor soccer facility is a wonderful idea but still have concerns about the bar aspect of the facility falling into the past problems of the former bowling alley with disturbances and broken bottles. Mr. Cruz stressed that he thought that a bowling alley clientele and a soccer facility clientele are quite different and hoped there weren't any of the past issues that arise. He also mentioned that his family is very hands-on with the business.

Commissioner Slabozeski asked when Mr. Cruz planned to open the business. Mr. Cruz stated that once the work was done as stated in the agreement. He hoped that he could get a rush team in there to get it done and open by July or August 2026. He stated that he wanted to be ready to go for the winter soccer season.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to close the public hearing for cases SU-26-3-4-1 and V-26-3-4-1.

(#6) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to close the Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions SU-26-3-4-1, and V-26-3-4-1, requests of Jorge Cruz for a Special Use for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, and Variations from Section 15.12.080 Signs in Business Districts, Chapter 15.12 of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances-Sign Code to increase permitted sign area from 50 sq-ft to 89 sq-ft, increase permitted digital sign area from 20 sq-ft to 54 sq-ft, increase permitted sign height from 15 feet to 21 feet, and decrease the required setback from the property line from 10 feet to 3 feet for an existing on-premises free-standing sign, located on the 2.23 acres, B-2 General Business District zoned property located at 905 Theodore St, Crest Hill.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Slabozeski, Stanton, Butler, Carroll, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioners Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:58 p.m.

Chairman Thomas expressed concern about the “sports bar” signage after extensive discussion about it not being a bar, suggesting alternatives like “sports restaurant” or “Corner Kick Lounge.” He strongly preferred limiting both soccer facility and restaurant hours to 11 PM rather than midnight, offering to support future hour extensions if the business proved successful and problem-free.

Commissioner Peterson favored leaving the hours as requested, noting that restrictions based on potential drunk patrons seemed unfair since problematic drinking could occur elsewhere regardless.

Commissioner Stanton preferred some alcohol service time restrictions, suggesting alcohol service end earlier than food service to maintain control, stopping alcohol at 8 PM while allowing food service until 11 PM or midnight.

Commissioner Carroll supported matching restaurant and soccer facility hours so families would leave together when activities ended and inquired about managing unruly customers. Mr. Cruz assured Commissioners they would be hands-on in monitoring patrons and preventing over-service.

Commissioner Slabozeski suggested simply monitoring the situation as proposed. She also inquired about whether there will be security cameras inside and outside. Mr. Cruz answered that there will be a security system inside and outside of the facility.

Commissioner Butler stated that he had no problem with keeping the operating hours as proposed with proper monitoring.

Consultant Mentzer added that businesses serving alcohol must obtain dram shop insurance requiring mandatory training for staff on monitoring customers and overseeing unruly situations. He noted police departments prefer to be called for any issues rather than having business owners manage problems themselves, creating a partnership approach to prevention. Consultant Mentzer also explained that the City Council had recently modified liquor control provisions to expand restaurant alcohol service hours to midnight to compete with national chains like Chili's, Applebee's, and Olive Garden which typically serve until 11 PM or midnight on weekends. The previous 10 PM limit had been a factor in difficulty attracting such competitive businesses to Crest Hill.

Commissioner Stanton thanked Consultant Mentzer for the added information about the modified liquor control provisions and being in competition with the national chains. He stated that it made sense to him.

After discussion, the Commission took an informal straw vote showing 4-2 support for keeping the proposed hours unchanged. Chairman Thomas noted he would forward the discussion details to the City Council for their final determination on operating hours.

Chairman Bill Thomas asked for a motion to approve the requests of Jorge Cruz seeking approval for a Special Use and Variation for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, contingent on the 6 conditions just discussed.

(#7) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Carroll, to recommend to the City Council the conditional approval of the Public Hearing and Consideration of petitions SU-26-3-4-1, and V-26-3-4-1, requests of Jorge Cruz for a Special Use for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, and Variations from Section 15.12.080 Signs in Business Districts, Chapter 15.12 of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances-Sign Code to increase permitted sign area from 50 sq-ft to 89 sq-ft, increase permitted digital sign area from 20 sq-ft to 54 sq-ft, increase permitted sign height from 15 feet to 21 feet, and decrease the required setback from the property line from 10 feet to 3 feet for an existing on-premises free-standing sign, located on the 2.23 acres, B-2 General Business District zoned property located at 905 Theodore St, Crest Hill..

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Carroll, Slabozeski, Stanton, Butler, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioners Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Thomas stated the Plan Commission unanimously recommends City Council's conditional approval of the Special Use for an Indoor Recreational and Entertainment (Soccer) Facility, and Variations from Section 15.12.080 Signs in Business Districts, Chapter 15.12 of the Crest Hill Code of Ordinances-Sign Code to increase permitted sign area from 50 sq-ft to 89 sq-ft, increase permitted digital sign area from 20 sq-ft to 54 sq-ft, increase permitted sign height from 15 feet to 21 feet, and decrease the required setback from the property line from 10 feet to 3 feet for an existing on-premises free-standing sign, subject to the project being implemented in substantial conformance with the six (6) conditions for approval and application documents

referenced in the April 9, 2026, Plan Commission Staff Report for petitions Case # SU-26-3-4-1, and Case # V-26-3-4-1.

Chairman Thomas announced that this recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council and to keep in mind that the Plan Commission is a recommendation body only. The City Council will hear about this case during the April 27th, 2026, Work Session Meeting and the May 4th, 2026, City Council meeting for formal vote.

Chairman Bill Thomas then thanked Mr. Cruz for having the vision to repurpose an existing commercial property that has been vacant for six years and to further expand his indoor soccer sports training facility in the City of Crest Hill. He wished Mr. Cruz and his family much success with both the new soccer facility and the restaurant associated with it.

OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

There being no further business before the Commission, a motion for adjournment was in order.

(#8) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to adjourn the April 9, 2026, Plan Commission meeting.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioners Peterson, Slabozeski, Stanton, Carroll, Butler, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Flynn.

There being six (6) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

As approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

As presented \_\_\_\_\_

As amended \_\_\_\_\_

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BILL THOMAS, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN