

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: December 8, 2022

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Street
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Sierzega called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Members attended: Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Johnson, Castaneda, and Chairman Sierzega; Member O'Brien arrived at 7:04 pm. Present from the Village were Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros, Village Planner Valerie Berstene, and Building Division Secretary Darlene Leonard. There were four people in the audience and two people on zoom. The public was able to listen and watch the meeting via zoom webinar.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of November 10, 2022.

Member Castaneda stated on Page 5 towards the top of the page to strike the comments in the first sentence of her statement and have it read that "she concurs with Staff".

Member O'Brien stated in the middle of Page 5 to include his statement stating "Member O'Brien stated that he had previously asked consultant Jackie Wells what the cost of an ADU would be in today's market. She estimated anywhere between \$75,000 to \$150,000. The median would be \$113,000. The median cost of a house in Homewood today is approximately \$250,000. Together they total \$363,000, an amount that makes a down payment that much more difficult." Member O'Brien also stated to add that Ms. Wells didn't state if the 25% is attached or detached ADU; it needs clarification.

On Page 6 in Member Cap's statement to strike the work "come" in the first sentence. Also on Page 6 about halfway down the page remove "lot non-conformity analysis".

On Page 7 in the middle of the page change it to "manufactured homes".

On Page 8 in the statement from Ms. Wells, change "list of open questions: to "list titled Loose Ends" and insert "unanswered" unto the second line after "numbered".

A motion was made by Member O'Brien to approve the minutes of November 10, 2022, as corrected; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Johnson, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

REGULAR BUSINESS:

CASE 22-35: Special Use Permit for a Salon/Spa at 18203 Dixie Highway:

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and asked if any comments were received; Village Planner Berstene stated no.

Chairman Sierzega swore in the petitioner, Benita Best.

Ms. Best stated bbHolistic is a holistic wellness center that will be a safe, tranquil, uplifting space for the community and will provide rejuvenation and relaxation. It will provide preventative care to help prevent clients from going to the hospital and having medical conditions. They will also help improve and manage medical conditions. The plan for the business is to have holistic practices and events and workshops. They will provide massage therapy, acupuncture, have a holistic esthetician, a natural nail technician, yoga, tai chi, and mind/body exercise classes. Ms. Best stated the space is where she wants people to not feel like it's a business, but feel like it's a space for a retreat or an oasis.

Member Castaneda asked what are a holistic esthetician and a natural nail provider? Ms. Best explained that a holistic esthetician focuses on the whole health and nutrition as well as other issues that cause skin imbalance. They only use organic and it's customizable for each client. A natural nail technician does not use artificial nail treatments or harsh chemicals, and only uses natural nail care. They use products that are natural and non-toxic and they try to do chemical free.

Member Castaneda asked what kinds of events and workshops will be held. Ms. Best stated they will be geared to health and wellness, diabetes, women's health, breast cancer, Alzheimer's, cardiovascular, etc.

Member Castaneda asked Village Planner Berstene how many salon/spas are in the Downtown area. Village Planner Berstene stated she put a memo together with all of the salons/spas downtown on it. (Memo is attached.)

Member Johnson asked how the space is going to be used as there are 6 treatment rooms. Ms. Best stated the practitioners will sublease and not all will be in at the same time. Ms. Best stated it is by appointment only and the hours are going to be: Monday –Saturday 9:30-7:00 and Sunday 9:30-6:00. The subleasing practitioners will have flexibility and make their own schedules. All treatment will be by appointment only.

Member Johnson asked if there will be a build-out of the space. Ms. Best stated the space is ideal because the rooms are already built; she will add doors to enclose them.

Member Johnson stated that the 6 treatment rooms require 3 parking spaces each, for a total of 18. He inquired if this is a realistic reflection of how the space will be used. Ms. Best explained that every practitioner may not all have clients at the same time.

Member Johnson expressed a concern about the parking demand. Ms. Best stated she has been driving by the property periodically, checking the parking at various days and times, and has observed that there has always been parking available in the lot and on the street.

Member Johnson asked if the massage therapist and acupuncturist are licensed and asked how many total licensed professionals would be operating at the business. Ms. Best stated all 6 practitioners- including herself- will be licensed, that it is illegal in Illinois to provide such services without being licensed.

Member Johnson clarified that the other practitioners would sub-lease space. Ms. Best affirmed.

Member O'Brien clarified that the hours of operation are daytime, not weekends and evenings, as incorrectly noted in the packet. He then clarified that the precise area of the space as provided on the architectural floor plan should be used throughout: 2,173 sf.

Member O'Brien asked how many people the small multi-purpose room would hold. Ms. Best stated 12 is the limit, but it would most likely be 10-12 for yoga classes.

Member O'Brien asked if the rooms would be subleased. Ms. Best affirmed.

Member O'Brien asked if the multi-purpose room would be leased out. Ms. Best explained that the room would not be sub-leased or available for rentals; the purpose is to hold workshops.

Member Cap asked if the main entrance is on Dixie Highway. Ms. Best affirmed.

Member Cap stated the Village is close to adopting the new ordinance, but wants to know how it would fit under the new ordinance as a thought exercise. He articulated that the case is being reviewed under the current ordinance, but asked if any of the changes in the new ordinance would affect the case. Village Planner Berstene stated some of the nuances around Personal Services uses have changed as recently as the last meeting. Looking at the proposed ordinance, it's not entirely clear how to categorize this proposed use- whether as Massage Therapy or Personal Services. It would be located in the new B-2 District, wherein Massage Therapy would not be allowed, but Personal Services less than 2,500 sf would be a Limited Use Permit. The parking spaces required would drop from 18 to 9 based on total area rather than per treatment room.

Member Cap stated there is an overarching goal to encourage retail in the commercial districts. Village Planner Berstene read the Purpose and Intent statement of the B-2 Zoning District from the proposed zoning ordinance.

Member Cap stated that the only change from the current ordinance to the proposed seems to be the parking requirements. Village Planner Berstene offered further comparison of the proposed use through the lens of the current ordinance and the proposed revised version.

Members Johnson and Cap remarked on the challenges of evaluating the current case without considering the proposed updates to the ordinance. Member Cap referenced several cases before the Commission, primarily related to corner lot fences, where variances were granted on the understanding that the structure would be permitted with the revised ordinance. Village Planner Berstene cautioned that the circumstances are different when considering less restrictions available under the revised ordinance, as opposed to consider more stringent regulations when that ordinance has not yet been adopted.

Member Cap recalled that the property owner allowed parking for a previous case, thereby adding additional demand to the parking lot of the subject property. He added that there is sufficient parking available nearby on-street.

Member Cap asked Village Planner Berstene if she had the percentage of spas as a proportion of businesses in the Village and as a proportion of businesses in the downtown. Village Planner Berstene stated she did not have that, but in a past memo from Staff Liaison Mesaros regarding a case in 2020 there were 20 salons/spas at 7.8% of businesses, but was not sure if that was in the downtown or all of Homewood.

Commission members discussed the known quantity of salon/spa establishments in the Village, referencing an email from Director of Economic and Community Development dated April 28, 2022 (attached for reference). Member O'Brien recited that the email said that 7.5% of all business were salons/spas with 22 downtown and 52 total in Homewood. That is roughly 40% of salons in the Village are located in the downtown. Member Castaneda clarified that salons account for 7.5% of all businesses in Homewood, but not specifically the downtown. Member Johnson cautioned that the statistic may include salons and spas offering different types of services.

Commissioners then discussed aspects of the proposed new zoning ordinance related to salon/spas and personal services.

Member Cap asked how the proposed use would be predominantly characterized – whether it is services for nails, skin, massage, etc. Ms. Best stated her business will provide alternative health services; one may not be dominant of the others. Some clients would use multiple services. The concept is a one-stop-shop to promote health & wellness and preventative care. She added that her services will also address coping with anxiety, depression, PTSD, and grief, serving as more than just a spa.

Member Cap asked if it is conceivable for a person to be there all day and use all the treatment rooms. Ms. Best responded that it is unlikely. It would be too many treatments for the mind/body at one time.

Member Johnson clarified that a single customer wouldn't come in for services from all practitioners in one visit because each practitioner will set their own schedules and may not be concurrent. It is unlikely that all practitioners will be on-site at the same time.

Member Bransky stated in the letter there would be three massage therapists, one acupuncturist, one holistic esthetician, and one certified natural nail technician. This mix of services would preclude the use from being classified only as a massage therapy establishment.

Ms. Best added context that she will be one of the massage therapists, but will scale back her practice to run the business. She further explained that the physical nature of massage limits the number of appointments any one therapist might make in a day; seeing five clients in a day would be the upper limit of what is physically responsible for a massage therapist.

Ms. Best spoke about the need to clean and prep rooms between clients, creating a default buffering between clients and explained that the infrared sauna and meditation room would be for guests to use as a transition to/ from treatments. These amenities would not add additional users on top of the other services, but be in addition to the other services.

Member Bransky asked if the multi-purpose room would be related to the use of the other spaces. Ms. Best stated it would be used during "off peak" times when the others are not there.

Member Bransky asked if it is possible that all 6 rooms would be in use at the same time and the multi-purpose room be in use simultaneously. Ms. Best averred that classes in the multi-purpose room would not be scheduled for a time when all other treatment rooms were in use. Events in the multi-purpose room would most likely be evenings or Sundays, but to be determined based on how the business' peak hours are determined.

Member Bransky stated no one is currently offering what is being proposed. Some have some of the services, but not all of them. Member Bransky expressed that the use is more along the lines of healthcare than a salon.

Member Alfonso inquired about the duration of the subleases. Ms. Best responded that leases would be a year duration.

Member Alfonso asked if the clients are existing or referrals, and where the other practitioners would be getting their clients. Ms. Best stated that most of her clients are existing, many in the south suburban area, but some are in the city or Indiana. Member Alfonso concluded that this would bring people into Homewood for this business.

Member Alfonso asked if there will be any counseling. Ms. Best stated she would have therapists come in.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there was a current location and if so, would it stay open. Ms. Best stated she does have a place, and would close it to relocate.

Chairman Sierzega asked if it is by appointment only. Ms. Best affirmed.

Chairman Sierzega asked if Ms. Best has sub-lessee practitioners line up yet. Ms. Best stated she has some interested, but she hasn't done any heavy recruiting until after she had the space and the approval.

Chairman Sierzega asked what her specialty is. Ms. Best stated she is a certified yoga instructor, licensed massage therapist, and has degrees in nutrition and psychology.

Chairman Sierzega asked, if it's approved, how long it would be before the opening. Ms. Best stated it would go in front of the Village Board in January so she is thinking March or April.

Chairman Sierzega restated that the hours of operation would be Monday-Sat 9:30-7:00 and Sundays 9:30-6:00. Ms. Best affirmed.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were questions from anyone in the audience. No one came forward.

Members Bransky and O'Brien corrected item #7 of the Findings of Fact should read 2,173 square feet.

A motion was made by Member Bransky to recommend approval of Case Number 22-35 to grant a Special Use Permit for a Salon/Spa Establishment in the B-1 Central Business District for bbHolistic LLC at 18203 Dixie Highway, incorporating the Findings of Fact into the record; seconded by Member Alfonso.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Johnson, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: Member O'Brien

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Member O'Brien stated that he voted in opposition due to the proliferation of the type of business in the downtown, the fact that they do not generate sales tax, and the goal of attracting retail for the downtown.

OLD BUSINESS:**CASE 22-40 – Public Hearing for Comprehensive Zoning Text and Map Amendments, continued**

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and invited Village Planner Berstene to start the discussion.

Village Planner Berstene directed the Commission to the materials in their packets, highlighting the memo itemizing revisions to the previous draft of the zoning text, the recommended motions for the text and map amendments, and the list of conditions of approval recommended by Staff.

Member Johnson asked if additional changes can be made after the ordinance is adopted. Village Planner Berstene affirmed, assuring that the ordinance can be amended over time as planning changes, economic markets evolve, and business types change.

Commission members further discussed the mandate of making a motion and the ability to further amend the ordinance subsequent to making a motion at the present time.

Member Johnson iterated the duration of the ongoing process and amount of effort put into creating the revised ordinance.

Member Bransky asked if particular sections of the ordinance could be called out for individual vote or put aside until further amended. He suggested creating a way to track any items that feel unresolved to further study and keep tabs on. Village Planner Berstene explained that the motion should be on the entire ordinance, or a consensus from the Commission to remove any particular sections, but that only a section introducing new regulations could be removed, such as was done with the section on Short Term Rentals.

Member Bransky proposed to establish an agenda of items for further review, so they don't get forgotten in the future. Village Planner Berstene agreed. Discussion ensued about the best way to record the items for further study.

An audience member came forward with a question; Chairman Sierzega swore in Florence Hardy, owner of 18148 Martin Avenue. Ms. Hardy looked to ascertain if the items of concern to be addressed further in the future would potentially impact her business.

Chairman Sierzega asked Ms. Hardy what type of business she has. Ms. Hardy stated it is a retreat center with overnight accommodations and classes during the day.

Village Manager Haney suggested that the intent to further amend the ordinance be added to the motion. Member Johnson clarified the intent is to consider further amendments.

Member Cap directed the discussion back to the previous case in search of further clarification of definitions of co-working, personal services professional offices, medical offices, and salon/spas. Commission members articulated concerns about and confusion around the clarity of the definitions of uses under the revised ordinance, particularly when uses are overlapping or multi-faceted and the role of the special use.

Commission members guided the discussion back to creating an agenda of items for further review in order to feel comfortable moving on a recommendation at the present time.

Motion was made by Member Bransky to recommend approval of the proposed amendment for a comprehensive update to the Village of Homewood Zoning Ordinance, subject to the stated conditions, and with the intent to consider amendments in the future; seconded by Member O'Brien.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Johnson, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion was made by Member Bransky to recommend approval of the proposed amendment for a comprehensive update to the Village of Homewood Zoning Map and the intent to consider amendments in the future; seconded by Member O'Brien.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Johnson, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURN:

Chairman Sierzega asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m., seconded by Member Castaneda.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Johnson, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Mesaros

Director of Economic and Community Development