

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: August 27, 2026

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

From: Noah Schumerth, Director of Economic and Community Development

Topic: Case 26-53: Variance to Place of Assembly Use Standards at 18148 Martin Avenue



Figure 1: The subject property in 2024

APPLICATION INFORMATION

APPLICANT	Florence Hardy (The Nap Lounge Illinois Inc.) 18148 Martin Avenue Homewood, IL 60430
ACTION REQUESTED	Non-residential variance approval to allow the operation of a members-only wellness retreat center (classified as an <i>indoor commercial place of assembly</i>) on a local street the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district at 18148 Martin Avenue.
ADDRESS	18148 Martin Avenue Homewood, IL 60430
PIN	29-31-313-018-0000

ZONING & LAND USE

SUBJECT PROPERTY	ZONING	LAND USE
CURRENT	B-2 Downtown Transition	Vacant (formerly retreat center)
SURROUNDING	N: B-2 Downtown Transition	Townhomes
	E: B-2 Downtown Transition	Multi-family residential (Martin Place)
	S: B-2 Downtown Transition	Professional office/multi-family residential
	W: B-2 Downtown Transition	Restaurant (Grady's)

LEGAL NOTICE

Legal notice was published in *Daily Southtown* on August 12, 2026; letters were sent to property owners and residents within 250'.

DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Application	2	Florence Hardy, Applicant	8/7/2026
Floor Plan	1	Florence Hardy, Applicant	7/1/2026
Special Use Permit Staff Memo	6	Noah Schumerth, Director ECD	8/11/2026

ACTION REQUESTED

Florence Hardy (“Applicant”) is requesting a variance to allow the operation of an indoor commercial place of assembly on a local classification street. According to the Village Zoning Ordinance, indoor commercial places of assembly are required to be located on a collector or arterial street.

HISTORY

The building on-site was originally constructed in 1908 as a single-family residence. The building was converted into a business (an antique store) in 1977. The building was converted into a duplex in 1997, a conversion which was approved by the Board of Trustees by zoning variance. The business was converted into a surveyor’s office in 2005. The building was used as a small retreat center called The Eos House for several years.

BACKGROUND

Summary: Florence Hardy (“Applicant”) previously requested approval of a special use permit to allow the operation of a members-only wellness retreat center (classified as an *indoor commercial place of assembly*) in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district at 18148 Martin Avenue. The special use permit was recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission on August 20, 2026, with the condition that a variance application is recommended for approval by the Commission at a future hearing date. A copy of the original staff memo for this special use permit application is attached to this memo.

According to the Village Zoning Ordinance, indoor commercial places of assembly are required to be located on a collector or arterial street. A variance is required to operate an indoor commercial place of assembly on a local street. Martin Avenue between Hickory Road and Olive Road is classified as a local street.

Martin Avenue is a local street with less than 500 vehicles per day. Per the Village’s 2019 Parking and Traffic Study performed by KLOA Inc., traffic volume is less than comparable through streets in the vicinity (Ridge Road, Harwood Avenue, etc.).

DISCUSSION AND VARIANCE STANDARDS

The applicant is seeking a variance to operate an indoor commercial place of assembly on a local street in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district.

All variance applications are reviewed against the two sets of Variance Standards found in Section 44-07-12 of the Village Zoning Ordinance – one set of required minimum standards for a variance, and an additional set of standards evaluating the degree of hardship and impacts on neighboring property.

Village staff have reviewed the proposed variance with these standards and provided staff findings below.

- (1) The Planning and Zoning Commission shall use the following standards when considering this variance request, as set forth in Section 44-07-12 of the Village Zoning Ordinance. No variance shall be granted unless findings of fact for each specific application demonstrate a suitable degree**

of hardship outside of the control of the property owner, and the minimal deviation from this chapter necessary, as provided in the applicant's response to each of the following standards:

- a) Can the property in question yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations governing the district in which it is located?

The proposed use is similar in function to previous uses approved at the property (including the most recent use of the property). The building has previously been utilized for other uses, including both residential and non-residential uses. The owner purchased the subject property in order to operate the proposed use, and the property is currently designed to support uses similar to the proposed use.

- b) Is the plight of the owner due to unique circumstances?

The property was previously utilized for a similar use to the proposed use. The requirements for place of assembly uses (such as the proposed wellness retreat) changed with the adoption of a revised zoning ordinance in 2023, which included additional restrictions on the location of indoor commercial places of assembly. The use is unique; while there are other indoor commercial places of assembly located in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, there are no known instances of the specific type of use proposed by the applicant (members-only wellness retreat designed to host small limited events).

The proposed use is anticipated to have a significantly lower traffic impact than uses in the same use category, which can include high-traffic uses such as event centers and large gyms. The proposed use is anticipated to have a maximum of 20-25 visitors at any given time, with visitor counts much lower than that number at most times. The use is not anticipated to produce "concentrated traffic flows" where congestion could occur, as can be common with high-traffic uses in the same use category which may produce concentrated traffic at start/end times of large events. According to the applicant's testimony in a special use permit application case on August 20, the use is also anticipated to partially rely on pedestrian traffic, including public and member traffic walking from nearby areas in the Downtown or from the Village's nearby transit hub.

Additionally, many collector and arterial streets in the vicinity (such as Harwood Avenue, 183rd Street, etc.) lack on-street parking, which may be necessary to support this infill development. The property was developed as a single-family house in 1908 and was not designed for additional vehicle parking. On-street parking spaces in the immediate vicinity are capable of supporting additional parking traffic spurred by the proposed use. On-street parking on the adjacent local street may further support the use in a manner which would not be appropriate for other commercial place of assembly uses in the same use category.

- c) If granted, will the variance alter the essential character of the locality?

The proposed variance is unlikely to alter the essential character of the locality. The property was previously operated as a similar use with no known citations or negative impacts on neighboring property. The use is deemed to be in alignment with the purpose and intent of the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, which is "to support the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for a mix of residential and nonresidential uses as well as contextually sensitive infill development in a pedestrian-oriented environment that supports the vibrancy of the downtown core."

(2) Supplemental to the above standards, the decision-making authority shall also consider findings on the character of the alleged hardship and the potential impacts to neighboring properties of granting the variance, as provided in the applicant's response to each of the following standards. Not one of the standards is controlling.

d. Do the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the subject property pose a particular hardship upon the owner, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, under the strict application of these regulations?

There are no known physical conditions which place a particular hardship on the owner. Martin Avenue has been classified as a local street since the Village's street classification map was established in the 1940s.

e. Would the conditions upon which the petition for variance is based be generally applicable to other properties within the same zoning classification?

There are no known instances of similar uses to the proposed use in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district. Some other uses approved in the same zoning district are larger event centers and fitness uses which do not share the same characteristics of use or anticipated traffic counts as the proposed use. The restriction on indoor commercial places of assembly on local streets were designed to avoid negative impacts from traffic congestion or parking demands on local street from larger uses within the use category, such as event centers and large fitness uses.

f. Has the alleged practical difficulty or particular hardship been created by any person presently having an interest in the property?

The owner has not created the conditions which constitute a hardship. Martin Avenue has been classified as a local street since the Village's street classification map was established in the 1940s. The zoning requirements which restrict indoor commercial places of assembly from being accessed by local streets was established with the adoption of the 2023 Village Zoning Ordinance, after this building was first utilized for a use similar to the one proposed with this application.

g. If granted, will the variance be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other neighboring property?

The variance is unlikely to be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to neighboring property.

h. If granted, will the variance: impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property; or substantially increase the danger of fire or otherwise endanger the public safety; or substantially diminish or impair values of neighboring property?

The variance is unlikely to impair the adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, substantially increase the danger of fire, endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair the value of neighboring property. All improvements proposed meet local zoning and building requirements, as reviewed by staff from the Building Department and Economic and Community Development.

STAFF COMMENTS

The Planning and Zoning Commission is a recommending body for variance applications. The Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for making a recommendation to the Village Board of Trustees for approval or denial of this application.

A special use permit for the proposed use (required in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district) was conditionally recommended for approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission on August 20, 2026. This special use permit must be approved or denied by the Village Board of Trustees. This special use permit will be heard concurrently with the variance recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

If the special use and variance applications are both approved (by ordinance by the Village Board), the business will require approval of a business operation certificate. The applicant has applied for this certificate. This approval requires inspections for code compliance prior to opening.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Staff has prepared the draft findings of fact following the standards outlined in Section 44-07-11 of the Village Zoning Ordinance for special use permit applications. The findings of fact, as proposed or as amended, may be entered into the record upon a recommendation of approval:

1. The subject property is located at 18148 Martin Avenue and is located within the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, with Cook County PIN # 29-31-313-018-0000;
2. The subject property is currently owned by Florence Hardy of Homewood, Illinois;
3. The proposed use of the property is an indoor commercial place of assembly, which is classified as a special use in Table 44-03-04 of the Village Zoning Ordinance;
4. The subject site meets the use-specific standards for places of assembly in Section 44-04-04 of the Village Zoning Ordinance;
5. The subject site meets applicable development standards in Section 44-05 of the Village Zoning Ordinance;
6. The proposed special use is consistent with the applicable standards for special use permit approval as set forth in Section 44-07-11;
7. The proposed variance is consistent with the applicable standards for variance approval as set forth in Section 44-07-12.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION ACTION

Staff recommends the following motion by the Planning and Zoning Commission, based on the findings outlined in this memo:

Recommend Village Board approval of Case 26-53: Variance for Place of Assembly Use Standards (Section 44-04-04) at 18148 Martin Avenue, to allow the operation of an indoor commercial place of assembly on a local classification street;

AND

Incorporate the Findings of Fact into the record.