

# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE OF MEETING:** April 2, 2026

**To:** Appearance Commission

**From:** Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development

**Through:** Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development

**Topic:** Case 26-22: Appearance Review for Live Free 999 Foundation at 18219 Dixie Highway

## DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Application	1	Linden Group Architects, Applicant	03/17/2026
Site Plan	1	Arete Ltd., Architect	08/15/2003
Floor Plans	2	Linden Group Architects, Applicant	03/17/2026
Elevations	1	Linden Group Architects, Applicant	03/17/2026
Interior Renderings	7	Linden Group Architects, Applicant	03/17/2026
Staff Exhibits	2	Noah Schumerth, A.D. ECD	03/27/2026

## BACKGROUND

The applicant, Mike Matthys of Linden Group (on behalf of Carmela Wallace, owner of Homewood Brewing Company and Live Free 999) has proposed the renovation of a building at 18219 Dixie Highway. This renovation will convert the building into a new headquarters for the Live Free 999, a foundation aimed at funding and supporting preventative mental health services and efforts to heal substance abuse in teens and adults.

## HISTORY

The building was constructed in 1950. The building was a restaurant (Mama and Me Pizzeria) for 32 years, between 1990 and 2022. The building was clad in its current bright yellow stucco exterior around the time of the opening of the pizza restaurant in 1990. The building was purchased by the owner of the adjacent Homewood Brewing Company, Carmela Wallace, in 2022.



Figure 1: The existing building located at 18219 Dixie Highway (former Mama and Me Pizzeria)

## DISCUSSION

### Exterior

In addition to the full interior rebuild of the existing 4,500 s.f. building, the applicant is proposing a full exterior renovation. The renovation will repair the stucco on the building and paint all stucco surfaces in a color palate of grey, purple and black. This color palate reflects the branding colors of the Live Free 999 Foundation.

The proposed renovation will create minor structural changes to the building. The applicant will add a window to the south side of the building and a new awning structure will be built on the front of the building. The window will have a dimensions which match the other large windows on the south façade of the first floor, and a window head and pane structure which will match those found on the existing windows on the building. The upper windows of the building are currently blacked out, but these windows will be opened and used to bring additional daylight into the interior of the building.

The existing black canvas awning is proposed to be removed. The awning will be replaced with a purple canvas awning matching the branding colors of the foundation. The new awning will project further over the sidewalk and have a flat top.

### Landscaping

No landscaping is proposed for the site. This project does not require Site Plan Review approval which would trigger the requirement of additional landscaping improvements to meet current zoning requirements.

### Lighting

The existing building has wall sconce lights along the south façade of the building (facing the alley near Homewood Brewing Company), which have historically provided illumination for business signage and a large mural. The applicant has proposed to remove this lighting. Staff has provided a recommendation to retain some of these lighting fixtures to allow for the illumination of a painted wall sign on the side of the building and to add lighting in an area of the existing alley where limited other lighting exists.

**Conditions:** Staff has recommended the following conditions of approval for consideration:

- Maintain the existing sconce lighting on the south façade, located in the rear 40' of the building, to ensure sufficient alley lighting and nighttime lighting of the proposed painted wall sign. Revise drawings to include lighting prior to the issuance of building permits.

### Public Art

The Village approved an agreement with the property owner in 2014 to create a mural on the south side of the building. This mural, painted by Tom Melvin and reflecting the style of the original artwork on the wall created by Richard Haas, depicts a Fourth of July parade scene in Homewood.

Per the terms of the 2014 sign agreement, the Village Board must agree to any alteration, relocation or removal of the mural. The owner will be unable to remove the mural, including the installation of the

new window or painting of the wall surface, without the express written approval of the Board prior to work being completed.

**Conditions:** Staff has recommended the following conditions of approval for consideration:

- Receive Village Board approval for the removal and relocation for the mural on the south façade of the building prior to the issuance of building permits.

### Signage

The applicant has proposed the removal of all remaining signage existing on the building, including a wall sign remaining on the front façade facing Dixie Highway. The proposed building design includes a wall sign on the west building façade (facing Dixie Highway), wall sign and a painted wall sign on the south building façade (facing Homewood Brewing Company). The building is permitted to have two (2) wall signs and one (1) painted wall sign. The painted wall sign will include the business' name, a quote, and various artistic elements such as lightning, butterflies, and other imagery consistent with the foundation's brand.

All signs meet the current requirements of the Village Sign Code. The signs included in this submittal will require sign permit approval separate from this application. Signs will be formally reviewed for conformance with the Village Sign Code at that time.

The applicant has proposed several additional painted elements with flowers, butterflies and other artistic elements along the front arcade of the building. These are considered as painted additions to the building and are not considered as painted wall signs. These artistic additions are permitted.

## **REVIEW STANDARDS**

The Appearance Commission may use the Appearance Plan as a set of standards for the review of any Appearance Review application. The Commission may wish to consider the following standards in the evaluation of this proposal:

### B. Relationship of Buildings to the Site

- 1. The site shall be planned to accomplish a desirable transition with the streetscape, and to provide for adequate planting, pedestrian movement, and parking areas.*
- 3. The height and scale of each building shall be compatible with its site and adjoining buildings.*
- 4. Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations, shall be underground. Transformers mounted on utility poles shall be discouraged.*
- 5. In relating buildings to site, the provisions of the Homewood Municipal Code in regard to bulk regulations, standards, and off-street parking shall be part of this criteria.*

### C. Relationship of Building with Surrounding Area

1. *Adjacent buildings of different architectural styles shall be made compatible by such means as screens, site breaks, and other materials.*
3. *Harmony in texture, lines, and masses is required.*
4. *Buildings should have a similar scale to those in the surrounding area.*

### D. Landscape and Site Treatment

2. *Landscape treatment shall be provided to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, and provide shade.*
4. *Plant material shall be selected for interest in its structure, texture, and color and for its ultimate growth. Plants that are indigenous to the area and others that will be hardy, harmonious to the design and of good appearance shall be used.*
6. *Parking areas and traffic ways shall be enhanced with landscaped spaces containing trees or tree groupings. Parking areas shall be treated with decorative elements, building wall extensions, plantings, fences or other innovative means so as to largely screen parking from public view.*
7. *Where building sites limit planting, the placement of trees in parkways or paved areas will be required. Planting areas within parking lots shall be encouraged.*
9. *In areas where general planting will not prosper, other materials, such as fences, walls and pavings; of wood, brick, stone, and gravel, shall be used. Carefully selected plants shall be combined with such materials where possible.*
10. *Exterior lighting, when used, shall enhance the building design and the adjoining landscape. Lighting standards and fixtures shall be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas. Lighting shall be restrained in design, and excessive brightness so it has no light spill over to adjacent properties, and brilliant colors avoided.*

### E. Building Design

1. *Acceptable design principals and proper use of materials and supporting surrounding elements;*
2. *Buildings shall, with their own design concept, be an asset in the aesthetic sense to the Village of Homewood;*
3. *Materials shall be compatible with and complimentary to the design; as follows:*
  - a. *Materials shall be of a permanent nature and require a minimum amount of maintenance;*

*b. Exposed structural frames that reflect the design principals of the building shall be an integral part of the building design;*

*c. Colors shall be harmonious, with bright or brilliant colors used mainly for accent.*

*4. Mechanical or electrical equipment and utility hardware, whether located on the roof, ground or attached to the building, shall be screened from the public view. Screening shall be accomplished with the use of fences, walls, enclosures or approved plantings. Materials used shall be compatible with the materials used on the building and throughout the project.*

*5. Exterior lighting shall be part of the architectural concept. Fixtures, standards and placement of these units and all exposed accessories shall be harmonious with building design. Lighting shall be restrained in design and excessive brightness so it has no light spill over to adjacent properties, and brilliant colors shall be avoided.*

#### F. Signs

*1. Wall, ground, and identification signs shall be part of the architectural concept. Size color, lettering, locations, and arrangement shall be harmonious with the building design, and shall be compatible with signs on adjoining buildings.*

*2. Materials used in signs shall be of sound architectural character, be durable, and be harmonious with building design and surrounding landscape. Materials that tend to become illegible shall be avoided.*

#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

The proposed use is a *professional office > 2,500 square feet*. This use requires a special use permit in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district. The special use permit will be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 9.

#### **RECOMMENDED APPEARANCE COMMISSION ACTION**

The Appearance Commission may wish to consider the following motion:

**Approve** Case 26-22: Appearance Review for Live Free 999 Foundation at 18219 Dixie Highway, as proposed on the drawings submitted by Linden Group Architects, subject to the following conditions:

1. Maintain the existing sconce lighting on the south façade, located in the rear 40' of the building, to ensure sufficient alley lighting and nighttime lighting of the proposed painted wall sign. Revise drawings to include lighting prior to the issuance of building permits.
2. Receive Village Board approval for the removal and relocation for the mural on the south façade of the building prior to the issuance of building permits.