

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: **January 25, 2024**

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Street
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sierzega called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, O'Brien, Johnson, and Chair Sierzega. Present from the Village was Staff Liaison Angela Mesaros, and Assistant Economic & Community Development Director Noah Schumerth. There was one person in the audience. The public was able to watch and listen to the meeting via Zoom webinar. There were no attendees on the Zoom webinar recording.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of January 11, 2024. Member Cap identified that language stating "exterior improvements are *and* enhancement" should be "exterior improvements are *an* enhancement."

Member O'Brien moved to approve the minutes as corrected; seconded by Member Cap.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Members Bransky and Johnson.

ABSENT: None

REGULAR BUSINESS:

CASE 24-01: Special Use Permit Indoor Commercial Place of Assembly at 18205 Dixie Highway

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and swore in the petitioner, Dionne Townsend of Honeycomb Hideout, an event center and banquet space located at 18205 Dixie Highway.

Chairman Sierzega requested information about the proposed use, a fitness/gym class to be hosted within the existing Honeycomb Hideout tenant space.

Applicant Townsend said the proposed use includes fitness classes which will take place in the existing Honeycomb Hideout event center space. Classes are to be held for up to 20 people at a time with a separate teacher who will lease the space. The classes will use the space for one hour on 2-3 weekdays. The classes will use 5 lb. dumbbells and other light exercise equipment.

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Chair Sierzega asked for information about the proposed hours for the new classes. Applicant Townsend stated that weekend classes will be hosted earlier in the morning at either 9 am or 10 am for one hour, and weekday classes will be hosted from 7 pm to 8 pm. Member Alfonzo asked for confirmation that weekday classes will happen in the evening.

Chair Sierzega noted that the applicant's narrative and the provided staff memo differed from the statement made at the hearing by the applicant. Chair Sierzega noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission was informed that classes would be held roughly between the hours of 5 pm and 9 pm. Chair Sierzega asked for clarification on the actual hours of operation.

Applicant Townsend noted that the size of the exercise classes will dictate the hours of the proposed use. The applicant noted that the classes do not have a set time. The applicant reiterated that weekday classes are likely to be hosted from 7 pm to 8 pm, but early classes could be hosted at either 8 am to 9 am or from 9 am to 10 am. The applicant reiterated that the hours are dependent on the demand for class space.

Chair Sierzega asked if there would be any classes hosted on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. The applicant stated that there would be no classes on Fridays, Saturdays, or Sundays.

Member O'Brien stated he liked the concept of the use and applauded that the new exercise classes were the result of collaboration between two local business owners.

Member O'Brien asked for clarification from staff about the square footage of the tenant space occupied by Applicant Townsend. Member O'Brien also asked for clarification about whether the new classes would overlap with peak business hours in the existing shopping center based on conflicting language on Page 12 and Page 13 of the staff memo. Assistant Director Noah Schumerth noted that on Page 12, staff members were referring to the overall peak of activity for all uses on the site. On Page 13, staff members were referring to the overlapping peak hours between the existing fitness center use approved in the building and the fitness center use proposed by Applicant Townsend.

Member O'Brien asked Asst. Director Schumerth about the potential for exceeding the supply of on-street parking on Dixie Highway on weekday evenings due to conflicts with the neighboring businesses. Asst. Director Schumerth stated that staff are primarily concerned with off-street parking when considering Special Use Permit applications, and staff believes that the center has sufficient off-street parking to support the use proposed by Applicant Townsend. Schumerth noted that visitors to other businesses near the center cannot park in the lot reserved for the tenants of the shopping center occupied by Applicant Townsend.

Member O'Brien expressed concerns about the future of the on-street parking supply on Dixie Highway. Asst. Director Schumerth noted that staff will continue to monitor parking supply in the downtown, especially near multi-tenant shopping centers.

Member Johnson asked for clarification about whether the space would be used for fitness classes on Fridays. Applicant Townsend noted that the space will not be used for fitness classes on Fridays and that the space is reserved for other event uses on weekends.

Member Johnson asked how busy the commercial center is with its current tenant mix. Staff Liaison Angela Mesaros stated that there are a range of different uses occupying the center, including a fitness

center which was approved in December 2023 and has not opened yet. Member Johnson noted that traffic may increase with the operation of the new fitness center used next door in addition to the new fitness classes proposed by the applicant.

Member Castaneda asked if events are hosted by the applicant during the week. Applicant Townsend noted that there are generally about four hours of events on weekdays, generally in the afternoon. The applicant noted that there are 62 spaces in the parking lot which are rarely used by the current tenants.

Member Cap noted that the property to the north of the commercial center has a significant amount of parking which includes spaces reserved for particular businesses. Member Cap noted that people will park where people feel it is convenient or safe to do so and expressed concerns about parking overflowing onto neighboring properties.

Member Cap asked if classes would be held each evening on weekdays. Applicant Townsend said no. Member Cap stated that there would be uncertainty in the scheduling of evening classes. Applicant Townsend reiterated that there would be one class per evening that the classes are hosted.

Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that advertisements posted on social media state that the business will operate two classes a night on Tuesdays, with one class per night hosted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Applicant Townsend stated that there the advertisement did not reflect the agreement made between herself and the host of the classes. Member Alfonso asked if the ad was reflecting classes in the current space. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that the advertisement was for classes in the applicant's current tenant space.

Liaison Mesaros stated that there the purpose of discussing the advertisement was to ensure that any restrictions around the Special Use Permit reflect the applicant's actual plans for business operation. Applicant Townsend stated that the business would be used for fitness classes two nights a week.

Chair Sierzega stated that plans must be laid out to ensure flexibility for the business operators to work together to host the proposed classes.

Member Cap asked for clarification about which nights the classes will be hosted. Applicant Townsend noted that the class scheduling is dependent on the level of interest in the proposed classes. Applicant Townsend asked if particular nights are better than others for hosting the proposed classes.

Chair Sierzega reiterated that the Commission is trying to ensure flexibility for the business owners to work together on class scheduling and to ensure the Special Use Permit does not unnecessarily restrict the proposed activities. Chair Sierzega noted that the recommended conditions on the Special Use Permit limit class operations to 5-9 pm, Monday through Thursday. The recommended conditions were not written to allow morning classes. Chair Sierzega noted that the morning classes would need to be accommodated through changes in the proposed conditions for the Special Use Permit.

Applicant Townsend noted that she is unsure if the business owner running the fitness classes will go forward with hosting classes in the Honeycomb Hideout space because she was looking at other spaces to host the classes. Applicant Townsend noted that the other business owner was looking elsewhere due to delays in permitting the classes at her location.

Liaison Mesaros noted that the conditions are going to be written to best support the business owners in how they wish to operate the classes, but the conditions need more information before they can be finalized. Asst. Director Noah Schumerth stated that the recommended conditions are standard for places of assembly, but the hours proposed in the conditions were based on the applicant's narrative and the public information about the fitness classes. Asst. Director Schumerth noted that the hours could be easily adjusted to support the new plans of the business owners and to ensure that changes in the fitness classes do not require an amendment to the Special Use Permit.

Member Cap asked about the capacity of parking on the site and how staff addressed this challenge. Assistant Director Schumerth discussed that staff included a restriction of 30 guests based on the parking demand required for other uses which are likely to be open in the commercial center at the proposed hours of operation for the new fitness classes. Staff believes that there is sufficient capacity to support the new classes being hosted by the applicant.

Member Cap asked for clarification on which businesses are currently operating in the commercial center. Assistant Director Schumerth provided clarification.

Member Bransky stated that a Special Use Permit generally requires information such as a clear set of hours of operation.

Member Alfonso asked what the capacity of Honeycomb Hideout is for any event. Applicant Townsend said that the capacity of the space is approximately 75 people, with more space if tables are not included.

Member Alfonso asked what types of events are hosted at Honeycomb Hideout. Applicant Townsend stated that showers, repasses, and other events are common.

Chair Sierzega asked for the hours of operation for the entire business at Honeycomb Hideout. Applicant Townsend said the hours are entirely variable based on the event. Chair Sierzega asked if there were any parameters for hours of operation for the business. Applicant Townsend mentioned that most events occur after 12 pm or 1 pm, and most events are over before 4 pm. Applicant Townsend added that she is not on the premises every day.

Chair Sierzega asked what kinds of events have been hosted there and how many people are generally in attendance. Applicant Townsend stated that baby showers, repasses, and family gatherings dominate the events hosted at the space, with the number of people at events varying greatly. Chair Sierzega asked for clarification about specific events and their general attendance.

Chair Sierzega asked about how late any event can go at Honeycomb Hideout. Applicant Townsend said events can run until midnight.

Applicant Townsend provided an example of an event happening at her business the following day, with 60 people scheduled to be in attendance.

Chair Sierzega asked if there are ever issues with parking for events. Applicant Townsend stated her business has never had an issue with parking capacity. Applicant Townsend noted that there are few parking spaces occupied at the commercial center.

Chair Sierzega asked for clarification about the range of hours that fitness classes will be offered. Applicant Townsend said that the classes may not happen, and it is hard to pin down an exact time.

Member O'Brien asked if 12 pm to 9 pm as a range of hours would provide flexibility to run the proposed classes. Applicant Townsend said yes. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that there are classes proposed for the morning hours, and thus the range of hours should reflect the plans stated for the classes.

Member Johnson asked for clarification about what days of the week need to be identified for classes. Member Bransky asked if there are morning hours that can be identified in the conditions of approval of the Special Use Permit to allow for morning classes on Monday through Thursday. Chair Sierzega noted that the time blocks do not force the fitness classes to be hosted at a particular time.

Member Johnson reiterated that the two time blocks for the operation of fitness classes were to be 7 am to 10 am on Monday through Thursday, and from 5 pm to 9 pm on Monday through Thursday. A recommendation was made to adjust the proposed condition of approval for the Special Use Permit.

Member Cap noted that the applicant should check advertised hours which are public.

Member O'Brien asked about the condition requiring a liquor license to sell alcohol on the premises. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that this is a standard condition for commercial places of assembly. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that the Special Use Permit application was required originally because the allowed use, a banquet center, had a specific definition under the old code which restricts what she can do in her current commercial space. The Special Use Permit will allow the applicant to host any activities permitted in an indoor commercial place of assembly in the current zoning ordinance. Staff Liaison noted that the condition prohibiting liquor without a license avoids confusion with these types of uses. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that a Village Board of Trustees approval of a liquor license would supersede this condition of approval

A motion was made by member Bransky to recommend approval of Case 24-01 for a Special Use Permit permitting the operation of an indoor commercial place of assembly establishment at 18205 Dixie Highway. Member Bransky noted that the condition restricting classes to 5 pm – 9 pm should be amended to permit classes from 7 am to 10 am, and from 5 pm to 9 pm.

Motion seconded by Member O'Brien. Motion

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Members Johnson praised the staff members present for the level of detail included in the staff memos and materials provided to the Commission.

Chair Sierzega asked Staff Liaison Mesaros and Assistant Director Schumerth about any new projects in the Village.

Member O'Brien asked for information about the renovations completed to the building at 18250 Harwood.

Member Johnson asked about parking at the new Homewood Brewing Company location. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that there is a large parking lot in the rear of the center which meets parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted the potential for increased competition for on-street parking. Mesaros said that Miller Court was improved to allow for parking access.

Member O'Brien asked about whether there are plans for the building adjacent to Homewood Brewing Company. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that there are no plans currently in place for the building.

Member O'Brien asked if barricades would be improved in front of the two neighboring houses on Miller Court. Staff Liaison Mesaros said that the barricades and street frontages were required to be improved per the conditions of the original approvals for the brewery.

ADJOURN:

Member O'Brien moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Member Cap; all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Noah Schumerth

Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development