

# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: January 13, 2026

**To:** Village President and Board of Trustees

**Through:** Napoleon Haney, Village Manager

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

**Topic:** Cook County Class 8 Incentive – 17911 Harwood Avenue

### PURPOSE

The applicant, Beverly Spearman who is the owner of the property at 17911 Harwood Avenue, is requesting an amendment to the resolution of support for a Class 8 property tax designation that was approved by the Board at the August 12, 2025 meeting. The Class 8 program promotes commercial development throughout Cook County by encouraging expansion, retaining existing businesses, and enhancing employment opportunities. If the property meets the criteria, it would be assessed at 10% for the first 10 years and any subsequent 10-year renewal period. If the incentive were not renewed, it would be assessed at 15% in year 11, 20% in year 12, and 25% in the following years.

### PROCESS

Beverly Spearman purchased the two-story, 1,853-square-foot office building which was previously occupied by Real Dobrez, LLC. The previous occupants moved out of the building in 2018 and the property has been vacant ever since. The applicant intends to use the site as the office for The Spearman Law Firm, LLC, operated by the applicant.

On August 12, 2025, the Village Board approved Resolution R-3231 to support a Class 8 real estate tax classification at 17911 Harwood Avenue. Upon further review of the Cook County Assessor's requirements, the applicant has requested a technical amendment to the resolution. Because the applicant purchased the property in 2021 and the vacancy occurred under the same ownership (rather than a new purchase), the Cook County Assessor requires specific language in the resolution finding that "Special Circumstances" exist. This requires a new resolution of support for the designation.

The "Special Circumstances" are based on the re-occupancy and rehabilitation that the applicant has undertaken to revitalize this building. Since purchasing the property in 2021, the applicant has transformed a vacant, aging structure into a professional office. The renovation included:

- installation of new flooring throughout.
- complete interior and exterior painting.

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



- ADA compliance upgrades.
- replacement of doors and windows.
- installation of a new HVAC unit.

The Cook County Assessor administers the Class 8 real estate tax incentive. The incentive is designed to encourage industrial and commercial development in areas experiencing economic stagnation. Under this incentive program, qualified commercial real estate is assessed at 10 percent of market value for the first 10 years, 15 percent in the 11<sup>th</sup> year, and 20 percent in the 12<sup>th</sup> year. The Class 8 designation may be renewed during the last year in which a property is entitled to a 10 percent assessment level or when the incentive is still applied at the 15 percent or 20 percent assessment level, upon approval of the Village Board by passing a resolution consenting to the renewal.

The Cook County tax system has placed a heavy tax burden on commercial properties that must compete with the lower tax rates in adjacent counties and in Indiana, where the property tax rate is as much as 45% less. Cook County has recognized the property tax issue for the Chicago Southland and created the Class 8 Cook County Tax Incentive Program. The program identifies five (5) Cook County townships that have automatic certification for the incentive; the subject property is located in Thornton Township, one of the five designated townships.

Any commercial or industrial project in these five (5) townships that includes new construction or reoccupation of abandoned properties is eligible for this incentive if it meets the following criteria:

1. Buildings or structures must have been vacant and unused for at least 12 continuous months.
2. A purchaser in whom the seller has no direct financial interest must have purchased buildings or structures for value in a vacant and unused state.

The building on the subject property has been vacant since the previous business vacated the space in 2018. The property meets the eligibility criteria to receive a Class 8 real estate tax incentive.

### OUTCOME

The applicant has invested over \$50,000 to rehabilitate the property, which has improved an existing vacant building in a highly visible location, near a “downtown gateway” at the intersection of Dixie Highway and Harwood Avenue. The property is owner-occupied by the Spearman Firm.

The real estate property taxes were \$9,986.58 in 2023 and \$8,450.61 in 2024. The Class 8 classification will result in an annual savings of approximately 60% for the property owner.

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



### FINANCIAL IMPACT

- **Funding Source:** N/A
- **Budgeted Amount:** N/A
- **Cost:** N/A

### LEGAL REVIEW

Completed

### RECOMMENDED BOARD ACTION

Pass an amended resolution supporting the Class 8 Cook County real estate tax classification for the property located at 17911 Harwood Avenue, owned by Beverly Spearman of The Spearman Firm, LLC.

### ATTACHMENT(S)

- Resolution
- Request for Amendment to the Class 8