

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING:

May 22, 2025

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Street
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Pro Tem Bransky called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien and Castaneda. Present from the Village were Director of Economic & Community Development Angela Mesaros, serving as Staff Liaison, and Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development Noah Schumerth. There was one member of the public in attendance, and no members of the public attending on Zoom via webinar.

The meeting was paused after the completion of the roll call until Chair Sierzega arrived. Chair Sierzega arrived at 7:07pm.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chair Sierzega asked for any changes to the minutes from February 27, 2025. No changes were requested.

Motion made to approve minutes by Member O'Brien; second by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: Chair Sierzega

ABSENT: Member Johnson

Chair Sierzega asked for any changes to the minutes from May 8, 2025.

On page 6, Member O'Brien noted that a comment should be clarified that he was asking for clarifying whether the building was 1,100 square feet or 1,300 square feet in area, rather than dictating one or the other.

On page 9, Member O'Brien said that a comment should be clarified that he was asking whether the owner was from Tinley Park, IL or Mokena, IL, not dictating one or the other. Chair Sierzega noted that Mokena was correct.

On page 7, Member O'Brien noted that the minutes do not clarify which way Harwood Avenue is proposed to go as a one-way, north or south. O'Brien said that the minutes do not note which side of the street that angled parking will be located.

Member O'Brien asked how the changes will impact the parking study received by the Commission in February. Staff Liaison Angela Mesaros said that the parking study included a recommendation to shift

Harwood Avenue to one-way traffic to increase parking availability. Mesaros noted that the shift in street direction came from the parking study.

Member O'Brien asked whether the contract for a parking lease with St. John Neumann Parish was completed and signed. Staff Liaison Mesaros said the contract was with the Archdiocese for final approval.

Member O'Brien stated that he provided a review of the special use standards and recommended to remove the duplication of the special use standards in staff memos and instead add relevant staff information under the applicant's answers in italics in the final memo.

Member O'Brien stated that he had frustrations with the special use standards in the zoning ordinance not aligning with the questions on the applicant forms, including grammatical errors or changes in wording.

Member O'Brien said that he wanted to address this with staff later on.

Member O'Brien said that he was corrected when addressing private rents for a multi-family residential development approved in January 2025. Member O'Brien requested explanation of how one can discuss a special use standard about "negative monetary impact" and not also discuss the economics of a project, including tentative rent information.

Motion made to approve minutes as amended by Member Castaneda; second by O'Brien.

AYES: Members Bransky, Cap, Castaneda, Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: Members Alfonso, O'Brien

ABSENT: Member Johnson

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Case 25-14: Special use Permit for Salon and Spa Establishment at 18346 Governors Highway

Chair Sierzega introduced the case and asked if any comments had been received.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated no.**

Chair Sierzega swore in the petitioner, Diamond Rowels. Sierzega asked for background information on the proposed business.

Rowels explained her proposed salon business at 18346 Governors Highway. Rowels said that she has been doing salon services for several years. Rowels said she wishes to put 12 additional rooms inside as private salon suites, in addition to two booths for other services.

Chair Sierzega asked if there would be a total of 14 booths for salon services.

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- **Rowels said yes.**

Chair Sierzega said that parking is not a concern for that particular location.

Sierzega requested comments from the Commission.

Member Alfonso asked how large each booth would be.

- **Rowels stated that there would be eight 90 square foot rooms, and four 120 square foot rooms.**

Member Alfonso asked if water would be provided to each unit.

- **Rowels said no. Water service for salon service providers would be in a central location in the facility in a separate room.**

Member Alfonso asked where laundry service would be provided.

- **Rowels said that in the existing break room, there are washer/dryer connections installed when the space was previously used as a salon.**

Member Alfonso asked how secure 24-hour access would be.

- **Rowels said that keys after hours would be available via lockbox. Rowels said the lockbox would be installed in the rear of the facility.**

Member Alfonso asked if there was sufficient lighting in the rear for after hours access.

- **Rowels said that security lighting was already installed near the door.**

Member Alfonso noted that the concept of salon suites is very popular, and asked if the applicant had an existing network of practitioners ready to lease space.

- **Rowels said yes.**

Member Bransky expressed appreciation in finding a more appropriate location after her previous application for a special use permit was denied.

Member Cap asked if there would be any uses occurring in the space which would not be permitted in the zone.

- **Rowels said that in her last application, she accepted that she would not be able to have a tattoo business in the space. She said that in this application, she would apply for the special use permit to allow tattoo artists unless it was not permitted, in which case she would not.**

Staff Liaison Mesaros said that there are buffer distance requirements for tattoo uses, and there is already a tattoo business in the same commercial center. Mesaros noted that this is the only issue that there would be with allowing tattoo artists to operate in this space.

Member O'Brien asked how a public bathroom would be accessible to members of the public.

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- **Rowels stated that only clients and practitioners leasing space would be allowed to use the restrooms in the building.**

Assistant Director Schumerth stated that while the restroom does not have to be fully public, it does need to be accessible for anyone at the business itself.

Member O'Brien asked staff if there are any other 24-hour operations in Homewood.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said that some gas stations may be open 24 hours, and the Essence Salon Suites on Halsted Street.**

Member O'Brien asked how the parking calculation was created. O'Brien noted that there were 68 more spaces in one parking count in the packet than other parking counts.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth noted that there is an additional parcel in the front of the center with 68 spaces which are not counted toward the Cherry Creek Shopping Center for zoning purposes, as they provide parking for the smaller plaza within that separate parcel.**

Member O'Brien noted that on page 20, there was missing text on the Non-Residential Zoning Review form completed by the applicant.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that there were problems with the PDF export, and that staff could provide any information which did not appear in final versions of the packet.**

Member O'Brien said that on page 14, the phrase "planning and zoning commission failed to approve" was a poor choice of words. O'Brien stated that the Commission exercised their property responsibility to not approve the case.

Member Bransky asked that the matter be addressed separately outside of the agenda item.

Member Castaneda stated that the location was acceptable for the use, since it was formerly used as a salon.

Member Castaneda asked for confirmation that massage would not be a use offered at this location.

- **Rowels said massage would not be an allowed service with this business.**

Rowels asked if architectural blueprints would be required.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said that this would be discussed with the Building Division once a business operation certificate was applied for.**

Chair Sierzega asked how often late night services occur.

- **Rowels said it is very rare, except in emergency situations.**

Motion to approve made by Member Bransky; second by Member Alfonso.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

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NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Johnson

Chair Sierzega stated that he planned to temporarily skip the Sign Code Update (Case 25-01) and return to it after the next review.

Cases 25-08 and 25-19: Special use Permit and Variance for Indoor Commercial Place of Assembly at 18027 Dixie Highway

Chair Sierzega introduced the case and asked if any comments had been received.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated no.**

Chair Sierzega swore in the petitioner, Marcella Abrams. Abrams discussed details of her proposed business in a presentation. Abrams discussed the physical details of the tenant space and plans for operating the business.

Chair Sierzega requested comments from the Commission.

Member Castaneda noted that parking concerns caused a nearby business to be denied a special use permit several months prior.

Member O'Brien asked what was meant on page 37 that, according to the applicant, parking demand for the business would occur at times when traffic is expected to be lower.

- **Abrams stated that this was meant to describe evenings and weekends.**

Abrams noted that she had reached out to three other businesses to consider parking leases during events as needed, and identified several public parking areas she hopes to use to support the business. Abrams said no agreements were signed yet.

Member O'Brien asked why zoning map amendment was checked.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth said that it should be corrected.**

Member O'Brien asked for clarification on the exact name of the property owner.

Member Cap stated that parking is a real problem for advancing this business forward. Cap expressed that capacity limits were important to any success at this location, but said that the worst case scenario of 65 parking spaces will be hard to identify.

Member Cap said that he would have problems supporting any approval of the application under the current conditions. Cap recommended waiting until an agreement was completed to secure parking for the business before returning for further consideration by the Commission.

Member Bransky asked how the applicant planned to arrange a lease or agreement for parking spaces.

- **Abrams confirmed that it would be a “by need” arrangement, with payment only occurring when spaces are needed.**

Member Bransky asked what types of events will be most common at the event space.

- **Abrams said that the space will be a multi-purpose space. Abrams said that the applicants may want a brunch or a small event, and this is meant to be flexible to accommodate those small-scale events. Abrams also mentioned award ceremonies and other similar types of events. Abrams emphasized that it was more likely to host bridal showers vs. a wedding reception.**

Member Bransky said that there are concerns with parking, and on-street parking is determined by the market and it is up to the applicant to determine whether the parking on the street can actually help support the operation of the business.

Member Alfonso said that an agreement in hand and coming back to the Commission will be more effective than the application as presented.

Chair Sierzega asked if equipment like tables and chairs would be available for users.

- **Abrams said yes.**

Chair Sierzega asked if events would be held on “off-days” in Homewood.

- **Abrams said they will be as far as is possible. Abrams said that it will have a time limit of 11pm when all occupants must be out.**

Chair Sierzega echoed concerns about parking.

Chair Sierzega recommended looking into parking availability at the neighboring property, which is an office and residential building.

The applicant agreed to continue to explore options for a parking agreement and to return at a later undetermined date.

Member Cap made a motion to table the agenda item to an undetermined date; second by Member Bransky.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O’Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Johnson

The Commission began a recess at 8:10pm. The meeting resumed at 8:15pm.

Case 25-01: Zoning Text Amendment for Village Sign Code Update

Chair Sierzega introduced the case. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that staff would provide a presentation on the Sign Code Update.

Assistant Director Schumerth provided a presentation on the proposed text amendment required to support a Sign Code Update. Schumerth introduced the background of the proposed sign code updates and explained that the text amendment was required to permit the sign code to be included into the Zoning Ordinance. Schumerth noted that there were limited attachments provided because the discussion is to be solely focused on whether the sign code outline as proposed is suitable to include in the Zoning Ordinance.

Assistant Director Schumerth explained the responsibilities of the Appearance Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission as separate review bodies.

Member Cap said that he agreed that the sign code should be located in the Village zoning ordinance. Cap said that there is still a two-step process for applicants required for new developments. Cap stated that he was considering how a sign could potentially impact a zoning review, and that processes need to protect against that possibility.

Member Bransky noted that the placement of signs is within the review authority of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth said this is correct. Schumerth noted that zoning review includes placement of signage against setbacks and other requirements. Schumerth said that not all signs, even freestanding signs, are included in the Site Plan Review process.**

Member Cap wished to ensure that the new code protects against signs located within the “sight triangle” required to be maintained by code.

Member Bransky reminded the Commission that material, shape, and other characteristics are within the responsibility of the Appearance Commission.

Staff Liaison Mesaros said that the Commission may choose to recommend changes or ideas to better look at cases between commissions and whether the sign code fits well with the existing Zoning Ordinance.

Member Cap asked for an explanation of how murals may be regulated by the new code.

- **Schumerth stated that the Appearance Commission will review murals through the Appearance Review process, with standards that clearly protect the content of the mural and regulate location, visibility, access, and other characteristics. Schumerth explained the difference between commercial speech in a painted sign and non-commercial speech in a mural.**

Schumerth also said that sight triangle requirements are clarified in the new sign code.

Member Cap asked how signs at existing buildings would be affected, such as sign copy in large multi-tenant commercial signs, and what threshold of sign change would trigger Appearance Commission review.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth noted that the reviews are generally discretionary; staff can review signs or elevate them to the Appearance Commission. Schumerth said that the new sign code requires more signs to go to the Appearance Commission.**

Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that currently, any sign requiring a variance must go to the Appearance Commission.

Member Cap asked about neighborhood identification signs in rights-of-way and whether the Sign Code would regulate these signs.

- **Staff Liaison said that the sign code regulates signage on private property, and public signs are not reviewed under this code.**

Assistant Director Schumerth identified some historic signs and other types of public-facing signs which are regulated by the Sign Code when they are placed on private property or in easements.

Member Cap asked about directional signs and parking lot signs and how they are regulated.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said that they are not regulated under the sign code.**

Member Bransky asked if IDOT regulations manage signage in public right-of-way.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros mentioned that IDOT only regulates signs approved to be located in their right-of-way.**

Member Bransky asked how to provide comments on specifics of the sign code after reviewing, even if this approval is regarding the inclusion of the sign code approved by the Appearance Commission in the Zoning Ordinance.

Member Bransky said there is a need to create a singular place for ordinances regulating private property, such as zoning and sign regulations, and the need to give sign regulations teeth by including them in the same processes as the zoning ordinance.

Assistant Director Schumerth said there are two options for going forward from the meeting: approve the sign code's inclusion in the Zoning Ordinance and then provide comments to staff until approval by the Village Board, or review the sign code and then approve the inclusion of the new code in the Zoning Ordinance.

Member Cap asked if it was possible to present a unified recommendation with all members.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said it would not be an official, formal recommendation because the content is not in the review authority of the Planning and Zoning Commission.**

Member Bransky asked if a group recommendation could be provided by the Commission.

- **Member Castaneda said it would only be as private citizens. Assistant Director Schumerth agreed and said that comments made on the record would be included in the record, but that**

the decision remained as to whether the code itself could be added to the zoning ordinance as presented. Staff Liaison Mesaros said it would not be a formal recommendation.

Staff Liaison Mesaros encouraged members of the Planning and Zoning Commission to provide relevant comments to help improve the final draft of the sign code.

Assistant Director Schumerth stated that comfort level of the Commission is important, and if the Commission feels more comfortable knowing the exact language included in the sign code copy, then this approval could be continued.

Member O'Brien asked if there would be any other public discussion with the Planning and Zoning Commission on this item if approved.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said no. The Village Board hearing for the code would be the next meeting where this would be discussed.**

Member O'Brien asked for page numbers to be clarified.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the sign code provided is directly from the agenda packet of the Appearance Commission meeting on May 1, 2025. Schumerth said that item started on page 26; the first 25 pages were minutes from past meetings.**

Member O'Brien requested that references to "previous sign code" be changed to "current sign code."

Member O'Brien said that the sign code has expanded by three times, and that it reflects the modern challenges of regulating signage.

Member O'Brien stated that the Village needs to revisit signage for access drives and private driveways, such as the Homewood Brewing north access drive near the former Mama Mia Pizzeria.

Member Bransky made a motion of approval; second by Member O'Brien with an amendment of text in #5 of the Findings of Fact.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Johnson

Staff Liaison Mesaros encouraged the Commission to provide comments on the final sign code text.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

ADJOURN:

Member O'Brien made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Bransky. The meeting adjourned at 9:11pm.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Johnson

Respectfully submitted,

Noah Schumerth

Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development