

MEETING MINUTES



Village of Homewood
Planning and Zoning Commission
Thursday, March 24, 2022
7:30 p.m.

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Road
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Sierzega called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Members attended Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Johnson, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega. Present from the Village was Economic and Community Development Director Angela Mesaros and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard. There were eighteen people in the audience and eighteen people attending via Zoom. The public was able to listen to and watch the meeting via zoom webinar.

Chairman Sierzega gave the instructions for the meeting and stated there is a 10:00 pm deadline.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of January 27, 2022.

Member Planera stated the sheet indicates he was in attendance, but he was not in attendance.

Member Bransky stated on page 6 the third sentence in the first paragraph he was trying to say that he doesn't want to prohibit the feasibility of existing.

Member O'Brien stated on page 4 that about two-thirds down the 12 driveways add the wording "in the Village".

A motion was made by Member O'Brien to approve the minutes of January 27, 2022, as amended; seconded by Member Cap.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of February 10, 2022.

Member Bransky stated on page 8 in the third sentence "them" should be changed to "business owner" and his name is misspelled and needs to be corrected. And on page 10 near the bottom of the page, "Bransky" should be changed to Bransky. Above that "nothing" should be changed to "notes" and that the distance he was speaking of is in regards to the distance of the front entry to the rear of the parking lot.

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Member Planera stated in the adjournment he and Member Johnson were absent.

Member Cap stated on page 10 in the twelfth sentence “her” should be changed to “job” and the word “at” added before keeping.

Member O’Brien stated on the eleventh page “so it does not” should be stricken from Staff Liaison Mesaros’ comments.

A motion was made by Member O’Brien to approve the minutes of February 10, 2022, as amended; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Johnson, O’Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Case No. 22-04 – Special Use Permit for a parking deck, site plan approval, and variance from Section 5.3, Table 5.2, Maximum Building Height at 17400 Halsted Street, 920 W. 175th Street:

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case.

In attendance for the casino were: Pat Daly, Vern Lohman, Robert Sit, Brent Pinkston, Claudia Welp, Brandon Navarro, and Matthew Schumaker.

Chairman Sierzega asked about the fifth floor of the parking garage. Mr. Daly stated the garage is still a four-level garage but with a roof to address the questions raised at the last meeting related to sound.

Mr. Daly stated that they removed the surface drive and combined the two garages into one garage. They also have submitted a sound study as was suggested, which recommended adding noise barriers to the north face of the garage, replacing the stockade fence with a solid fence, and installing a roof on the top floor of the structure.

Mr. Daly stated they added seven stalls for bus staging and drop-off in the southwest corner and long-term bus parking would be off-site, but they are still looking for a location.

Member O’Brien asked if the applicant’s participants on Zoom needed to be sworn in.

Chairman Sierzega swore in Dr. Tom Thunder and Brian Romanelli.

Mr. Lohman stated the plan is one interconnected parking garage with the entrance on the north side where the service road used to be, and a connector on the northwest side connecting the garage to the casino. There will be a small lobby/lounge for people from the busses to gather before going to the casino or getting onto the busses.

Mr. Lohman stated there is an 8-foot wide walkway on the north side to keep people out of the flow of traffic. Mr. Lohman stated the parking garage is the same height as previously proposed, but with the addition of the roof.

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Mr. Lohman stated the west elevation will be completely enclosed, with signage installed above the main entrance in the center, and all the materials will remain the same as the previous design.

Member Johnson asked if there would be any information presented about the acoustic treatment. Mr. Daly stated that Dr. Thunder, who conducted the sound study, stated that trees do not help to deaden the sound so it was recommended to use a solid fence. It will still be a three-foot berm with a six-foot solid fence on top.

Mr. Daly stated that sound would bounce off the panels on the garage and not having openings would enhance it. Installing 2" thick sound-absorbing panels above ground level to the top and enclosing the fourth level deck and putting a roof on it would help mitigate the sound.

Chairman Sierzega asked if it would be a solid fence. Mr. Daly stated yes, that it will.

Member Cap stated he is not clear on the 60% of the façade that is intended to be covered, and asked that it be clarified. Dr. Thunder stated the modeling software measures traffic volume and determined the sound levels to be 43 decibels at night and 55 decibels at peak rush hour. Dr. Thunder stated the large flat wall would enhance the noise already there. He specified the sound-absorbing panels on the west side at 60%. They have a 0.95 noise reduction coefficient meaning 95% of the noise is absorbed.

Member Cap asked if the panels would be fixed in place. Dr. Thunder stated the panels can be put up in a random fashion but should be equally distributed over the full surface area.

Member Cap asked if the placement of the panels will be reviewed with the building plan submission. Mr. Daly stated yes.

Member Cap stated that sound barriers are used to obstruct or impede noise generation and the line of sight is equal to the noise admitter. The proposed barrier is 9 feet tall, but the average height of a truck is in the 12-foot range. Dr. Thunder stated the rule of thumb is 5-6 decibel reduction at the line of sight, above that, is one decibel.

Member Cap asked if there is a way to assure the sound or measure that occurs at the property line and if it is in excess, indicate better mitigation of the sound. Mr. Daly stated yes.

Member Bransky asked if the fence or berm could be increased in height.

Member Cap stated he is an advocate for a 12-foot high barrier. Mr. Daly stated the fence can be increased in height.

Member Johnson asked if it can be higher than 3 feet (berm) + 6 feet (fence).

Mr. Daly asked Dr. Thunder if the fencing comes in a 9-foot tall height. Dr. Thunder stated yes it does. Mr. Daly stated he did not know the fence came in 9-foot tall panels.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there was any issue with the 9-foot high fence. Mr. Daly stated not at all; they will increase the height.

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Member Johnson asked what the hours would be for trucks. Brandon Navarro stated they do not staff warehouses for overnight shipments and 90% will be between 6:00 am and 2:00 pm with the remaining 10% between 2:00 pm & 10:00 pm.

Member Johnson asked what was meant in the report by “set the hours.” Mr. Daly stated there will be no overnight deliveries. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated trucks are restricted from the road during overnight hours.

Chairman Sierzega asked for the correct parking counts and asked about an oil separator for the storm water, and stated that it shows on the map where the snow will go with snow removal.

Chairman Sierzega asked about the water on the exterior lots. Ms. Welp stated the water will go to the storm water sewers.

Chairman Sierzega asked about the water and the connections. Ms. Welp stated the parking garage water will connect from Homewood and loop around and the casino water will connect from East Hazel Crest and loop around.

Member Cap asked by “loop around” if it will completely encircle the outside. Ms. Welp stated yes, completely around the exterior.

Chairman Sierzega asked about the buses and parking. Ms. Welp stated the buses will be staged off-site. Mr. Daly added they are still looking for real estate off-site. Mr. Navarro stated the busses will drop off and then leave, and they would not allow staging on site.

Chairman Sierzega asked how many buses on a daily basis. Mr. Navarro stated currently the casino in Pennsylvania gets about 80 buses a day, but they are not anticipating that many especially once the casino in Chicago is open; maybe 10 per day.

Member O'Brien asked with the change from two parking structures to one and originally the west garage had a sloped ramp because part of it was below grade, would any part of the parking be below grade. Mr. Navarro stated that all of the parking will be at or above grade.

Member O'Brien stated the noise study says three stories above grade, but the structure is five stories so it conflicts with the study. Dr. Thunder stated that “grade” means the upper floors above the first floor which is 10-11 feet.

Member O'Brien stated the garage is five stories above grade and the sound study is for three stories above grade.

Member Bransky stated the west side has four stories when discounting the first story and then would only need deadening on the second, third, and fourth stories.

Member O'Brien stated that the location of the property gives no clear identifier to the west and there is a street sign that says “Garden Lane” and that should be in the Findings of Fact.

Member O'Brien asked what the square footage of the garage is. Mr. Navarro stated it is 578,500 for the garage area.

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Member O'Brien stated the slope on grade is 18 feet from the original 14 feet and asked if it sloped from southwest to northwest or southeast to northwest. Ms. Welp stated it is an 18-foot slope from southwest to northwest and that all grades will match the existing natural slope.

Chairman Sierzega stated that the applicant did everything that was asked by the Board at its last meeting, and it is commendable.

Chairman Sierzega asked if 174th Street will still exist after everything is built. Ms. Welp stated that 174th Street will be hammered at the end and no longer go through and the section on the property will be vacated.

Chairman Sierzega asked about the emergency gate. Ms. Welp stated there will be a gate with a lockbox for emergency vehicles and stated they are working with East Hazel Crest and Homewood on what is needed for access.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there will be an access road for the storage units at the t-intersection for the frontage road. Ms. Welp stated it will continue intact to Halsted and have to access to 174th Street.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any questions from the audience:

Michael Haeberle, attorney for Garden Court Association, was sworn in by Chairman Sierzega.

Mr. Haeberle asked if the buses will drive on the service road to the bus parking spaces. Ms. Welp stated the buses can enter from either Halsted or 175th Street to access the spaces.

Mr. Haeberle asked if that would be on 175th Street beyond the retention areas to the spaces. Ms. Welp stated yes.

Mr. Haeberle asked if that bus area is for drop-off, pick up, and waiting. Ms. Welp stated for drop off and pick up only. The buses will stage off-site.

Mr. Haeberle asked if the traffic study included the buses. Dr. Thunder stated that the scope of the study was to mitigate noise.

Mr. Haeberle asked about an increase above any levels. Dr. Thunder stated no.

Mr. Haeberle asked if a drainage study was done and if so, if it is complete. Ms. Welp stated they have been working on it and it is not yet complete. Ms. Welp stated the construction would not adversely affect the neighboring properties by capturing storm water and reducing run-off and added that currently there is none on-site.

Mr. Haeberle stated with one basin proposed, they cannot say the retention is greater or less. Ms. Welp stated the property will drain to the north because that is how it naturally drains and it will go to the north basins and an underground vault.

Mr. Haeberle stated there has been no communication regarding the aesthetics of the wall or the structure. Mr. Daly stated that is incorrect. The applicant has been in contact with Ms. Moore for

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two years, since 2020, and has asked for and received input from the Gardens of Homewood, and they are keeping in contact with her.

Mr. Haeberle stated there is a change to the fence. Mr. Daly stated yes, at the Planning and Zoning Board's discretion. It has not yet been submitted to the residents of the Gardens of Homewood, but he has spoken to several board members of the Gardens of Homewood.

Chairman Sierzega stated it is a large entry increasing from 26 feet to 40 feet at the curb cut. Ms. Welp stated that is correct.

Chairman Sierzega asked if the entrance will line up with the Walmart drive on the south side of 175th Street and asked if a signal will be installed and tied into the existing signal at Halsted & 175th Street. Ms. Welp stated the drive will line up and a signal will be installed, but she is not sure if it will be tied to the other signal. Mr. Navarro stated the signal would have to be interconnected and they are waiting to hear back from the State about it.

Chairman Sierzega stated the plan is to have the signal interconnected with the light at Halsted and 175th, but they need to wait on IDOT since they control it. Mr. Navarro stated that is correct.

Member O'Brien asked if the changes have had any impact on the construction timeline from the last meeting. Mr. Daly stated no.

Chairman Sierzega asked if they will be starting ASAP. Mr. Daly stated yes. The contractors need to be submitted to the state for review and approval; they are hoping to start in the next two weeks.

Member O'Brien stated the Findings of Fact have to be changed; that #3 needs to be changed to #1 and the staff recommendation changed to remove 920 175th and add Garden Lane.

Chairman Sierzega asked Staff Liaison Mesaros if there is an exact address. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated not yet, so Garden Lane could be used as the western boundary.

Member Planera stated they have to revisit the height of the garage. If it stated 5 stories, it could raise the western half. Member O'Brien stated it is 5 levels, not stories.

Member Planera stated it could be called a single structure with the west side 3 levels above grade and the east 4 levels above grade. Mr. Daly stated on the elevations the height is identified as the west being 54' and the east 61'.

Member O'Brien stated it should be 578,500 square feet.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Marcia Moore of 938 Garden Lane was sworn in. Ms. Moore stated the water flows to the north and there are retention areas near Lathrop and at the west corner of 174th, as well as two areas on 175th, and asked if there will be any water issues or backflow issues.

Chairman Sierzega asked if they considered the west side of the property line for drainage. Ms. Welp stated yes, they are not going to the west. Ms. Welp stated that currently water goes that way, but most, if not all, will be reduced. The retention basins will be dry bottomed.

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Ms. Moore asked if there will be extra air pollution or an air quality change because of the cars and building exhaust. Mr. Schumaker stated they are not experts in air pollution.

Ms. Moore asked if there will be helicopter landing areas. Mr. Daly stated no.

Ms. Moore stated she wants to meet with Mr. Daly and the attorney in the next two weeks because they did not receive any plans and she was unaware of the meetings until February of this year.

Amanda Davis of 906 Garden Lane was sworn in. Ms. Davis asked if the entrance to the garden is going to change. Chairman Sierzega stated not Garden Lane, but the entrance for Chick-fil-a and Panera will be changed to line up with Walmart across the street.

Mr. Schumaker stated the new entrance will be slightly wider with one lane in and two lanes out.

Ms. Davis asked if it will affect the sewer or street, drainage, or result in higher water costs. Chairman Sierzega stated no, they would not tie into the water main for the Gardens of Homewood.

Laura Alexander of 913 Garden Lane was sworn in. Ms. Alexander stated she moved in May 2020 and stated her property is the unit located next to the parking garage. Ms. Alexander asked what the wall will look like, and what the project will do for her and her taxes, and stated that the proposed on 175th won't allow the residents to get out of the community.

Mr. Daly stated they have been in consultation regarding the landscape barrier and the fence. There will be a three-foot berm and a fence, and trees on the west side of the fence. The trees will be 8-feet tall at planting and will be 35-feet at maturity.

Mr. Haeberle asked Ms. Alexander if she is asking to delay or deny the case until she sees what the fence will look like.

Mr. Daly stated he is happy to consult.

Member Bransky stated it is proposed or similar, but not the final plan, and stated that they do not approve the final plan here, this is conceptual.

Mr. Daly stated, regarding the fence, that multiple colors are available.

Ms. Moore stated she is concerned the community is vulnerable to outside people and asked thoughts for on security. Mr. Daly stated there will be security cameras on the perimeter of the casino, garage, and hotel along with security patrols on the property. Mr. Daly stated he thinks the security has increased because of the berm and fencing along with their existing fence. So there will be a double fence for someone to cross as well and a berm that will block trash.

Ms. Moore asked how often the condition of the fence would be checked. Mr. Navarro stated it is in their best interest to have it pristine and make sure it is a safe, inviting place.

Mr. Haeberle asked Ms. Moore if she is asking the Board to deny it tonight. Ms. Moore stated she is willing to let things happen if she can have a meeting with Mr. Daly.

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Mr. Haerberle asked Ms. Moore is she wants the Board to wait to approve it until after the meeting with Mr. Daly. Ms. Moore stated yes.

Chairman Sierzega stated they cannot hold up tonight's decision.

Ms. Alexander asked if the taxes will be higher. Member Johnson stated it is not our say. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that is the Cook County Assessor's decision.

A motion was made by Member O'Brien to approve Case 22-04 Special Use Permit for a parking deck, site plan approval, and variance from Section 5.3, Table 5.2 Maximum Building Height at 17400 Halsted Street, 920 W. 175th Street with the amended Findings of Fact; seconded by Member Cap.

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

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Case No. 22-02 – Lot Consolidation at 18225 Dixie Highway:

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and swore in the petitioners, Donnell Johnson and Tianna Lanum.

Mr. Donnell Johnson stated they propose to install a fence, but not at the corner, just the back.

Chairman Sierzega stated by definition a corner property has two front yards.

Mr. Donnell Johnson stated the property is located at a dead end so there is no traffic and the fence would be along the back of the property.

Chairman Sierzega asked what kind of fence. Mr. Donnell Johnson stated a white vinyl privacy fence.

Member Johnson stated the fence would only be across from a neighbor.

Chairman Sierzega stated the fence will be on the right-hand side, east of the driveway.

Member Bransky asked if the fence would stop at the front of the house. Mr. Donnell Johnson stated it would go to the sidewalk.

Member Planera stated, that given conditions in the past, he is having a hard time finding similarities here.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there will be a gate along the driveway or if it will be solid. Mr. Donnell Johnson stated there will be a gate on the side by the sidewalk.

Member Cap asked Staff Liaison Mesaros if the fence would be consistent with the new fence requirements. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes.

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Member Cap asked Staff Liaison Mesaros if there will be any kind of checklist attached to approvals like this for plantings, etc. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that will have to be done as part of the permit process.

Member Bransky asked if the future fence regulations will 6-foot fences be allowed if they are 3-feet off the sidewalk. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated only in the back corner, not the front corner.

Member Bransky stated he is not in favor of the fence being past the front of the house but is in favor of the compromise.

Member Alfonso stated that if it was brought back further, it would be even better.

Member Johnson asked if it was necessary for the arborist to approve the landscaping. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes, that is what the new code states for corner side yards.

A motion was made by Member Cap to approve Case 22-10 for a Variance from Table 8.1 of the Municipal Code Section 22-95 (e) to allow a fence 6 feet in height in the front yard of the property located at 1319 Elder Road and incorporating the Findings of Fact into the record with a minimum 3-foot setback on the Elder Road Side with landscaping to be approved by the Village's arborist; seconded by Member O'Brien.

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

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Case 22-09: Variance from Section 4.3, Table 4.2 for new single-family construction at 2044 183rd Street

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and swore in the petitioner, Anna Lukaszczuk of 9642 Menard in Burbank.

Ms. Lukaszczuk stated the lot currently is not conforming at 50 feet wide and 7,500 square feet. The house will be a single-family one-story with a basement and a detached garage located off the alley.

Member Alfonso asked Staff Liaison Mesaros if the property would be in compliance with the new code and when it will be in place. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes it would be in compliance and November of this year if the pace is kept.

Member Alfonso stated in light that she has no issue.

Member Bransky stated he has no problem with it but is concerned about the power pole needing to be moved.

Member Cap stated the plant of the survey in the packet had no dimensions from the common property line and the existing garage that serves the apartment building. Member Cap stated it appears the garage is on the neighboring lot but is not sure how far off the property line it is. Member Cap stated it could create a legal-nonconforming use. Member Cap stated that the worst-case scenario would be that it is not as depicted, but encroaches on the lot. So, a new survey would be needed for both lots.

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Member Planera stated there are no floor plans and asked if they are looking at the square footage of the residence. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes.

Member O'Brien stated the proposed drawing indicates the house is to be at the west side of the lot. Ms. Lukaszczyk stated yes.

Member O'Brien stated that it is closer to the existing building. Ms. Lukaszczyk stated it is 6 feet, which is what is required,

Member O'Brien asked why that was done. Ms. Lukaszczyk stated to give a bigger side yard on one side for the future owners.

Chairman Sierzega asked if they plan to sell it as an empty lot. Ms. Lukaszczyk stated no, they plan to build a house. Building plans and permit applications have already been submitted.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any comments from the audience.

Katelyn Raddatz from 2054 183rd Street was sworn in.

Ms. Raddatz stated they moved in five years ago and were told the lot had to remain empty because it was too small to be built on and the garage was built over the lot line. Ms. Raddatz stated they were denied buying the empty lot by the property owner. Ms. Raddatz stated the whole space floods terribly, and asked what will happen to the water that goes there.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated the lot is the same size as the neighboring lot at 2054 283rd Street. Flooding is a concern for the Village and the Village Engineer, Max Massi is aware and is working closely with the project engineer.

Member Cap stated he spoke to Max briefly and the lot in question is depressed so the new house elevation will be above the street and alley. The lot will have to be graded to drain properly, but he is not sure if that would be towards the alley or the street and Max said they may have to install a storm sewer in the alley.

Ms. Raddatz stated she would like the decision to be pushed to November to give her and her husband time to make a decision because the idea of a house going up is scary and the flooding is a huge concern.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated the grading will have to be completely changed and it would have to go through the permit approval process and meet requirements which include that it cannot flood neighboring lots.

Jay Heiferman of 1816 Sycamore was sworn in.

Mr. Heiferman stated he was speaking on behalf of the resident of 2060 183rd Street, and he wants to make sure the Board understands the situation. Per the resident of 2060 183rd, the yard floods during any measurable rain including flooding the garage and basement. The flooding got worse with the construction of the condos to the north and the paving of the alley. They are concerned any further building will make it even worse.

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Member Cap stated they need to have faith in the Village Engineer who is very attentive to such matters and makes sure things work.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that Max Massi is aware of the drainage issue.

Member Johnson asked if it should be included as part of the Findings of Fact. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated this is a condition that will be stated in the ordinance.

A motion was made by Member Cap to approve the variance from the minimum lot width and minimum lot area requirements of Section 4.3 of the Homewood Zoning Ordinance and Section 36-87 of the Homewood Municipal Code to allow construction on a lot that is 50 feet in width and 7,500 square feet in area located on the west half of 2044 183rd Street, Lot 21, Property Index Number 29-31-316-019-0000 with the condition that a grading and drainage plan be prepared for the project and approved by the Village Engineer prior to issuance of a building permit, and incorporating the Findings of Fact into the record; seconded by Member Johnson.

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

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Sierzega asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:19 p.m., seconded by Member O'Brien.

Motion passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Mesaros
Staff Liaison