

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: November 21, 2024

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

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

Through: Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development

Topic: Case 24-49: Special Use Permit for Indoor Commercial Place of Assembly at 18035 Dixie Highway

APPLICATION INFORMATION

APPLICANT	Niya Jones
ACTION REQUESTED	Special Use Permit
ADDRESS	18035 Dixie Highway
PIN	29-31-400-054

ZONING & LAND USE

SUBJECT PROPERTY	ZONING	LAND USE
CURRENT	B-2 Downtown Transition	Vacant (Formerly Retail)
SURROUNDING N:	B-2 Downtown Transition	Indoor Commercial Place of Assembly (Elite 24 Fitness)
E:	B-2 Downtown Transition	Medical Office (Eldridge/Eldridge Dental)
S:	B-2 Downtown Transition	Personal Services (Travel Brokers)
W:	B-1 Downtown Core	Gas Station

LEGAL NOTICE

Legal notice was published in *Daily Southtown* on November 6, 2024; letters were sent to 55 property owners and residents within 250'.

DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Application	2	Niya Jones, Applicant	11/15/2024
Special Use Standards	2	Niya Jones, Applicant	10/18/2024
Floor Plan	1	Niya Jones, Applicant	10/18/2024
Staff Exhibits	2	Noah Schumerth, Asst. Dir. ECD	11/15/2024

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Niya Jones of The Livie Room, has proposed an indoor commercial place of assembly at 18035 Dixie Highway. According to the applicant, the space is proposed as a “community gathering space” for corporate events, podcast hosting, small gatherings, small holiday events, repass events, and other small upscale functions.

DISCUSSION

The applicant has proposed an event center as an indoor commercial place of assembly at the subject property. The subject property was formerly occupied by Popology, a retail store offering popcorn and other food items.

The tenant space at 18035 Dixie Highway has a floor area of 1,100 square feet. The space will be broken into two areas: a large gathering area arranged for various events, and a kitchen space designed for event preparation and food for events. The space will have one restroom for use, located off the rear kitchen area. No on-site food preparation is planned with this business. Liquor may not be served at any time without approval of a Liquor License by the Village Board of Trustees.

The business will have one employee.

The applicant has stated that the event center would be available from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., seven (7) days a week. The applicant envisions that peak hours will be weekends, especially weekend nights. The applicant does not anticipate high traffic on weekdays, with only repasses and corporate events expected. Larger events, such as birthdays and wedding receptions, would occur on weekends.

The applicant anticipates a maximum capacity of approximately 50 people for high table events, and 60 people for events with seating. The final capacity of the building will be determined by the Fire Department during the Business Operation Certificate review process.

There is one (1) dedicated parking space for use by the business located in the rear of the building, which will be used by the one employee of the business. There is no public customer parking on the site. Four parking spaces are required by the Village Zoning Ordinance: *1,100 square feet * 1 space per 300 square feet = 3.67 spaces (rounded up to 4 spaces)*.

The remaining three (3) parking spaces for zoning compliance may be met using off-site parking spaces within 300’ of the business, as permitted by Section 44-05-02.j of the Village Zoning Ordinance. The three spaces are met using on-street parking spaces on Dixie Highway in front of the building.

Larger events are expected to require a greater number of parking spaces than the four (4) which are required. The applicant has stated that she wishes to use street parking and public parking facilities to support larger events. The applicant has also suggested a desire to lease spaces from another entity, such as St. John Neumann Church or another institution in downtown Homewood, to permit event parking at specific times.

Special Use Standards

The Planning and Zoning Commission must consider the following standards when reviewing the application for this special use:

- 1) Is the special use deemed necessary for the public convenience at that location? Other similar uses (indoor commercial places of assembly events spaces) are located within a ½ mile radius of the proposed business, including Infinite Event Suite (1820 Ridge) and Honeycomb Hideout (18205 Dixie Highway). Staff has received a large number of requests for similar uses, suggesting increased public demand and a need for such locations with convenient access.
- 2) Will the special use be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community?
- 3) Will the special use be consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan and other adopted plans of the village?
- 4) Is the special use at the subject property so designed, located, and proposed to be operated, that the public health, safety, and welfare will be protected? There are limited parking opportunities within a short distance of the proposed business. Larger public parking areas that may support the events proposed, such as the Village Hall Parking Lot on Chestnut Road and the “Metra” Parking Lot on Harwood Avenue, are over 500’ from the business. These lots also require crossing multiple streets, which may create safety hazards for users when accessing the site.
- 5) Is the special use a suitable use of the property and, without the special use, could the property will be substantially diminished in value? The property is located in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, which permits a range of commercial and assembly uses. The property is unlikely to be diminished in value if the special use is not approved due to alternative permitted uses which may occupy the space.
- 6) Will the special use cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood in which it is located?
- 7) Will the special use be consistent with the uses and community character of the neighborhood surrounding the subject property? The proposed use, an indoor commercial place of assembly, is similar to other uses in the immediate vicinity. Hours of events may extend until 1:00 a.m., which may allow activity to run later than most other businesses in the downtown neighborhood.
- 8) Will the special use be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the neighborhood for the purposes permitted in the zoning district? The use may significantly increase parking demand in the immediate vicinity at event times and may impact the enjoyment of surrounding properties and existing businesses.
- 9) Will the special use impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses permitted in the zoning district?
- 10) Does the proposed special use at the subject property provides adequate measures of ingress and egress in a manner that minimizes traffic congestion in the public streets? The area may see brief traffic increased before and after larger events. Congestion impacts may be mitigated by available parking dispersed across the downtown area, but could also be increased by a large number of event attendees attempting to park vehicles at busy times in the downtown area. The site has one public access point along Dixie Highway. The site has vehicular access off of Ridge Road for loading and employee parking. No customer parking is available on-site.

- 11) Is the subject property adequately served by utilities, drainage, road access, public safety and other necessary facilities to support the special use? The site has the necessary utilities and facilities to support the use. Additional review of facilities, such as fire suppression and security systems, will be completed during the Business Operation Certificate review process upon approval of a Special Use Permit.

FINDINGS OF FACT

The staff has prepared the draft findings of fact following the standards outlined in Section 44-07-11 of the Village Zoning Ordinance for special use permit applications. The findings of fact, as proposed or as amended, may be entered into the record:

1. The subject property is located at 18035 Dixie Highway on a 0.24-acre parcel, at the northeast corner of Dixie Highway and Ridge Road;
2. The subject property is owned by UMC Meds LLC of Mokena, Illinois;
3. The subject property is located within the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district;
4. The proposed business is to be located within a space with 1,100 square-foot of gross floor area;
5. The applicant has proposed an indoor commercial place of assembly to occupy the subject property;
6. The current zoning designation of the property allows indoor commercial places of assembly as a special use;
7. The subject property has four (4) parking spaces on-site, shared with other businesses adjacent to the proposed business, with one (1) dedicated parking space.
8. The site meets applicable development standards in Section 44-05 of the Village Zoning Ordinance;
9. The proposed event business will operate within the existing commercial building that is adequately served by utilities, access, and on-site parking.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION ACTION

Staff recommends denial of a Special Use Permit for an indoor commercial place of assembly at 18035 Dixie Highway. The Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider the following motion:

Case 24-49 for a Special Use Permit to allow the operation of an indoor commercial place of assembly at 18035 Dixie Highway;

AND

Incorporate the Findings of Fact into the record.