

# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: August 14, 2025

**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 25-07: Site Plan Review for Tequila Raizes Restaurant, 18136 Dixie Highway

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| APPLICANT        | Joaquin Anguiano/Jose Rafael Ponce Mena     |
| ACTION REQUESTED | Site Plan Review                            |
| ADDRESS          | 18136 Dixie Highway                         |
| PIN              | 29-31-314-031, 29-31-314-018, 29-31-314-019 |

## ZONING & LAND USE

| SUBJECT PROPERTY | ZONING                     | LAND USE                   |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| CURRENT          | B-2 Downtown Transition    | Vacant                     |
| SURROUNDING      | N: B-1 Downtown Core       | Salon/Spa Establishment    |
|                  | E: B-2 Downtown Transition | Professional Office        |
|                  | S: B-2 Downtown Transition | Place of Assembly (Church) |
|                  | W: B-2 Downtown Transition | Multi-Family Residential   |

## LEGAL NOTICE

Legal notice is not required for Site Plan Review applications. Administrative exception mailings were prepared for property owners immediately adjacent to the subject property.

## DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

| Title                | Pages | Prepared by                       | Date       |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Existing Site Plan   | 1     | Joy Elizabeth Dewitt, Architect   | 08/07/2025 |
| Site/Landscape Plan  | 2     | Joy Elizabeth Dewitt, Architect   | 08/07/2025 |
| Elevations           | 1     | Joy Elizabeth Dewitt, Architect   | 04/20/2025 |
| Renderings           | 1     | Jose Rafael Ponce Mena, Architect | 08/04/2025 |
| Floor/Interior Plans | 3     | Joy Elizabeth Dewitt, Architect   | 04/20/2025 |
| Staff Exhibits       | 2     | Noah Schumerth, Asst. Dir. ECD    | 08/08/2025 |

## BACKGROUND

The applicant has proposed the construction of a 6,000 square foot restaurant at 18136 Dixie Highway. The restaurant is proposed to be located on the site previously occupied by Savoia's To-Go Restaurant. The property, including the former Independence Park, was purchased from the Village in early 2025. The proposed restaurant will replace an existing park and vacant gravel parking area currently located on the site.

## DISCUSSION

### Site Concept

The proposed site plan will have three primary components: a parking area, a single restaurant building, and a large patio and green space.

The parking area will replace the existing gravel parking area and will be constructed with 29 parking spaces. The parking area will be screened from the neighboring Abundant Grace United Church of Christ property (directly to the south at 18200 Dixie Highway) with the existing six canopy trees along the property boundary, along with new landscaping installed by the applicant. A loading area will also be located within the new parking area.

The 6,000 square foot building will be located with approximately 40' of frontage along Dixie Highway and approximately 150' of frontage along Hickory Road. The building will have a maximum height of 21', similar to the height of other nearly 1-story commercial structures along Dixie Highway. The building will include an interior seating area near the front of the building, and a large kitchen/"back of house" area in the rear of the building. Large overhead doors will allow for movement between the building and the patio area. A loading area for deliveries with a large overhead door will be provided near the northeastern corner of the building.

The patio is planned to measure 25' x 150' and will be located along the north side of the building. It will be designed to offer ample outdoor seating and entertainment space for the restaurant. The patio will be constructed from permeable pavers designed to minimize stormwater runoff impacts and provide an attractive appearance. The patio will feature an overhead metal and wood pergola. Two large existing oak trees will be preserved and integrated into the patio design to provide additional shade and make the restaurant more distinctive.

Additional green space will be preserved between the patio and the sidewalk along Hickory Road. The applicant will maintain the existing memorial plaque from Independence Park within the green space. The existing monument on the site will be removed.

### Parking

#### *Off-Street Parking Requirements*

The applicant will construct a new off-street parking area with 29 parking spaces. Restaurants require 1 parking space per 200 square feet of gross floor area. The proposed restaurant will require 30 parking spaces (6,000 square feet / 200 (1 space per 200 s.f.) = 30 parking spaces).

Section 44-07-06.C of the Village Zoning Ordinance (Administrative Exceptions) permits the Director of Economic and Community Development to reduce off-street parking requirements by 1 parking space or 5% of the number of required spaces, whichever is lower. The Director of Economic and Community Development has received a request for this administrative exception from the applicant. The Director of Economic and Community Development has reviewed the request against the Village's administrative exception review criteria, as required in Section 44-07-06.E.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Written notice has also been provided to the adjacent property owner as required in Section 44-07-06.D.2 of the Zoning Ordinance. Should any neighbor provide a written protest from an adjacent property owner, the Director of Economic and Community Development shall bring the proposed change in parking requirements before the Planning and Zoning Commission as a variance.

The Zoning Ordinance requires new parking areas with greater than 30 parking spaces to provide interior parking lot landscaping, including landscape islands, landscape "end caps," and additional screening. These additions would reduce parking by up to 5 parking spaces on-site. A variance would also be required to meet parking requirements. An administrative exception will avoid additional loss of off-street parking on the site and mitigate the need for additional variances. This site is also adjacent to a large public parking lot located across Hickory Road; this lot is determined by the Village's downtown parking study to have available parking capacity at the anticipated peak hours of the restaurant business.

#### *Parking Area Design*

The parking lot will be designed with two rows of parking along a single aisle on the south side of the building. The aisle will feature a single driveway onto Dixie Highway. The drive aisle in the parking lot will be 24 feet wide to support two-way traffic. An unmarked area near the back of the parking lot has been set aside for vehicles to turn around without blocking other vehicles. Landscaping along the southern property boundary, adjacent to Abundant Grace UCC, will screen the parking area, including six existing canopy trees that will remain. A trash enclosure will be placed at the rear of the parking lot. A 10-foot buffer is planned between the parking lot and the rear property boundary to protect existing trees and a utility easement.

#### *ADA-Accessible Parking*

Per the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code, this development requires two (2) ADA-accessible parking spaces. Two spaces have been provided near the building entrance on Dixie Highway. The proposed placement and design of the ADA-accessible spaces meet the standards of the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code and other building codes of the Village of Homewood.

#### *Off-Street Loading Requirements*

This site does not require a dedicated off-street loading space as required in Section 44-05-03.A. of the Zoning Ordinance. A dedicated loading area has been provided to allow for ease of access for smaller deliveries expected for the restaurant. This loading area will be located near the southwest corner of the building (facing Abundant Grace UCC).

While deliveries are anticipated to occur outside of business operation hours, the applicant has proposed to enforce "employee only" parking in the two spaces in front of the delivery doors to

minimize the potential for conflicts between delivery traffic and customer parking. These spaces are located near the rear of the parking lot to preserve customer parking closer to the entrance of the restaurant.

### Landscaping

#### *Screening/Transition Zone Landscaping*

Transition zone “Type A” landscaping is required between the proposed restaurant site and the neighboring place of assembly use to the south (Abundant Grace UCC). “Type A” transition zone landscaping along this property line requires a minimum of six (6) canopy trees. The applicant will retain the existing six (6) canopy trees along this property boundary to meet the requirement. The applicant will remove weeds and trim existing flora, and add additional bushes and grasses to provide additional property screening.

Transition zone “Type B” landscaping is required between the proposed restaurant site and the neighboring multi-family residential use to the west. “Type B” transition zone landscaping along this property line requires a minimum of six canopy trees, six understory trees, and shrubs and native grasses. The Director of Economic and Community Development has waived requirements for this transition zone landscaping in the rear as permitted in Section 44-05-05 (h).3. Existing screening landscaping is present in the rear of the property, and the adjacent uses are deemed to be of similar scale and intensity.

#### *Parking Lot Landscaping*

All new off-street parking areas are required to provide parking lot perimeter landscaping where parking areas abut the Village right-of-way. This perimeter landscaping is required on the edge of the parking area adjacent to Dixie Highway. The perimeter landscape area is required to be a minimum of 7 feet wide and include shrubs and native grasses. The applicant has proposed a 9-foot wide perimeter landscaping area with a variety of native grasses and shrubs.

The applicant has proposed the construction of a new parking area with 29 parking spaces. No new interior parking lot landscaping (including parking lot landscape islands and “end caps”) is required. The applicant has proposed one (1) parking lot landscape island to improve the aesthetic quality of the parking area, which will include two small trees and a variety of shrubs and grasses.

At the August 7 meeting of the Appearance Commission, the Commission conditioned approval of the Appearance Review for this project on the relocation of this parking lot landscape island from its current location to a new location immediately to the east of the proposed trash enclosure. This relocation will improve screening for the proposed trash enclosure. A new parking space is required to replace the current location of the parking lot landscape island. See *Appearance Commission Decision*.

#### *Patio Landscaping*

The applicant will retain the two existing mature trees located on the northern side of the property boundary. These trees will be incorporated into the large patio area proposed on the north side of the new building. These trees will be integrated into a metal and wood pergola structure proposed on the north side of the building.

These two trees have been determined by the Village Arborist to be of environmental and historical significance. Both trees have been determined to be “heritage trees” pre-dating the incorporation of the Village. One tree is a rare hybrid between American elm and Siberian elm tree species.

#### *Landscape Palette*

In addition to maintaining existing trees on the property, the applicant has proposed new landscaping materials with the following palette:

- *Canopy Trees:* Chanticleer callery pear
- *Shrubs/Understory Trees:* Fragrant sumac, “Gro-Low” fragrant sumac
- *Groundcover:* Little bluestem

The Village Arborist has reviewed all landscape plans and recommended replacement of the proposed plant palette with the following materials:

- *Canopy Trees:* Silver linden, zelkova
- *Shrubs/Understory Trees:* Japanese tree lilac, dwarf vibranum
- *Groundcover:* Little bluestem

#### Grading/Drainage

Engineering review of the proposed site plan has been completed by Village Engineer Max Massi.

Existing municipal water, sanitary sewer and electric utilities are available within right-of-way on Hickory Road. The applicant proposes utility connections to these existing utility lines along Hickory Road. Village Engineer Max Massi has deemed these utilities sufficient to support the proposed restaurant business, but has requested a final utility plan at time of building permit submittal to identify final utility connection locations.

The applicant has proposed to narrow the existing driveway on Dixie Highway from approximately 35’ to 24’ to align with the proposed parking lot drive aisle. The driveway modification will require permit approval from the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The applicant has begun the process of applying for these permits.

The removal of the existing parking lot and the construction of the new parking area will require MWRD review. A letter of Permit Determination will be required from MWRD prior to final approval of building plans. See *Planning and Zoning Commission Recommendation*.

Additional drawings, including demolition, erosion control, utility, and final MWRD-approved grading/drainage plans, are requested by the Village Engineer prior to the issuance of building permits.

#### Elevations/Building Design

##### *Materials*

The applicant has proposed a material palette of smooth-cut brick, “hardie board” (fiber cement molded into narrow horizontal boards or panels), and aluminum. The brick is proposed to be colored black. The

fiber cement panels are proposed to be colored orange. The proposed materials meet the minimum material quality requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, as shown in the table below.

|                              | Tier I Materials      | Tier II Materials     | Tier III Materials   |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Front (East)</b>          | <b>61%</b> (min. 50%) | <b>39%</b> (max. 50%) | <b>0%</b> (max. 25%) |
| <b>Interior Side (South)</b> | <b>95%</b> (min. 25%) | <b>5%</b> (max. 75%)  | <b>0%</b> (max. 25%) |
| <b>Exterior Side (North)</b> | <b>62%</b> (min. 50%) | <b>38%</b> (max. 50%) | <b>0%</b> (max. 25%) |
| <b>Rear (West)</b>           | <b>90%</b> (min. 25%) | <b>10%</b> (max. 75%) | <b>0%</b> (max. 25%) |

On August 7, the Appearance Commission conditions Appearance Review approval for this project on a replacement of the black brick color for the building, which was deemed to be incompatible with surrounding community character. The Commission recommended replacement of the black brick color with a “softened” color such as charcoal gray or dark brown. The applicant will review proposed changes with Village staff and the Appearance Commission for compliance. See [Appearance Commission Decision](#).

#### *Transparency/Building Openings*

The applicant has proposed to construct large windows and overhead doors along the north (exterior side) elevation of the building to allow for expansion of the indoor dining area into an outdoor dining space. The applicant has also recommended “fold-open” windows along Dixie Highway to maximize interaction between the restaurant and the sidewalk.

As a new development within the B-2 zoning district, the Homewood Zoning Ordinance requires this building to provide a minimum of 80% transparency along the front (Dixie Highway) elevation and 40% transparency along the exterior side (Hickory Road) elevation. The exterior side elevation meets the requirement (55%), but the front elevation does not (25%). The front elevation provides additional opening windows, raised off the ground to allow for privacy for restaurant patrons.

On August 7, the Appearance Commission approved the proposed plans for the front elevation along Dixie Highway with reduced transparency requirements. See [Appearance Commission Decision](#).

#### *Façade Articulation/Design:*

Two of the sides of the proposed building (interior side and exterior side) are longer than 60’ and require façade articulation, or design features that break up the façades. The Zoning Ordinance provides numerous methods for creating façade articulation, including windows/doors, public art, columns and pillars, and other design features.

To provide required façade articulation, the applicant has proposed large windows and overhead doors along the exterior side elevation of the building facing Hickory Road. The applicant has also proposed a large pergola structure to add additional visual interest to this side of the building. Two large existing oak trees will also screen a large portion of the side of the proposed building.

The applicant has proposed 4' x 14' "green wall" panels along the south (interior side) and west (rear) elevations of the building. These panels will feature greenery framed in metal material, matching other metal accents on the building. The panels will be bolted into the exterior walls of the building as a permanent installation. Seven panels are proposed to be installed on the interior side elevation, and three panels are proposed on the rear elevation.

On August 7, the Appearance Commission requested the addition of 1-2 "green wall" panels along the south elevation. The Commission also recommended the removal of "green wall" panels along the west elevation and the replacement of these panels on the north or south elevation, where plant materials are more likely to survive and panels will be more visible to the public. See Appearance Commission Decision.

#### Lighting

The applicant has proposed wall-mounted security lighting on the south elevation of the building, in addition to parking lot lighting on poles on the southern property boundary. A comprehensive lighting plan, including photometrics and lighting product cutsheets, will be required. See Recommended Planning and Zoning Commission Action.

#### Signage

The applicant has proposed a large channel letter sign on the top of the pergola structure proposed to extend over the patio. The sign will face east (toward Dixie Highway) and be colored in bright orange to match the proposed color palette for the building.

The applicant may add additional wall signage near the northeastern corner of the building above the main building entrance.

### **APPEARANCE COMMISSION DECISION**

On August 7, the Appearance Commission held a public meeting to consider an application for an Appearance Review for this proposal. Any new development requiring building permits must be reviewed by the Appearance Commission as an Appearance Review application.

At the public meeting, the Commission approved the Appearance Review for this project, subject to the following recommendations:

- 1. Transparency Requirements:** Reduce transparency standards on the east (front, along Dixie Highway) elevation to accommodate folding windows that are positioned at least 42 inches above the ground.

2. **Pergola Placement:** Adjust the location of the pergola to avoid conflict with existing oak trees. Oak trees must be preserved. *Staff recommends that Appearance Commission approval be conditioned upon the movement of the pergola to a suitable location.*
3. **Parking Island:** Move the existing parking island to a location adjacent to the trash enclosure to provide screening for the enclosure, which meets Zoning Ordinance requirements (Section 44-08). *Staff recommends that Appearance Commission approval by conditions upon the movement of the parking island, the parking space closest to the proposed enclosure.*
4. **Landscaping Materials:** Replace landscape materials as agreed to with the Village Arborist, including the following recommended replacements (as appropriate):
  - a. Silver linden
  - b. Zelkova
  - c. New elm species
  - d. Japanese tree lilac
  - e. Fragrant dwarf vibranum or diervilla
5. **Green Panels on South (Side) Elevation:** Add two green panels and shift all panels approximately 20-30' toward Dixie Highway to add façade articulation closer to Dixie Highway where the building is visible from the public right-of-way.
6. **Green Panels on West (Rear) Elevation:** Remove three green panels and move to blank wall area on north (exterior side) elevation, near the northwest corner of the proposed building.
7. **Brick Color:** Change proposed color of smooth-face brick material from black to a warmer tone compatible with surrounding buildings along Dixie Highway. Recommended to replace color with dark brown brick similar to that used on Homewood Brewing Company (18225 Dixie Highway) and neighboring condominium buildings (18133 Martin Avenue), or another color as recommended by the Appearance Commission.
8. **Parapet Walls:** Identify rooftop equipment height on final plans and provide a brick parapet wall suitable for screening any equipment.
9. **Lighting:** Submit a photometric plan before final approval, and identify all lighting (including string lights on patio and other recommended features) on the final plan.

## RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Based on the review of the submitted Site Plan Review materials against the Zoning Ordinance and other Village codes and ordinances, Village staff recommends the following changes as conditions for approval:

1. **Appearance Commission Conditions:** Apply all conditions approved by the Appearance Commission at the Appearance Review hearing for this proposal on August 7, 2025, and revise all drawings to incorporate conditions before the issuance of building permits.
2. **Landscape Materials:** Replace landscape materials as agreed to with the Village Arborist, including the following recommended replacements (as appropriate):



- a. Silver linden
  - b. Zelkova
  - c. New elm species
  - d. Japanese tree lilac
  - e. Fragrant dwarf vibranum or diervilla
3. **Lighting Plan:** Submit a comprehensive lighting plan to Village staff for review, including a photometric plan and product cut sheets. Staff will review the lighting plan for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other Village codes and ordinances.
4. **Roof-Mounted Equipment:** Submit revised plans and elevations indicating the location of any proposed roof-mounted equipment with screening measures compliant with Section 44-05-08 (Screening) of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff will review plans for compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and other Village codes and ordinances.
5. **MWRD Determination Letter:** Obtain a permit determination letter from the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) as required by the Village Engineer.
6. **Sign Agreement:** Develop and execute a sign agreement with the Village of Homewood to preserve Village ownership of historic plaques to be located within the proposed restaurant site. Agreement shall be developed and executed between the property owner and the Village prior to the relocation of any existing sign, plaque or monument on the site.

#### RECOMMENDED PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION ACTION

The Planning and Zoning Commission may wish to consider the following motion:

Approve **Case 25-07**, Site Plan Review for Tequila Raizes Restaurant at 18136 Dixie Highway, as proposed in the drawings submitted by Joy Elizabeth DeWitt and Jose Rafael Ponce Mesa, subject to the approval conditions recommended by Staff in the Recommended Conditions section of this memorandum.