

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING:

June 26, 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 7:01pm.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, and O'Brien. Present from the Village were Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic & Community Development and serving as Staff Liaison; Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development; and Darlene Leonard, Building Department Secretary. There were 5 members of the public in attendance, and no members of the public attending on Zoom via webinar.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chair Pro Tem Bransky asked for any changes to the minutes from May 22, 2025.

Member O'Brien stated at the bottom of page 2, the answers from the Director were not included and asked for them to be stated for the record and they should be in the minutes.

Member O'Brien asked that on page 5 in the middle,

The word "property" should be removed from his statement. A motion was made to approve minutes as corrected by Member O'Brien; second by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Cap, O'Brien, and Chair Pro Tem Bransky

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Johnson and Castaneda, and Chair Sierzega

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Case 25-23: Variance for a fence at 18657 Gottschalk Avenue:

Chair Pro Tem Bransky explained the procedure, introduced the case, and swore in the petitioners, Mark & Anne Barry, and asked if any input was received from the mailing or notice.

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Assistant Director Schumerth stated nothing was received.

Mrs. Barry stated they want to replace the existing fence in the current location that aligns with their neighbors. They want to install a 6-foot fence because of privacy and improvements they have done to the yard over the years. They also now have a dog and the fence would reduce the barking. There is no Village sidewalk and because of the trees, people walk along the fence and they are concerned that if they move the fence closer to the house people would walk even closer to the house.

Mr. Barry stated the layout of the house is different from other corner lot houses because the garage is on the street side. They are the only house of the corners with that layout. There is easy access to the property and garage and have had break-ins before due to the each access. Mr. Barry stated there is no sidewalk and people walk between the trees and the fence instead of between the trees and the street.

Mrs. Barry stated they do have an extra wide gate for deliveries, etc. as the rear door is a better access point. They have planted trees but can't landscape under them because of the blockage of light. They do have landscaping under the tree closest to the stop sign. They are unsure if anything would even grow under the trees because of the lack of light and people walking through. They are willing to plant later as the light and trees allow it.

Member O'Brien asked about the 2 gates and their size, how long they have been in the property, and for clarification of the fence location.

- **Mr. Barry stated one side of the property does not have a sidewalk. Barry confirmed that the gates are 6-feet high and 4-feet wide. The Barrys stated that they moved to the property in June 2001. Mr. Barry stated that right now the fence is on the property line. Barry stated that they want to have a new 6-foot fence in the same location, but it would not be solid the full 6 feet. It would have lattice at the top similar to the requirement of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Member O'Brien asked what occurred that the additional privacy is needed.

- **Mrs. Barry stated they have expanded the patio and have started spending more time outside.**
- **Mr. Barry stated when they first installed the fence they were not aware of potential issues, they only wanted to get the yard enclosed. Mr. Barry stated that their family now realizes that there are privacy issues.**

Member O'Brien asked if bushes or landscaping was considered.

- **Mr. Barry stated they have hedges in the back, but they do not keep their small dog in the yard.**

Member Cap stated the reasoning behind the setback and planting strip is to use them to soften the visual effect of the fence. And asked if consideration was given to install plantings.

- **Mrs. Barry stated they are not against plantings, but they are not sure how it would work as people use the area as a walkway.**

Member Cap stated the plantings could push people out.

- **Mr. Barry agreed. Mr. Barry stated that they don't think another tree would fit in the space and they have looked at things that can be planted between the trees.**

Member Alfonso stated she understands why they want the higher fence and she has no problem with it.

Chair Pro Tem Bransky stated he has no problem with any of it and he does agree with Member Cap that landscaping along the fence could push people away from it. A lot of usable side yard would be lost if the fence has to be pulled in and that would put people right at the window. He still recommends that landscaping be installed to push people away from the fence, even pavers or mulch around the trees could work to push people away from the fence.

Member O'Brien asked if permission is needed to do anything in the parkway.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated approval is needed, but it can be recommended to the arborist and considered by Public Works.**

Chair Pro Tem Bransky asked if there were any comments from the Public.

- **Mr. Pat Cleary from 1857 186th stated he lived across the street and there are people going by the Barry's window all the time.**

Member O'Brien recommends numbers 7-11 in the Findings of Fact be removed as they are from the standards and not factual as the facts should be.

Chair Pro Tem asked Staff why they were listed.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated the finding just state why the recommendation is being made and that they are up to the Commission.**
- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the findings include statements and facts found to be true by staff and inform the recommendation, and that is why they are there. Schumerth stated that they can be added or deleted as needed.**

Member Cap asked if there should be a statement to have the applicant confer with the Village Arborist about the plantings.

Chair Pro Tem Bransky stated if it's not part of it they are not under obligation to do the plantings.

Member Cap stated the purpose is to provide a planting space for landscaping to soften the visual effect of the fence. He stated he has no issue with the fence at the property line, but there should be encouragement to plant some sort of greenery to soften the visual of it.

Chair Pro Tem Bransky stated the variance will still state they are not under the requirement to plant.

Member Cap stated not the landscape buffer as required by zoning, but plantings within the Village right-of-way. Cap asked for a strong recommendation to install landscaping to complete the visual of the intention of the code.

Member O'Brien stated he is unsure how practical it is because if the right landscaping isn't installed, the landscaping will be a financial burden. And asked if it has to be part of the motion.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated no, but it will be part of the record.

Motion to approve made by Member Alfonso; second by Member Cap with a recommendation to speak with the Village Arborist for landscaping within the Village parkway at this location in coordination with the property owner.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Cap, O'Brien, and Chair Pro Tem Bransky

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Johnson, Castaneda, and Chair Sierzega

Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the case does not need to go to the Village Board, and the Zoning Ordinance states that the Commission has final approval for variances involving this type of fence setback.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Member Alfonso stated she would like to acknowledge the passing of former Trustee Peggy Schultz and thank her for her service to the Village.

Assistant Director Schumerth stated the next meeting will be July 10 with maybe a site plan review and a garage expansion, and potentially other business to review. Schumerth noted that there are a number of projects being looked at by Staff

ADJOURN:

Member Cap made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Member Alfonso. The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Cap, O'Brien, and Chair Pro Tem Bransky

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Johnson, Castaneda and Chair Sierzega

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Leonard

Darlene Leonard, Building Department Secretary

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