

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: April 9, 2026

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 26-21: Special Use Permit for Professional Office at 18219 Dixie Highway

APPLICATION INFORMATION

APPLICANT	Carmela Wallace
ACTION REQUESTED	Special Use Permit
ADDRESS	18219 Dixie Highway, Homewood, IL 60430
PIN	29-31-409-046-0000

ZONING & LAND USE

SUBJECT PROPERTY	ZONING	LAND USE
CURRENT	B-2 Downtown Transition	Vacant
PROPOSED	B-2 Downtown Transition	Professional Office
SURROUNDING	N: B-2 Downtown Transition	Vacant (former Care Cleaners)
	E: B-2 Downtown Transition	Parking Area (Homewood Brewing)
	S: B-2 Downtown Transition	Brewery (Homewood Brewing)
	W: B-2 Downtown Transition	Communications Center (AT/T)

LEGAL NOTICE

Legal notice was published in *Daily Southtown* on March 25, 2026. letters were sent to property owners and residents within 250'.

DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Application	5	Carmela Wallace, Applicant	03/24/2026
Special Use Standards	3	Carmela Wallace, Applicant	03/24/2026
Business Narrative	2	Carmela Wallace, Applicant	04/02/2026
Site Plan	1	Arete Design Ltd., Original Architect	05/29/2003
Existing Floor Plan	1	Linden Group Architects, Architect	03/17/2026
Proposed Floor Plan	1	Linden Group Architects, Architect	03/17/2026
Elevations and Renderings	8	Linden Group Architects, Architect	03/17/2026
Staff Exhibits	3	Linden Group Architects, Architect	03/17/2026

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Carmela Wallace of Homewood Brewing Company and the Live Free 999 Foundation, has proposed the renovation of a building at 18219 Dixie Highway. This renovation will convert the building into a new headquarters for the Live Free 999, a foundation aimed at funding and supporting preventative mental health services and efforts to heal substance abuse in teens and adults.

HISTORY

The current building was constructed in 1950. The building was a restaurant (Mama and Me Pizzeria) for 32 years, between 1990 and 2022. The building was clad in its current bright yellow stucco exterior around the time of the opening of the pizza restaurant in 1990. The building was purchased by the owner of the adjacent Homewood Brewing Company, Carmela Wallace, in 2022.



Figure 1: The existing building located at 18219 Dixie Highway (former Mama and Me Pizzeria)

DISCUSSION

Site Plan

The applicant does not propose any major changes to the existing site. The existing site includes a 4,425 square-foot building and a rear parking area with 14 parking spaces. While the applicant is proposing to redesign the interior of the building and is fully repairing and renovating the exterior of the building, the applicant is not proposing any site improvements which require a site plan review or the application of additional zoning regulations.

Landscaping

The applicant is not required to add landscaping to the site. At the April 2, 2026 Appearance Commission meeting to review the proposed exterior renovation of the building, the Appearance Commission conditioned their approval on the addition of landscape planters along Dixie Highway on the front elevation of the building.

Parking

The proposed use (professional office > 2,500 square feet) requires a minimum of 1 parking space per 300 square feet of building area. The 4,425 square-foot office will require 15 parking spaces (1 space per 300 square feet x 4,425 square feet = 14.75 spaces). There are 14 parking spaces on-site. The property owner also owns the neighboring parking lot with 46 spaces, which will also be available for use.

The applicant requires an administrative variance to reduce the required on-site parking by one (1) space. Administrative variances for up to one (1) parking space or 5% of the total parking requirement (whichever is greater) are permitted via Section 44-07-06 of the Village Zoning Ordinance. The process for approval

of an administrative variance is detailed in **Staff Comments**. Approval of this administrative variance has been listed as a condition of approval (see *Recommended Planning and Zoning Commission Action*).

The new office use will require a minimum of one (1) ADA-accessible space to meet the requirements of the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code. The former pizzeria had one space informally reserved as an ADA-accessible space, with a parking space striped to serve as a passenger loading area. This space will need to be upgraded to meet current state and federal accessibility requirements. The addition of this required ADA-accessible parking space has been listed as a condition of approval (see *Recommended Planning and Zoning Commission Action*).

Elevations

The applicant is proposing a full exterior renovation of the existing building. The proposed renovation will include repairs to the existing EIFS wall cladding which has deteriorated since the closure of Mama and Me Pizzeria in 2022, and painting all stucco surfaces in a color palette of grey, purple and black. The chosen color palette reflects the branding colors of the Live Free 999 Foundation.

The proposed renovation will create minor structural changes to the building. The applicant will add a window to the south side of the building. The window will have a dimensions which match the other large windows on the south façade of the first floor, and a window head and pane structure which will match those found on the existing windows on the building. The upper windows of the building are currently blacked out, but these windows will be opened and used to bring additional light into the interior of the building.

The applicant has proposed the removal of the existing black canvas awning. A new purple canvas awning is proposed to match the branding colors of the foundation. The applicant plans to remove some of the existing sconce lights on the south façade of the building and replace the remaining lights with modern sconce fixtures.

At the April 2, 2026 meeting of the Appearance Commission, the Commission conditioned approved the proposed elevations of the building. The approval was conditioned on retaining sconce lighting on the rear 40' of the south façade of the building to ensure sufficient lighting of the drive aisle adjacent to the building.

Mural/Painted Wall Sign

The applicant proposes to replace the existing mural on the south façade of the building with a new mural. The Village maintains an agreement with the property owner which requires the owner to maintain the mural. The mural may not be removed without Village Board approval.

The new mural will require review through the Village's new public art review process. This process requires a recommendation of approval by the Appearance Commission and final approval by the Village Board. The new mural would be brought forward for approval by the Board at the same time as the termination of the existing contract to retain the existing mural. The property owner could not alter or remove the mural until the Board approves the new mural and terminates the existing contract protecting the former mural.

The Village plans to replicate the existing mural or create a similar mural at another location. The location has not been selected, but may be on public or private property. The Village has contacted the

artist who painted the existing mural, Thomas Melvin, to prepare plans for a replica mural or a mural with a similar style. If the new mural is approved, the property owner of 18219 Dixie Highway will be responsible for funding the removal and replacement of the mural.

If the new mural contains any branding related to the Live Free 999 Foundation (including the foundation name, branding, etc.), the mural will be classified as a *painted wall sign* and will follow a similar review process through the Appearance Commission.

Use Details

The applicant has proposed for the entire building to be used as administrative offices for the Live Free 999 Foundation. The offices will include an open office space with desks and group meeting areas, conference rooms, a lounge, and a podcast studio. The space will also include employee spaces such as a kitchenette and storage areas.

The applicant does not anticipate significant visitor traffic except for appointments or small group sessions (podcasts, content creation, or group sessions for foundation programs). The office will primarily be used by employees running and supporting programs supported by the foundation. The office will be open during weekday business hours (8:00am – 5:00pm). Visitor and employee traffic is expected to be minimal on weekends.

The space will include a merchandise display in a lounge in the front of the business. This lounge and merchandise area has a separate entrance which may be made accessible to the public. The foundation's merchandise sales are primarily handled online. These orders will also be processed and fulfilled from this office location.

SPECIAL USE STANDARDS

The Village Zoning Ordinance defines salon and spa establishments as a *special use* in the B-2 Downtown Transition zone. Any special use must be reviewed against the Special Use Standards found in Section 44-07-11 of the Village Zoning Ordinance.

Staff has reviewed the application utilizing the Special Use Standards. The full responses to the Special Use Standards, completed by the applicant, are attached with this application.

- 1) *Is the special use deemed necessary for the public convenience at that location?* The proposed professional office will provide a permanent home for the foundation operated by the owner of the adjacent Homewood Brewing Company at 18225 Dixie Highway. The foundation currently does not have a physical location. According to the foundation's website, the foundation is currently based remotely in Lake Success, New York.
- 2) *Will the special use be detrimental to the economic welfare of the community?* The addition of the Live Free 999 offices in the Village's downtown area will expand the employment base of the downtown area. While the use will have minimal visitor traffic along the Dixie Highway corridor, which is generally reserved for higher-traffic uses such as stores and restaurants, the approval of the special use will place a highly-recognizable business in a high-visibility location in the downtown area, which is likely to increase overall visibility and vibrancy of the downtown area. The location of this office use at this location will likely contribute to the overall visibility and

economic activity of the adjacent Homewood Brewing Company, as the office will be part of the overall “campus” of the applicant’s business. The use is not anticipated to cause any detriment 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? The proposed use expands the employment base of the downtown area and eliminates a long-term vacancy along a downtown corridor, meeting two goals of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. The proposed use also meets the purpose and intent of the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, which is to provide locations for “contextually sensitive infill development which supports the vibrancy of the downtown core.”
- 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? The use will be operated in a manner which does not impact public safety, health and welfare. The property has sufficient parking and access for both vehicles and pedestrians. The building will be required to be updated to meet current building, accessibility, and life and safety codes adopted by the Village. The proposed office use is not anticipated to create external impacts which impact public health, safety, or welfare.
- 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 proposed use is directly tied to the operation and business mission of the neighboring business, Homewood Brewing Company. The location of this use adjacent to Homewood Brewing Company will likely reduce traffic impacts by allowing for direct access between the two businesses by employees and allowing for shared parking between uses. The location of the proposed use at this location will also likely increase visibility and economic productivity of both the proposed use and Homewood Brewing Company. The use will also place additional employees in the downtown area, providing additional support for activity in the Downtown which is consistent of the uses encouraged in the B-2 Downtown Transition zone.

The property has been vacant for four years. Given the high level of traffic occurring at the neighboring business (Homewood Brewing Company), limited on-site parking and indirect site access (accessed through the Homewood Brewing Company property via access easement), the site may not as suitable as other nearby locations for high-traffic uses generally encouraged along Dixie Highway through the Village’s economic development efforts, such as “sit-down” restaurants and retail uses. This property is well-suited for a low-traffic use such as an office, especially an office which is directly supportive of the neighboring business, and owned and operated by the same property owner. Denial of the special use could further limit appropriate uses of the property, which may impact the property’s value.

- 6) Will the special use cause substantial injury to the value of other property in the neighborhood in which it is located? There are no anticipated negative impacts from the proposed building expansion on the value of surrounding property in the neighborhood.
- 7) Will the special use be consistent with the uses and community character of the neighborhood surrounding the subject property? The use is closely related to the neighboring business (Homewood Brewing Company). There are also numerous other office uses (professional or

medical) in the immediately vicinity of the proposed use along Dixie Highway, including Homewood Dental Associates (18213 Dixie Highway), American Family Insurance (18159 Dixie Highway), and various office tenants in the Westwood Office Plaza (18141 Dixie Highway). These businesses offer additional employment and add visitor traffic to the downtown area. The proposed use is consistent with similar uses and the overall character of the surrounding area, and will contribute visibility and activity to the neighboring use at Homewood Brewing Company.

- 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 expansion of the existing use is unlikely to create any external impact which may harm the enjoyment or use of other property in the neighborhood.
- 9) Will the special use impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding properties for uses permitted in the zoning district? No impact on the normal and orderly development of surrounding property is anticipated from this use. Any potential traffic or parking impact which could affect neighboring property is likely to be lessened further by the large parking area attached to Homewood Brewing Company behind the subject property, which is owned by the same property owner and can accommodate additional parking demand without impacting surrounding properties or on-street parking.
- 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? Pedestrian access to the building is provided directly from Dixie Highway. Vehicle access to the building is provided via access easement which runs through the access drive to the south of the property. Because the property owner also owns the adjacent property (Homewood Brewing Company), the subject property may also be accessed through the parking area of the brewery on Miller Court.
- 11) Is the subject property adequately served by utilities, drainage, road access, public safety and other necessary facilities to support the special use? The property was formerly used as a restaurant and has existing connections to water, electric, and sanitary sewer utilities. The applicant intends to utilize the existing connections to support the use. The property has appropriate pedestrian and vehicle access to support an office use with limited visitor traffic. The use is proposed in a manner which is not anticipated to impact public safety.
- 12) Will the special use have a substantial adverse effect on one or more historical, archeological, cultural, natural or scenic resources located on the parcel or surrounding properties? No impact on these resources is anticipated.

FINDINGS OF FACT

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 upon a recommendation of approval:

1. The subject property is located at 18219 Dixie Highway and is located within the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district, with Cook County PIN #29-31-409-046-0000;
2. The subject property is currently owned by Carmela Wallace of Lake Success, New York;

3. The property is currently vacant and was formerly utilized as a restaurant use;
4. The proposed use is a professional office > 2,500 square feet, which is designated as a special use in the B-2 Downtown Transition zoning district;
5. The subject site meets applicable development standards in Section 44-05 of the Village Zoning Ordinance; and
6. The proposed expansion to an existing medical office business is consistent with the applicable standards for special use permit approval as set forth in Section 44-07-11.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION ACTION

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

Approve Case 26-21: Special Use Permit for Professional Office at 18219 Dixie Highway, to allow the operation of the foundation offices of Live Free 999 Foundation, subject to the following conditions:

1. Revise site plan drawings to indicate the location of one (1) ADA-accessible parking space adjacent to the rear entrance of the building, as required in the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code.
2. The applicant must receive approval for an administrative variance to reduce the on-site parking requirement by one (1) parking space.

AND

Incorporate the Findings of Fact into the record.