

# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: **October 19, 2023**

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room  
2020 Chestnut Street  
Homewood, IL 60430

### CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Chairman Sierzega was absent from the meeting.

### ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, and O'Brien. Present from the Village was Staff Liaison and Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros, and Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Noah Schumerth. There were 5 members of the public in attendance at the hearing. The public was able to participate in the meeting via Zoom.

### APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky asked if there were any changes or corrections required to the minutes of the September 14, 2023 hearing. No corrections to the minutes.

A motion was made by Member Cap to approve the minutes of September 14, 2023, seconded by Member O'Brien.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Castaneda, Johnson and Chair Sierzega

### REGULAR BUSINESS:

#### CASE 23-28 – Zoning Variance to Parking Requirements to Operate a Restaurant at 810 Maple Avenue.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky introduced the agenda item and stated that the case was to be continued to the next available hearing date with the Planning and Zoning Commission. Bransky asked whether any members of the public had comments on Case 23-28. There were no comments.

A motion to continue was made by Member Cap, seconded by Member O'Brien.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Castaneda, Johnson and Chair Sierzega

Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros noted that the next opportunity for the case to be heard would be November 11, 2023.

### **CASE 23-27 – Special Use Permit for Indoor Cycling and Fitness Center at 18203 Dixie Highway**

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky introduced the case and swore in the applicants, Tashyna Willis and Jimmy Taylor, and provided a brief introduction to the indoor cycling and fitness center use proposed in the B-2 zoning district. Chair Pro Tem Bransky introduced the application materials provided for public review. Chair Pro Tem Bransky explained that the current space is a vacant tenant space within a multi-tenant commercial center.

Applicants Willis and Taylor were sworn in by Chair Pro Tem Bransky. Applicant Taylor introduced the proposed use and the history of the applicant's business, including the current location at 415 W 119<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, IL, 60611. Applicant Taylor noted that there are large numbers of existing customers coming from Homewood to the Chicago location of the business, and the applicant wishes to establish a new location in Homewood to accommodate these customers.

Member O'Brien noted that the applicant's original business location in Chicago is approximately 2,200 square feet with 115 exercise bikes, but the new location would be approximately 2,100 square feet with only 19 exercise bikes. Member O'Brien asked for clarification about reasoning for the planned difference between locations. Applicant Taylor noted that the space had a large outdoor area for the use of exercise bicycles, and the ability to host 115 bicycles at the Chicago location is a unique circumstance based on the site. The applicant noted that the new location would not be able to host more than 19 bikes, and that larger groups, special exercise groups, and families would need to use the location in Chicago.

Member O'Brien asked for clarification about the square footage of the tenant space indicated in the staff memo provided to members of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that 2,173 square feet is the correct square footage of the tenant space.

Member Cap noted the thoroughness of the staff memos provided to members of the Commission.

Member Cap identified that the space is a multi-tenant shopping center, and expressed concerns about the new method of calculating parking requirements for these buildings, originally set under the new zoning ordinance. Member Cap stated that the range of uses allowed in these buildings may significantly vary the total parking demand for the building over time as tenants change. Member Cap noted that the proposed use would have required more parking under the old ordinance, which evaluated parking requirements in multi-tenant buildings based on the requirements for individual uses. Member Cap expressed that there is a risk to be unable to meet the demand created by the new uses using the standards in the new zoning ordinance.

Member Cap suggested creating summaries of uses in multi-tenant shopping center buildings to document current uses to ensure proper parking is available for these buildings. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that such summaries could be created through a staff analysis. Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the purpose of the new parking requirement for multi-tenant shopping centers is to reflect the shared parking opportunities available at these sites due to variations between peak demands for most uses. Assistant Director Schumerth also noted that the Special Use Permit application

allows for the review of other parking available near sites and whether nearby parking supply is available to support a proposed use.

Member Cap noted that the primary focus of the Planning and Zoning Commission is to evaluate available off-street parking for new uses. Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky noted that discussion of studies and assessments of the new zoning ordinance were not applicable to the special use permit application under consideration by the Village.

Member Bransky stated that the parking on the site was reasonable and generous and did not require further study.

Member Alfonso said she was excited about the new proposed business. Member Alfonso asked whether the weight room would be used only for classes or used in support of fitness memberships. Applicant Taylor noted that the space could be used with an unlimited pass membership.

Member Alfonso asked about the level of supervision available. Applicant Taylor stated that all employees supervising and monitoring the space would be certified. Member Alfonso asked how members could join classes. Applicant Taylor noted that all signups and space reservations were online.

Member Alfonso asked how many instructors were hired by the new business. Applicant Taylor stated: 6 instructors. Member Alfonso asked if there would be showers and cleaning facilities on site. Applicant Taylor stated that no showers would be available on site.

Member Alfonso asked for the applicant to provide class times proposed for the new space. Applicant Taylor noted that classes are most often held in the early morning and late afternoon/early evening after business hours, and at various morning/early afternoon times on weekends. Member Alfonso noted that the hours would ensure that the parking demands for the new use would not interfere with parking access for other businesses.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky asked for confirmation of business hours. Chair Pro Tem Bransky asked about the volume and selection of music in the space during classes. Applicant Taylor noted the importance of music in exercise classes but stated that he was aware of the surrounding businesses including an event space and an African restaurant. Applicant Taylor noted that the general hours of classes would reduce effects on other neighbors and that neighbors are members of classes at the business. Chair Pro Tem Bransky asked about the type of wall insulating the proposed fitness gym from other uses. Applicant Taylor noted that there were no concerns about the thickness and soundproofing of the wall. Chair Pro Tem Bransky identified the letter of support provided by the landlord of the property.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky asked for public comments on the case. No public comments were provided.

Director Angela Mesaros noted that the special use permit must receive final approval from the Village Board prior to the issuance of the special use permit.

A motion was made by Member O'Brien to recommend approval of Case 23-27 to grant a special use permit for a place of assembly, indoor commercial in the B-2 Downtown Transition District at 18203 Dixie Highway and incorporate the findings of fact into the record; seconded by Member Alfonso.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Castaneda, Johnson and Chair Sierzega

**CASE 23-29 – Special Use Permit for a salon at 18350 Kedzie Avenue, Suite 202**

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky introduced the case and swore in the applicant Jocelyn Alamoodi, and provided an introduction to the proposed salon within the B-3 zoning district. Bransky explained that the salon is proposed to be located in an empty tenant space within the office building, which is currently classified as a multi-tenant commercial center.

Applicant Alamoodi explained that the salon and beauty industry largely survived the COVID-19 pandemic and has many expansion opportunities. The applicant noted that Homewood is a strong market for this type of use, in addition to being a good place for businesses run by members of minority communities. The applicant expressed a desire to create an upscale feel with the new business and noted that she wished to create a space for aspiring salon professionals to start their careers as independent contractors.

Member Alfonso asked what staff would be at the salon at a given time since the salon artists will be independent contractors. Applicant Alamoodi noted that a receptionist will be on site when the business is open. Alamoodi also stated that she will regularly be on-site, and a security system with cameras will be installed as an additional safety measure.

Member Alfonso asked how salon professionals will be certified or licensed. Member Alfonso noted that many independent salon professionals carry liability for actions involving individual guests, and an “umbrella policy” may be pursued to cover potential liability specific to the rented space.

Member Alfonso asked about the limited capacity available in the tenant space selected for the new business. The applicant noted that while the weekend may have significant traffic and demand for space, many stylists have specific times during the day they generally practice that are influenced by clients. The applicant noted that there will be three waiting chairs provided in case of overlaps between appointments at the salon location.

Member Cap addressed staff and noted that there are only 30 off-street parking spaces available on the site when 36 are needed under current regulations for multi-tenant shopping centers. Member Cap stated that the current applicant should not be punished for existing parking deficiencies, but that staff should identify how many spaces are available at current multi-tenant shopping centers and provide the data to evaluate use permit decisions in these types of buildings. Member Cap noted that planning has allowed a large number of spa and salon service uses in a building with limited parking.

Member O’Brien said that he saw the salon business’ name was already listed on the building directory list and etched on the door of the tenant space, and the space already is outfitted with furniture. Member O’Brien identified a discrepancy between the hours listed on the proposed business door and the application for a special use permit. Applicant Alamoodi noted that the hours on the application (9:00 am – 5:00 pm) are correct.

Member O’Brien stated that there are tenant spaces in the office building which would have required 52 spaces under the old zoning ordinance. Member O’Brien noted that there have been instances of visitors parking in the Jewel Osco grocery store parking lot across Kedzie Avenue from the office building and crossing traffic to reach the building due to lack of parking. Member O’Brien expressed that as density increases (smaller buildings, more buildings, etc.), the shift in the new ordinance from use-specific parking standards to building-specific parking standards for commercial centers does not

capture the increasing density of businesses in many areas of the south suburbs of Chicago. Member O'Brien expressed that staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission should work together to reassess the changes made to parking standards in the new zoning ordinance.

Member O'Brien asked the applicant about demand on the proposed business, given the four other salons located in the building. The applicant did not express concerns about demand for the salon and identified that potential salon professionals have been informed about the need to work out hours with other professionals using the space and avoid placing undue burdens on parking shared between all tenants of the building.

Member Cap noted that salons may incur a significant parking demand and that it is likely that the total peak parking demand for the building may be higher than the 36 available spaces required on the site.

Director Angela Mesaros noted that the special use permit must receive final approval from the Village Board before the issuance of the special use permit.

A motion was made by Member O'Brien to recommend approval of Case 23-29 to grant a special use permit for a salon establishment in the B-3 General Business District at 18350 Kedzie Avenue, Suite 202 and incorporate the findings of fact into the record; seconded by Member Alfonso.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Castaneda, Johnson and Chair Sierzega

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros introduced a new employee in the Village Manager's Office, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Noah Schumerth.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky suggested that more vigilance be taken to avoid conversations about the construction of the zoning ordinance or future changes to an ordinance when considering a specific item of business on a hearing agenda. While comments are appropriate, efforts must be taken to have such conversations apart from a particular case discussion, unless the comments directly affect the voting outcome of a particular case.

Member Cap stated that he would have tabled or continued both cases had there been a clear method of recommending that more information be gathered on particular issues, such as parking at multi-tenant shopping centers. Chair Pro Tem Bransky noted that no apology was needed for comments made during agenda items, and that such comments were appropriate, but that comments related to the zoning ordinance and not directly to a case might be addressed in a different portion of the meeting.

Member Cap explained his rationale for voting to approve both special use permits while having reservations about the available parking supply on each site. Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky suggested that if the reservations about parking supply would not be used to suggest a potential continuance,

tabling, or denial of an agenda item, such comments should be reserved for a different part of the hearing agenda.

Member Cap reiterated comfort with the methods used to develop the 2023 Zoning Ordinance and highlighted that comments throughout the hearing were not meant to be derogatory toward staff or the ordinance, but were designed to provide an assessment of specific policies within the ordinance. Chair Pro Tem Bransky expressed appreciation for the comments made during the hearing and highlighted the importance of reviewing the ordinance's effectiveness carefully.

Member O'Brien concurred with the idea of providing a separate agenda category for the discussion of the zoning ordinance and other local policies. Member O'Brien expressed concerns about conflating "Village concerns" caused by the ordinance with "applicant concerns" of the details of specific cases. Chair Pro Tem Bransky expressed that questions are necessary for applicants but recommended that prepared discussions or zoning-specific concerns be reserved for a new, regularly-scheduled meeting business category. Member O'Brien asked Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky how to best initiate zoning conversations with staff. Chair Pro Tem Bransky recommended that concerns be brought up with staff in advance of meetings to add an item to the agenda.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky requested information about how the decisions were made around new parking regulations for multi-tenant shopping centers. Member Cap stated that this evening's cases provided clarity about what studies might be needed to ensure that suitable parking is provided for multi-tenant shopping centers.

Member Cap reinforced that the ordinance serves the Village well and comments made during the evening were focused on refining the policies included in the ordinance.

Chairman Pro Tempore Bransky asked if there were any additional comments from the audience. One member of the public expressed concerns about the quality of bicycling infrastructure on roadways in Homewood. Chair Pro Tem Bransky identified challenges to implementing bicycling infrastructure on many streets in Homewood due to control by the Illinois Department of Transportation. Chair Pro Tem Bransky recommended bicycling and sustainable planning advocacy groups to contact to get involved with other projects, and noted that the "road diet" on 183<sup>rd</sup> Street may provide additional bicycling infrastructure for the community. Chair Pro Tem Bransky also recommended involvement in the Village Transit-Oriented Development Master Plan, an ongoing project with the Village. Assistant Director Schumerth said that additional comments could be provided directly to him as a member of planning staff.

**ADJOURN:**

Motion to adjourn made by Member Cap. Seconded by Member O'Brien.

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

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Castaneda, Johnson and Chair Sierzega

Respectfully submitted,

Noah J. Schumerth