



TOWN COMMISSION
Meeting Date: April 15, 2026

STAFF REPORT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

RESOLUTION NO. XX- 4 – 26: A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF LAKE PARK, FLORIDA, APPROVING A SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE OF A GENERAL RESTAURANT FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 748 PARK AVE. SUITE A; PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPECIAL EXCEPTION USE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Special Exception Request: Request to allow a general restaurant with outdoor seating in accordance with the Park Avenue Downtown District (PADD), section 78-70, table 78-70-1 of the Town Code.

Location: 748 Park Ave. Suite A, Lake Park

Applicant: The Culinary Project

The applicant proposes to utilize an existing restaurant space and dining deck space for a new restaurant “The Culinary Project”. The space was previously occupied by the Locale Gastropub. The space consists of 1,942 square feet indoors and a 380 square foot deck.

A special exception use approval for the use of a “restaurant” is required since the Town Code currently classifies this use as a special exception use, and since the unit has been vacant for over 90 consecutive days and has lost its legal, nonconforming status. As restaurants are envisioned in the downtown and are in line with the Town’s Community Redevelopment Area Plan for the downtown as well, Staff has proposed to revamp the table of uses so as to make restaurants a permitted use, however, this will be forthcoming at a later date. For now, this restaurant use at this location requires special exception review and approval.

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The applicant is proposing a full service restaurant, described as “an upscale contemporary American restaurant focusing on top tier hospitality” and appealing to “a wide demographic of guests”. They will offer “Smaller portions, sharable dishes, more composed plates, along with aggressively promoted happy hour all at a softer price point attractive to people dining during the week as well as weekends, holidays and special occasions.” The restaurant would be open from 4 pm to 10 pm.

LOCATION MAP - 748 PARK AVE.



Proposed Location: former Locale Gastropub



BACKGROUND

Owner: ARAM LLC

Applicant: The Culinary Hospitality Group LLC, DBA The Culinary Project

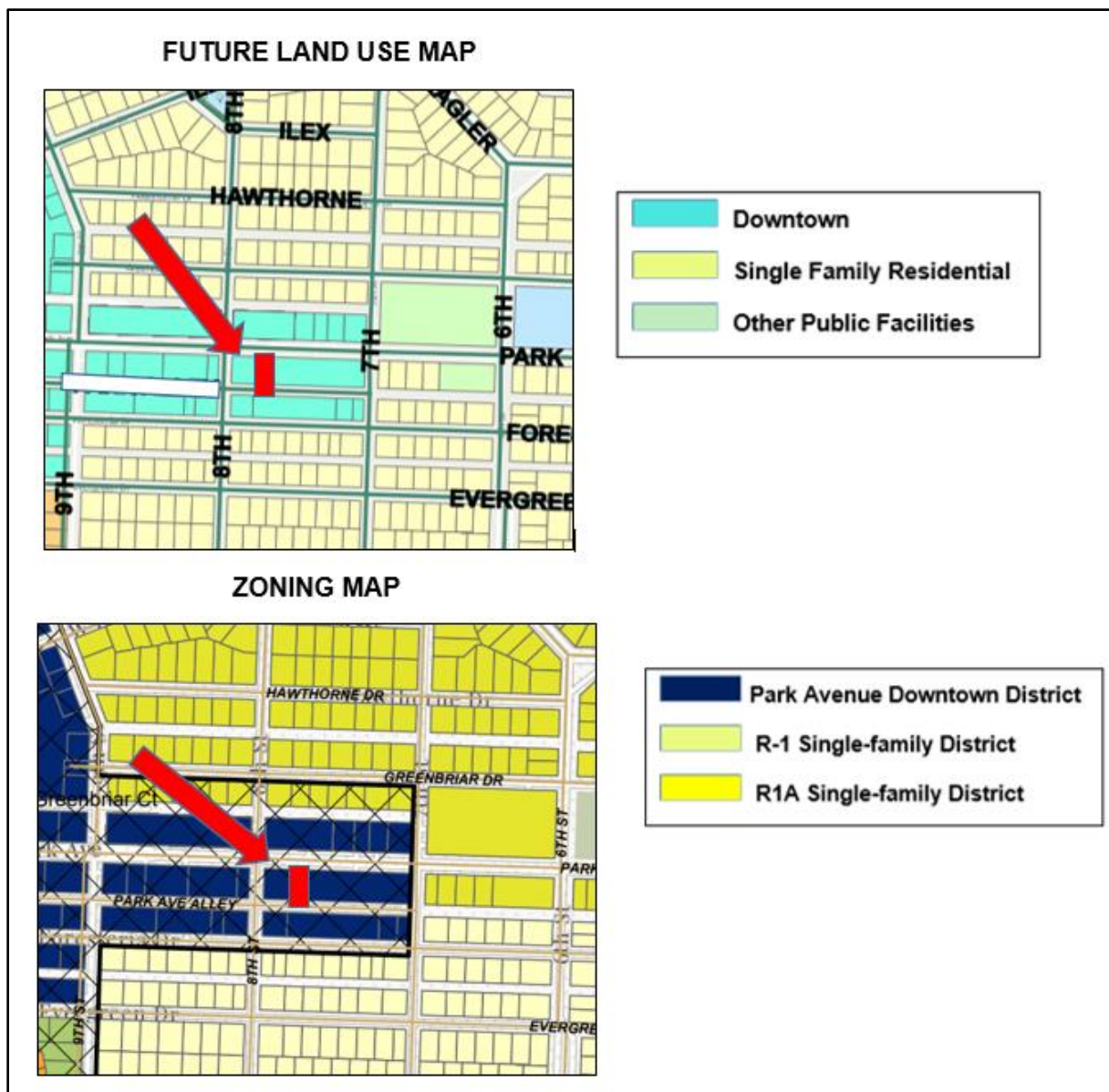
PCN: 36-43-42-20-01-010-0180

Property Size: .17 acre

Building Unit Size: 1,942 square feet indoors and a 380 square foot deck.

Existing Future Land Use: Downtown

Existing Zoning: Park Avenue Downtown District (PADD)
Outer Sub-district



The location has been the site of restaurants for many years, including the Locale Gastropub and Brick and Barrel. Prior amendments (circa 2018-2022) made certain uses as special exceptions uses regardless of the size of their operation. Prior to the code amendments there were no sub-districts and, restaurants were categorized by size. Larger restaurants were special exceptions and smaller restaurants such as this unit size were allowed by right. However, in the current code, there is no size distinction and while restaurants are a use by right in the core, they are a special exception in the outer sub-district. As the outer sub-district is closer to single family uses, the intent was to allow for closer scrutiny to insure that there were no negative impacts on the nearby residents.

Therefore, The Culinary Project is required to go through the special exception process, even though it is the same use that has been there without complaints in the past.

PADD SUB-DISTRICT REGULATING PLAN



Consistency with the Special Exception Criteria

The Code requires that a request for special exception must meet 6 general criteria. These are addressed in the application. Staff analysis of whether the criteria have been met is set out below.

1. The proposed special exception use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies of the town's comprehensive plan.

The use is consistent with Objective 12 of the Comprehensive Plan related to redevelopment of the historical downtown area. The Downtown future land use designation encourages “a dense, vibrant, walkable mixed-use downtown that combines residences, businesses, and civic spaces, and that is well-integrated into the surrounding neighborhoods.”

CRITERIA MET.

2. The proposed special exception is consistent with the land development and zoning regulations and all other portions of this Code.

The site is located in the PADD, which lists as a district purposes: “(3) The re-establishment and redevelopment of an urban center offering a mixture of retail, personal service, commercial, office, and residential uses; (5) The concentration of a variety of uses, including live performance theaters, **restaurants**, brewpubs and breweries, offices, arts and crafts, and other retail uses to attract both residents and visitors to the Town's traditional downtown for specialty shopping and entertainment.”

CRITERIA MET.

3. The proposed special exception use is compatible with the character and use (existing and future) of the surrounding properties in its function; hours of operation; type and amount of traffic to be generated; building location, mass, height and setback; and other relevant factors peculiar to the proposed special exception use and the surrounding property.

The surrounding properties are varied retail and restaurant uses; the proposed restaurant will add to the synergy necessary for a successful downtown, with appeal to a broad demographic. The proposed hours of 4 pm to 10 pm will be compatible with existing commercial uses and nearby residences.

CRITERIA MET.

4. The establishment of the proposed special exception use in the identified location does not create a concentration or proliferation of the same or similar type of special exception use, which may be deemed detrimental to the development or redevelopment of the area in which the special exception use is proposed to be developed.

Unlike many uses, a proliferation of restaurants typically assists in the vitality of a downtown. Currently the Park Avenue downtown can benefit from the increased activity that accompanies restaurants.

That said, there are no other restaurants on Park Avenue that serve the proposed creative, American cuisine.

CRITERIA MET.

5. The proposed special exception use does not have a detrimental impact on surrounding properties based on:
 - a. The number of persons anticipated to be using, residing, or working on the property as a result of the special exception use;
 - b. The degree of noise, odor, visual, or other potential nuisance factors generated by the special exception use; and
 - c. The effect on the amount and flow of traffic within the vicinity of the proposed special exception use.

The proposed restaurant will be very similar in impact to its predecessors, having the same general number of seats. The Town did not experience complaints or any detrimental impacts from the previous tenants and anticipate this would continue.

Parking for the restaurant will be primarily on-street and in the CRA parking lot which is just around the corner on 8th St. and Foresteria. As many uses within the property to the east close at 5 – 6 pm, this parking lot will also be available.

CRITERIA MET.

6. That the proposed special exception use:
 - a. Does not significantly reduce light and air to adjacent properties.
 - b. Does not adversely affect property values in adjacent areas.
 - c. Would not be a deterrent to the improvement, development or redevelopment of surrounding properties in accord with existing regulations.
 - d. Does not negatively impact adjacent natural systems or public facilities, including parks and open spaces.
 - e. Provides pedestrian amenities, including, but not limited to, benches, trash receptacles, and/or bicycle parking.

As the restaurant is locating in an existing building there will be no impact to light and air of adjacent properties. Its location will not adversely impact property values or redevelopment, in fact the opposite can occur. A successful, vibrant downtown will have a positive impact on property values and redevelopment. The pedestrian sidewalk separating the building from the deck will be kept open and will ultimately connect to the building next door.

CRITERIA MET

Legal Notice: The request for special exception was advertised in the February 23, 2026 edition of the Palm Beach Post and certified letters were mailed to all property owners of record within 300 feet of the site.

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD RECOMMENDATION –FINDINGS OF FACT

The Planning and Zoning Board held a hearing on March 2, 2026. No public comment was received.

The Board found that all six criteria for granting a Special Exception have been met, and unanimously recommended approval to the Town Commission of the request for a general restaurant at 748 Park Ave. suite A with the following conditions:

1. The Applicant is authorized to occupy the Site consistent with the Applicant's Special Exception use application, its justification statement, and floor plans submitted to the Department.
2. Prior to the opening of the restaurant, the property owner shall open the driveway access to the Site, which has been closed due to construction at the adjacent 754 Park Ave. (*note: ARAM LLC is the owner of both properties*)
3. The Owner shall install a sign directing individuals who come to the Site's parking lot that there is additional parking available at the Community Redevelopment Agency's parking lot, located 1/2 block south at the 800 block of Foresteria Drive.
4. Cost Recovery. All professional consulting fees and costs, and legal fees incurred by the Town in reviewing the Application and in the preparation of this resolution shall be paid by the Applicant to the Town within 10 days of the mailing of an invoice from the Town. The failure to reimburse the Town within the 10 days from the town's mailing of its invoice shall result in the suspension of any further review of plans or building activities pursuant to the building permit, and may result in the revocation of this approval.

RECOMMENDED MOTION: MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # _____