



**MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
PLAN COMMISSION – Special Meeting
September 4, 2024 – 7:00 P.M.**

**LINCOLNWOOD VILLAGE HALL
6900 NORTH LINCOLN AVENUE
LINCOLNWOOD, ILLINOIS 60712**

Present: Chairman Mark Yohanna and Commissioners Steven Jakubowski, Adi Kohn, Mark DeAngelis, Henry Novoselsky, Don Sampen, and Sue Auerbach

Absent: None

Staff Present: Planning and Economic Development Manager Doug Hammel, Community Development Director Scott Magnum, Public Works Director John Welch, Village Manager Anne Marie Gaura, Village Trustee Atour Sargon, Community Development Coordinator Marcos Classen, and Village Attorney Hart Passman

I. Call to Order

Call to order at 7:04 pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Jakubowski and arrived at 7:06

Chairman Yohanna announced that due to the nature of the two items on the docket for this meeting that both items would be called at the same time.

III. Case #PC-06-24: Zoning Text Amendment – Zoning Text Amendment Regarding the Permissibility of a College or University in the B-2 General Business Zoning District

IV. Case #PC-07-24: 3420 West Devon Avenue – Approval of Special Uses, Zoning Variations, and Parkway Parking for the Proposed Redevelopment of 3420 West Devon Avenue

Planning and Economic Development Manager Doug Hammel gave some background about the request. The initial presentation went over the text amendment necessary to allow the proposed use (College) in the B-2 zoning District. The second half of the presentation went over the

various zoning approvals being requested as well as the Parkway Parking relief that is typically not under the purview of the Plan Commission.

Mr. Hammel stated the presentation for PC-06-24 by giving some background on the history of the property at 3420 W. Devon noting that the property has been vacant for quite some time. The new proposed use would be for a college with onsite lodging for up to 42 people.

For the text amendment there are three sections that would require amendments:

Section 2.02: zoning definition for “college or university” as the current definition of “college or university” does not contemplate on-site lodging

Table 4.01.1: Establishes “colleges or universities” as allowed by Special Use in O Office and M-B Manufacturing/Business zoning districts, prohibited in all other districts

Section 7.10: Establishes minimum off-street parking requirement of 1 space for every 5 students, based on capacity, plus 2 spaces per 3 employees.

Mr. Hammel went over the discussion of the Committee of the Whole about the proposed development highlighting the overall support of the proposed development but also noting some of the concerns the Village Board feel needed to be addressed.

Mr. Hammel went over the proposed Zoning Text Amendments which would look to meet the following objectives:

Allow the proposed use at the subject property through Special Use approval

Limit the potential for proliferation

Differentiate on-site lodging from traditional dwelling units

Consider whether minimum off-street parking standards are needed for on-site lodging

The amendments to Table 4.01.1 Permitted and Special Uses in All Zoning Districts would be to:

Amend the current “college or university” line item with an “S (see note 13)” under the B-2 column to indicate that it is an allowable use through Special Use approval in that district

Add new notes #13 stating “colleges and universities are only allowed within that portion of the B-2 District extending along Devon Avenue between Lincoln Avenue and McCormick Boulevard, and only on sites with a minimum lot area of at least one-half acre and a minimum lot frontage of 250 feet.”

The Amendments to Section 2.02 Definitions include:

Amend the current definition for “college or university” to read “an educational institution either authorized by the State of Illinois to award associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees, or operated by a local school district to provide post-high school training related to employment and life skills. A college or university may also include lodging in the same structure as the primary use for occupancy by faculty, staff, or students actively involved in the operation of the use.”

Amend the current definition of “dwelling” to read “a building or portion thereof designed or used exclusively for non-transient residential purposes, including single-family, two-family and multiple-family dwellings, but not including lodging rooms in hotels, motels, rooming houses, colleges or universities, or short-term rental properties.”

There was some discussion of this type of development being proposed in a TIF district versus it not being in a TIF district.

Finally for the potential amendment to Section 7.10 Off Street Parking Schedule. Mr. Hammel noted that staff was not able to find a generally utilized or recommended approach, but he did share staff research showing how other local municipalities account for dwelling parking requirements.

Mr. Hammel transitioned to presenting case PC-07-24 again noting that without an approval of PC-06-24 that the second case couldn't even be considered.

Mr. Hammel went over some of the physical characteristics of the proposed development. He noted that the building would have a primary height of 47 feet, but portions of a decorative façade material would extend to a height of approximately 51 feet and mechanical and elevator towers would extend to a height of 54 feet.

Mr. Hammel spoke about the various setbacks of the proposed development including:

Located immediately adjacent to the front lot line along Devon Avenue

Majority of the structure would be set back 19 feet from the north lot line along the alley, with only a small loading/trash area being approximately 11 feet from that lot line

West façade would be set back 6.7 feet from the Trumbull Avenue lot line. A new sidewalk, accessible to the public, would be located between the building and the proposed parkway parking on the east side of Trumbull Avenue

Mr. Hammel went over the proposed vehicular access noting that three existing curb cuts would be removed, and vehicular access to the site would be provided exclusively through the alley north of the property. Ten parking spaces would be accessed with the alley serving as the drive aisle

Mr. Hammel went on to speak about some of the operational characteristics of the proposed development. He noted that the design capacity account for 42 people to lodge on site but that the petitioner expects the actual number of on-site lodgers to be around 25-30 people most school years. He further stated that the overall number of students to be around 120 with 30 administration, staff, and faculty. Classes would be held Sunday through Thursday, year round (three semesters). Mr. Hammel also noted that a loading/trash area would be located at the northwest corner of the building and accessed from the alley north of the building. This area would house a 10-yard dumpster that would be serviced two to three times per week, with servicing vehicles idling in the alley adjacent to the proposed loading/trash area.

For the proposed development there are two special uses required, along with eleven variations, and two parkway parking approvals:

Required Special Uses include those pursuant to:

1. Section 4.01.1 to allow a college or university in the B-2 General Business zoning district (assuming the Plan Commission recommends approval of a Text Amendment as a result of case #PC-06-24)
2. Section 7.06(5) to allow parking in the corner side yard abutting the east lot line of the subject property.
 - A. The proposed development includes on-site parking spaces in the parking lot at the east end of the property and along the north lot line
 - B. The interpretation of yards is ambiguous for this property, but based on the orientation of the lot along Devon Avenue and adjacency to two side streets, staff feels it is appropriate to consider the Kimball Avenue frontage a corner side yard
 - C. Based on that interpretation, a Special Use pursuant to this provision is required

Required Variations include relief pursuant to:

1. Section 3.13(13)e to allow a masonry fence in the corner side yard abutting the south and east lot lines of the subject property
 - A Variation is required to allow a masonry fence that encroaches into the corner side yard, meets the zoning definition of a “solid fence”, and has a height of seven feet
2. Section 4.07(3) to waive the requirement for a setback of 22 feet when abutting the rear yard of a residential property, allow the required buffer yard to be used

for parking, and waive the required landscape screening when windows exist more than 20 feet above grade.

A Variation is required to waive the requirements of Section 4.07(3)

3. Section 4.07(5) to allow for outdoor operations to accommodate an open-air courtyard toward the center of the site.

A Variation is required to allow these outdoor spaces

4. Section 4.13 to allow a building with a height greater than 35 feet to accommodate a building with a height of 47' to predominant parapet, 51' to the secondary parapet.

Based on the proposed building height of 51 feet, a Variation from this provision is required.

5. Section 6.03(1)c to waive the requirement for a 5'-foot wide sidewalk along the rear façade of the building to accommodate on-site parking. The proposed spaces along the north façade of the building result in no space for a sidewalk

A Variation from this provision is necessary to waive the requirement for a sidewalk along the north façade of the building

6. Section 6.04(3)b to allow a building that does not incorporate specified high-quality materials into at least 75% of each elevation. The north elevation of the structure includes concrete blocks that comprise 78% of that elevation

A Variation is required to waive the requirements of Section 6.04(3)

7. Section 6.14(1) to waive or reduce the width of landscape screening along the west, east and north sides of the parking lot. The proposed spaces along the north façade of the building result in no space for a sidewalk. The proposed spaces along the north façade of the building result in no space for a sidewalk

A Variation from this section is necessary to waive the requirement for the landscape area

8. Section 6.14(2) to waive or reduce the width of required landscape islands at each end of parking aisles in the parking lot and rear parking area. The islands at the north end of the parking lot provide the required area and landscape elements. The islands at the south end of the parking lot do not comply with the required minimum area. There are no landscape islands proposed at either end of the parking spaces along the north side of the building

A variation from this section is required to a) reduce the area of the islands at the south end of the parking lot and b) waive the requirement for islands at either end of the parking spaces along the north end of the building

9. Section 6.16(1) to waive the required transition yard setback and landscape screening requirements. Due to the proposed building setback and parking spaces along the north lot line, no landscape buffer or screening is proposed

Variation is necessary to waive compliance with this requirement

10. Section 7.10 to reduce the amount of required off-street parking. Based on the floor plans submitted by the Petitioner, staff estimates the maximum capacity to be 183 students and 13 faculty at peak capacity. That assumed maximum capacity results in a total required parking capacity of 45 spaces. The proposed site plan includes a total of 28 parking spaces.

A Variation is necessary to reduce the amount of required parking by 17 spaces

There were some clarifying questions by the Commissioners to understand how staff calculated the number of required spaces. The key point in calculating the number of spaces is based on peak capacity. It was noted that the parkway parking on Devon and Trumbull could not be included in the Zoning Calculation but that the Plan Commission can take those spaces into consideration when looking at this variation.

11. Section 7.08(2) to waive the required loading space. The proposed 35,000-square foot building requires one loading space with a minimum width of ten feet and a minimum depth of 55 feet. The proposed loading/trash area in the northwest corner of the building is substantially smaller than these dimensions and would be obstructed by dumpsters and possibly other elements. It is also proposed that vehicles would idle in the alley and would not enter the loading/trash space

A Variation from Section 7.10 is necessary to waive the requirement of one off-street loading space

Mr. Hammel noted that for this proposed development that the Plan Commission has been given the authority to offer a recommendation about Parkway Parking Approvals. Typically, this type of relief would be heard by the Traffic Commission but the Village Board referred this request to the Plan Commission so it could be considered within the context of the overall development.

Required parkway parking approvals include:

1. Approval of parkway parking, pursuant to Sections 6-5-17 through 6-5-23 of the Village Code, to allow for the installation of seven spaces on the east side of

Trumbull Avenue. This would be a net gain of 5 spaces and as a result two mature trees would be removed, and one new tree would be planted.

2. Approval of a Parkway Parking Variation from Section 6-5-18-A to allow the removal of a sidewalk in the public right-of-way as part of a parkway parking improvement. The proposed configuration would relocate a sidewalk in the public right-of-way onto the Petitioner's private property. Staff recommends approval of a Parkway Parking Variation from Section 6-5-18 based on Petitioner's proposal including a new sidewalk on their private property

Mr. Hammel then spoke about the potential traffic impacts that the proposed development may create with some considerations that the Plan Commission could add to a recommendation to limit egress north into residential areas. There was some discussion about how a similar stipulation for the Starbucks development, Mr. Hammel noted that while similar due to the egress being in a public alley, the petitioner is limited in adding a physical deterrent to do north.

Mr. Hammel spoke about the Parking Capacity of the site and about how staff determined the required spaces. He noted that the public spaces could not be used in any calculations because public spaces are not under the full control of the petitioner. Mr. Hammel also went over the Village Engineers peer review.

Mr. Hammel went over staff recommendations regarding parking capacity:

That at any point within 12 months of the initiation of the active operation of the proposed use, the Village may request with 30 days' notice that the Petitioner contract with a third-party consultant and deliver to the Village the results of a survey of on-street parking on the 6400 blocks of Trumbull Avenue and Kimball Avenue, or a geographic area to be determined by the Village, with the intent of gathering data to determine whether the standards related to resident-only parking restrictions are being met

That the Petitioner cannot object to any resident-only parking restrictions that may be applied for (by either adjacent residents or the Village) on the 6400 blocks of Trumbull Avenue and Kimball Avenue, or a geographic area to be determined by the Village

That the Petitioner provide a minimum of 15 days' advance notice of any special events at the subject property that exceed the capacity of the normal day-to-day operation of the use for educational instruction, and present to the Director of Community Development a parking plan for the event that may include valet parking in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 18 of the Village Code, agreements with nearby properties for remote parking, or other strategies as deemed appropriate by the Village.

There was some discussion and clarifying questions about the recommendations from the Village Engineer.

There was discussion about the needed height variations and the accompanying shadow impact study that was conducted.

There was discussion about the variation needed due to the façade design of the building.

There was discussion about the reliance on the alley access. Mr. Hammel noted that when a proposed development would have this level on impact on an alley, typically the Village would look to have the developer improve the alley. This alley may be included in a planned program from the Village to install green alleys. As a result, staff deems that it would be impractical to rebuild the alley as a part of the proposed development and the standard payment could be made by the petitioner to go towards the green alley development.

Commissioner DeAngelis asked if there were discussions about vacating this alley. Mr. Hammel noted that this idea was not a part of this proposed development.

There was discussion about the Parkway Parking along Trumbull Ave. As a part of the proposed development, the current sidewalk would be relocated onto the petitioner's private property. Staff would recommend that the Petitioner enter into an agreement, to the satisfaction of the Village Attorney, ensuring that the portion of that sidewalk located on the Petitioner's property will remain available to the public and provide direct connections to adjacent segments of the public sidewalk network.

There was a discussion about proposed bike parking in the public right-of-way. Mr. Hammel also noted the Special Use and Variation Standards that need to be considered.

Mr. Hammel went over the public comment that was received prior to this meeting.

Petitioners:

Hal Francke – Attorney

Rabbi Shmuel Schuman – Director

Dr. Chani Tessler – Dean

David Hartman – Family Representative

Michael Thompson – Architect

Peter Lemmon – Traffic Engineer

Alexa Falbo - Civil Engineer

Brenden Penny - Attorney

Mr. Francke gave an opening statement that highlighted what the petitioner's presentation would go over.

Rabbi Schuman gave a history of the Hebrew Theological College (HTC) and spoke about the current location and the vision for moving the women's college (Sarah Hartman Women's College of Touro at HTC) to Lincolnwood.

Dr. Tessler spoke about the curriculum of the college and the culture of the students who attend.

There was some discussion about the current number of students and the anticipated growth in students. Rabbi Shuman stated that they do expect growth and hope to see the number of student rise over the first five years. He hopes that the number of students may approach 120 in the first 5 years. There was discussion about current students and Dr. Tessler spoke about the amount of people that she's observed parking at their current location.

Mr. Hartman gave history about his grandmother whom the college was named in honor of.

Mr. Thompson spoke about the goals when designing the proposed development.

There was some discussion about the proposed materials and why these specific materials were chosen.

Mr. Thompson showed some mockups of how the finished building would look.

Commissioner Auerbach asked if they considered building over the proposed parking lot instead of adding a third level. She noted that the proposal calls for a lot of variations but feels that as developed the designers left a lot of options on the table.

Mr. Thompson stated that while building over the parking area was considered it was ultimately not included in this plan for a few reasons. It wasn't desirable to create a covered parking lot (aesthetics, maintenance), they wanted to highlight the center courtyard as part of the design, and the budgetary impact of that sort of design.

Commissioner DeAngelis noted that the current height restrictions in the Zoning Code are lower than neighboring communities and if Lincolnwood wants to be able to compete with these communities, then we need to look at updating our restrictions to match those of our neighbors.

Commissioner Auerbach also asked about the high ceilings on the first floor. Instead of a 17-foot-high ceiling maybe reduce that height slightly.

Mr. Thompson stated that this is an aspect that the design team is willing to take another look at.

Mr. Lemmon addressed the Commission to speak about traffic evaluation and parking study. He spoke about the uniqueness of this development. The typical university usually accounts for enrollment in the thousands of students where this development in capped at no more than 200. The normal scale is thrown off as a result. So, they used the existing campus in Chicago as a basis for their parking study. Based on the peak usage over the three-day study, they determined that the peak parking need would be 27 spaces based on current enrollment.

Mr. Lemon also addressed the plan to deal with special events and how parking would be addressed. It was noted that some off-street parking has been secured with 19 spaces for special events at nearby Bais Chaim Dovid. Mr. Lemmon also went over a parking management plan that was a result of the parking study.

Ms. Falbo went over the grading and drainage plan for the proposed development. Ms. Falbo also went over the current Landscape plan.

There was some discussion about the upcoming Green Alley plan. Public Works director gave some overview of the project as well as explained how funding was received.

Mr. Penny gave a summary of what the petitioner is looking for, going over the requested special uses, variations, and parkway reliefs.

The Chairman opened up the discussion for Public Comment.

Matthew Stanton – 6400 block of Trumbull – Spoke about how he is not against the development but feels that the lack of onsite parking is absurd. He feels that there wasn't a lot of thought into the potential growth. He feels that too much of the burden of this development falls on the residents of the area. He presented a petition that was signed by 19 area neighbors stating their objection to the project.

Steve Sfikus – 6400 block of Kimball – Stated that the area parking is already congested due to the post office across the street. He also spoke about the height of the building.

Linda Lampert – 6400 block of Kimball – Overall is against this development, she feels that it would better fit in a bigger space somewhere else in the Village.

Marla Lampert – 6400 block of Kimball – Overall is against this development, she feels that it would better fit in a bigger space somewhere else in the Village. Also raised questions about property taxes and a potential decrease in tax revenue.

Rita Liptschitz – Assistant Dean for Sarah Hartman Women's College spoke in favor of the project.

Ahuva Guttman – Alumnus of Sarah Hartman Women's College spoke in favor of the project.

Mr. Markovits – 6700 block of Trumbull – Spoke in favor of the proposed development, thinks it would be a benefit to the community.

Joel Gordon – 6500 block of Central Park – Spoke in favor of the project. He is looking forward to the site being developed after so long.

Mark Hartman – 6600 block of Central Park – Spoke in favor of the project, thinks it would be a benefit to the community.

The commissioners then began their discussion about the cases.

Commissioner Novoselsky spoke about the first case PC-06-24 stating that he strongly opposes adding a college use to the B-2 zoning district. He feels that the proposed plan works against the

2016 Comprehensive Plan. Further he states that the Village should not even consider this proposal because the use itself should not be allowed in this zoning district.

Commissioner DeAngelis spoke in opposition to Commissioner Novoselsky's comments stating that the Comprehensive Plan is not law and that it encourages both religious institutions and schools, maybe not in this specific area of the Village.

Commissioner Sampen is in favor of this type of development in the Village. But he does wonder if the location of the proposed development fits.

Commission Kohn spoke about being in favor of this project. Feels that this would help revitalize the abandoned space. She feels that there the petitioner seems to be willing to work with the Village to adapt the proposed plan

Commissioner Auerbach hopes that her earlier comments didn't skew others about the project in a negative way. She spoke about how she feels that the use would be a good fit and use for the long-abandoned site. She feels that with some tweaks to the plans that this could be a viable plan. She reiterated that she feels that the first-floor height can be lowered to a twelve-foot height to alleviate some of the height concerns.

Commissioner Jakubowski spoke about how he didn't feel that Commissioner Novoselsky's comments were accurate. He also agreed with the comments of Commissioner Auerbach and feels that the petitioner didn't fully consider the impact that some aspects of the project would have on the neighbors. He feels that the approach was a little too insular and that some aspects of the project should be reconsidered. He recommends that the petitioner scales back the project slightly and brings it back.

It was determined that the Commission would vote on PC-06-24 first.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Novoselsky to deny the request for a text amendment to allow for a college in the B-2 zoning district.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampen

Aye: Chairman Yohanna and, Commissioners Novoselsky, and Sampen

Nay: Commissioners Jakubowski, Kohn, DeAngelis, and Auerbach

Abstain:

Motion Failed: 3-4

A Motion was made by Commissioner Auerbach to approve the request for a text amendment as presented by staff to allow for a college/university in the B-2 zoning district.

The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Jakubowski.

Commissioner DeAngelis asked the Village Attorney when adding an amendment to an open motion would be appropriate.

Mr. Passman stated that any amendment should be made prior to the vote on the original motion.

Commissioner DeAngelis made a motion to amend the motion made by Commissioner Auerbach to increase the allowed height for new buildings to 45 feet to match that of other nearby municipalities.

There was discussion about the validity of the motion.

Mr. Passman noted that while the motion does follow Robert's Rules, the subject of the amendment was not notified for tonight's meeting and an amendment like that could have unforeseen repercussions.

Commissioner DeAngelis rescinded his amendment to the motion.

The commissioner then voted on the original motion made by Commissioner Auerbach

Aye: Commissioners Jakubowski, Kohn, DeAngelis, and Auerbach

Nay: Chairman Yohanna and, Commissioners Novoselsky, and Sampen

Abstain:

Motion Approved: 4-3

This item will go to the board in conjunction with a recommendation regarding Case PC-07-24.

The commission then moved to discuss PC-07-24

Commissioner Jakubowski stated that the number of sought reliefs are not out of the norm in his opinion. He did note some concern over two of the requested reliefs regarding the building setback and the building height. He feels that the petitioner should rework the plans and bring it back to the commission.

Commissioner Auerbach also feels that the plans should be altered and brought back to the Commission.

Commissioner Kohn overall feels that the plan is a sound one. She does concur with the previous commissioners that the petitioners can work on the building height and then come back to the Commission.

Commissioner Sampen concurs with the other commissioners that the plans should be reworked and brought back to the Commission.

Commissioner DeAngelis stated that he thinks that the Village needs to look at the height regulations independent of this case as a separate topic. He feels that these types of regulations make it difficult for Lincolnwood to complete with neighboring communities for these types of projects. He stated that he believes that height should be 45 feet. He went on to state that he doesn't believe that parking will be an issue at all at the site.

Commissioner Novoselsky reiterated his earlier statements that the proposed development is too big and too tall for the lot and that the proposed rear setback is too short and will have a large impact on the residents of the area. He also stated that the hardship threshold hasn't been reached.

Chairman Yohanna stated that he agrees with Commissioner Novoselsky. He stated that he doesn't believe that the standards have been met to approve the requested variations. Further he feels the development is too big for the proposed lot.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Novoselsky to deny all the special uses and variations.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampen

This motion does not include the Parkway Parking reliefs.

Before the vote the attorney for the Petitioner stated that the petitioner would be agreeable to revise the proposed plans and bring it back to the commission if given the opportunity to.

There was discussion about the impacts of continuing this case to a future meeting.

Commissioner Novoselsky withdrew his motion

Commissioner DeAngelis moved to continue this case to the September 30, 2024 meeting

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kohn

Chairman Yohanna left the meeting 11:18 pm

There was discussion if a new Chairman needed to be appointed before continuing.
A vote was taken to appoint an acting Chairman

Motion by Commissioner DeAngelis to recommend Commissioner Jakubowski be appointed Temporary Chairman of the Plan Commission for the duration of this meeting

The Motion was seconded by Commissioner Auerbach

Aye: Commissioners Jakubowski, Kohn, DeAngelis, Sampen and Auerbach

Nay: Commissioner Novoselsky

Abstain:

Motion Approved: 5-1

The commission voted on the motion to continue the hearing to September 30, 2024.

Aye: Commissioners Jakubowski, Kohn, DeAngelis, Sampen and Auerbach

Nay:

Abstain: Commissioner Novoselsky
Motion Approved: 5-0

V. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Plan Commission is scheduled for Monday, September 30, 2024.

VI. Public Comment

Temporary Chairman Jakubowski announced the opportunity for additional comments from the public. Let the record show that no one came forward.

VII. Adjournment

A Motion was made by Commissioner DeAngelis to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampen.

Aye: Acting Chairman Jakubowski and Commissioners Kohn, DeAngelis, Novoselsky, Sampen and Auerbach

Nay:

Abstain:

Motion Approved: 5-0

The meeting ended at 11:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcos Classen
Community Development Coordinator