

VILLAGE OF OAK LAWN

ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION

Village Hall Auditorium
Monday, November 21, 2022
Meeting Minutes #2022-8

I. ROLL CALL: Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.

A. Chairman: Vernon Zumhagen

B. Members:

Steve Adamsheck	Mike Moriarty
Dave Bennett	Rich Piazza
Tom Duhig	Vernon Zumhagen
Bill Lundy	

C. Staff:

Don McKenna, Building Division Manager
Drew Guardi, Engineering Technician
Deanne Adasiak, Recording Secretary

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Zumhagen.

III. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:

A motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes #2022-7 dated August 29, 2022 was made by Commissioner Duhig and seconded by Commissioner Piazza.

Roll call: Zumhagen, yes; Piazza, yes; Moriarty, yes; Lundy, abstain; Duhig, yes; Bennett, yes; Adamsheck, yes.

Motion passes: 6-0-1.

The Oath was administered by Commissioner Zumhagen.

IV. PETITION:

A.) Pet. #2022-19 – Request variation for the approval of a pole sign at 5600-5620 West 95th Street, Peter Giadla, petitioner

Mr. Peter Giadla, Seneca Real Estate Group, 7702 S. Cass, Darien, Illinois

The petitioner stated that he is present to represent the owner of the property. He explained that the variation request is for the approval of a pole sign. He expressed that the property owner intends to improve and modify the current pylon sign. He showed pictures of the current sign and explained that the improvements will include tenant panels for tenants who do not currently have a presence on the existing pole sign. He also stated that the car wash has removed their roof sign. He went on to say that the existing pylon sign is unappealing.

Commissioner Lundy said he has no objections as long as there are no obstructions or site restrictions, and that it is a nice improvement. According to Mr. McKenna, covering the pole will make it slightly larger than the existing pole sign. Commissioner Duhig asked whether the pole sign is already in place. Yes, the petitioner replied, explaining that the existing pole sign has been on the property for over 20 years. Commissioner Duhig asked about the current signs on the pole. The petitioner informed Commissioner Duhig that additional cabinets will be added for the other tenants. He stated that this requires a variation because the pole sign is located within a site triangle. Mr. McKenna went on to say that the Village of Oak Lawn recently passed an Ordinance restricting pole signs and now require all sign requests to be for monument signs. Mr. McKenna

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added that the sign's base must be 75% the width of the cabinet above. He said the subject pole sign will be covered. Commissioner Duhig asked about Village Code and the height restrictions on pole signs. Mr. McKenna responded that pole signs are limited to 24'. According to the petitioner, the subject pole sign is 13' from the bottom of the existing cabinet, and if three additional cabinets are added, the dimensions will be 8' from the base of the sign. Commissioner Duhig asked the petitioner whether the sign will create an obstruction for the traffic on 95th Street. The petitioner replied that that is unlikely at that height.

Commissioner Moriarty commented that the proposed sign is a nicer improvement.

Commissioner Piazza asked about Affinity Title, one of the businesses in that area. The petitioner explained that Affinity Title is a Century 21 affiliate and not a tenant. He stated that Century 21 would have to request a change if Affinity Title is requested to be added to their tenant panel.

Commissioner Bennett asked if the property owner has other locations. The petitioner responded yes and said there are locations in Willowbrook, Darien, and in Florida. Commissioner Bennett asked Mr. McKenna if the sign will be within the 15' site triangle. Mr. McKenna replied yes. Commissioner Bennett expressed his displeasure with the sign. He stated that he does not believe the proposed sign is an improvement. He went on to say that he was a Commissioner on the Architectural Review & Design Commission and reviewed numerous sign requests. He stated that many businesses make significant investments in the cost of a monument sign, and he wondered why this sign should not also be a monument sign, especially given its proximity to the 95th Corridor.

The petitioner responded to Commissioner Bennett's comments. He explained that they explored the idea of having a monument sign but found if a monument sign were installed, the setbacks required for a monument sign would impact ingress and egress from Parkside Avenue and would also eliminate parking stalls. He also mentioned that if they extended the base further, it would cause the same issue and hinder visibility. Commissioner Bennett replied that widening the base creates a restriction, and that site restriction code applies to anything within that site triangle. Mr. McKenna commented that the changes to the base of the sign are not substantial.

Commissioner Zumhagen expressed that in this case and based on his assessment of reasonableness, the petitioner has done his homework and presented a reasonable request.

The petitioner commented that instead of doing additional cabinets, he spoke with other tenants and they agreed to remove some other signs. He had already mentioned the removal of the car wash sign, and said Play It Again Sports will also be removing one of their signs.

Commissioner Adamscheck asked the petitioner whether the sign would be lower than 8'. The petitioner replied no. Commissioner Zumhagen stated that the Play It Again Sports signs needed to be improved and asked if all of their signs would be removed. The petitioner responded that the sign on their east façade will be removed. Commissioner Zumhagen expressed that this is a great attempt to improve an existing sign while also working with Village Codes.

Commissioner Bennett asked the petitioner about other improvements. The petitioner stated that he discussed connecting the parking lots at the corner and at the north end with Mr. McKenna. He said a large portion of the property has been vacant for 5-6 years. He stated that Covid and the market

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had an impact on the vacancy. He said their plans include creating an opening through Century 21 to allow for foot traffic and better access for customers who park at the rear of the property.

Commissioner Bennett asked if a monument sign would have to be placed in a parking space if one were to be added. Mr. McKenna stated that it would; he said he is certain that the property has a parking variation, which they would then have to revise. Commissioner Zumhagen commented that even if a monument sign is moved, it is still a difficult location. He expressed that it will cause problems near Parkside. Commissioner Bennett emphasized the cost incurred by other businesses to install the required monument sign. He expressed concerns with continuous approvals of variations and a disregard for the Village's requirements for monument signs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Moriarty to approve Pet. #2022-19 – Request variation for the approval of a pole sign at 5600-5620 West 95th Street, Peter Giadla, petitioner. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lundy.

Roll call: Adamscheck, yes; Bennett, no; Duhig, yes; Moriarty, yes; Piazza, yes; Zumhagen, yes.

Motion to approve passes: 6-1.

PUBLIC HEARING:

The Public Hearing opened at 7:58 p.m.

B.) Pet. #2022-20 – Request special use permit for special event space in a C-3 Zoned District at 8821 Ridgeland Avenue, The Opulent Room LLC, petitioner

Ms. Lanisha Thadison, 8821 S. Ridgeland, Oak Lawn, Illinois

The petitioner stated that she is seeking a special use permit to allow for a special event space. She explained that it will be a small space for no more than 50 people and will be used for community events, corporate events, bridal showers, and other special occasions.

Commissioner Piazza asked the petitioner if this was her first business. The petitioner responded that it is her first brick and mortar business. She stated that she runs an online business. Commissioner Piazza asked the petitioner whether there were any similar event spaces in the area. The petitioner responded that she is aware of hospitality-related businesses all over the country. Commissioner Piazza asked the petitioner whether her proposed business would include food and liquor. The petitioner stated that she will not provide food but those who rent the space may cater, and that she is not interested in obtaining a liquor license at this time.

The paperwork, according to Commissioner Piazza, shows four (4) part-time employees. He asked the petitioner what those employees will be doing. The petitioner replied that those employees are hired to work at events and open houses. Commissioner Piazza mentioned the number of parking spaces, stating that the paperwork shows 60 parking spaces, and he asked the petitioner if that was correct, to which the petitioner replied yes.

Commissioner Moriarty stated that the paperwork shows 380 parking spaces available. The petitioner replied that is correct and explained that the subject location is part of State Road Plaza. Commissioner Moriarty asked the petitioner how many parking spaces are available in the

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immediate area of the subject location. The petitioner responded that she is unsure. Commissioner Moriarty asked the petitioner if she was aware that a Special Use permit was required. The petitioner stated that she was informed of this when she called the Village.

Commissioner Duhig asked the petitioner if the space could be used for Christmas parties and how many people it could hold. The petitioner responded yes and said the location capacity is for 50 guests. Commissioner Duhig asked about liquor. The petitioner responded that she is not interested in obtaining a liquor license.

Commissioner Lundy asked the petitioner if she had any interior drawings. The petitioner explained that the lease is conditional on the Special Use permit being approved, and that if approved, she plans to remodel the space, including knocking down a wall. She explained that it will be an open space with banquet tables and chairs provided to guests based on their needs. Commissioner Lundy asked about restroom facilities. The petitioner responded that the space currently has three bathrooms. Commissioner Lundy stated that it is difficult to review the proposed request without knowing what the interior will look like. He believes that this event space will set a precedent, and he would feel more comfortable making a decision if there were interior drawings. The petitioner stated once more that it will be an open space, a vanilla box. She explained that she can provide drawings once she receives approval to proceed. She reiterated that it will be an open space with only tables and chairs.

Commissioner Lundy also asked whether the petitioner intended to obtain a liquor license. The petitioner stated once more that she is not interested. She mentioned that some of her mentors have had success in their businesses without the use of alcohol. She also mentioned similar businesses in Atlanta, Georgia, and said that none of them serve alcohol.

Commissioner Zumhagen said he understands that the petitioner's customers will cater and bring their own food; He was curious if this type of business necessitated the use of food equipment. He asked the petitioner if she planned to rent furniture or if the customer would be responsible for bringing their own. The petitioner replied that she will provide tables, chairs, and an AV system.

Commissioner Piazza asked about garbage collection for the business. He mentioned the hours of 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and asked how frequently the garbage would be picked up. The petitioner replied that she has not looked into it yet. She stated that her space will only be used for special events, which may occur twice a weekend and/or four times a month.

Commissioner Bennett asked the petitioner if her income will come from renting the space for her business. Yes, said the petitioner. Commissioner Bennett asked the petitioner if she will handle the catering for the events. No, said the petitioner. Commissioner Bennett asked the petitioner if her event contracts will allow people to bring their own alcohol. The petitioner responded that she has not explored a BYOB option. Commissioner Bennett asked of the petitioner's closing time at 11:00 p.m. According to the petitioner, all events must end at 11:00 p.m.

Commissioner Lundy expressed concerns because this is the first business of its kind and there are some unknowns. He mentioned the use of social media and wondered how the petitioner would screen the maximum number of guests of 50. According to the petitioner, her events will include an event contract. She stated that she will have staff and cameras on hand. Mr. McKenna stated that the Fire Department will confirm the occupancy limit. Mr. McKenna stated that the number will be

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posted following an inspection and capacity determination by the Fire Department. He stated that it is not unlikely that the capacity number will exceed 50.

Commissioner Duhig asked the petitioner whether she will charge guests at the door. No, said the petitioner. She said the event contract is based on a per-hour fee. Commissioner Lundy asked the petitioner whether she rents the space for 10 or 50 people, the cost will still be by the hour. Yes, said the petitioner.

Commissioner Zumhagen asked about the petitioner's plans for waste. He advised the petitioner to speak with her landlord about where her dumpsters would be placed for her business. The petitioner stated that there was a brief discussion about dumpsters, but she was unsure of the dumpster location. Commissioner Zumhagen advised the petitioner to be clear with her landlord about the trash enclosure for her dumpster.

The Oath was administered by Commissioner Zumhagen.

Mr. Marion Wegner, 8932 Ridgeland Avenue, Oak Lawn, Illinois

Mr. Wegner stated that the petitioner's business concept is great, but he believes there is insufficient parking. He said as an example, if the petitioner hosts a bridal shower, there will most likely be 40 cars in addition to staff parking. He expressed that he is well aware of how valuable parking in that area is and is concerned of where all of the cars will park.

Mr. Wegner also stated that the petitioner space will require a grease trap and sink. He pointed out that people will be cleaning up food and pouring grease down the sink. He reiterated his concerns about parking. He advised the petitioner to visit the property at 11:30 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. on a Saturday to observe the Jewel parking lot. He said it will be full. He went on to say that the dentist, bank, and dog groomer are all open and have employees. He reiterated that he thinks it's a great idea, but he's not sure about parking.

Commissioner Lundy commented that parking is sufficient per Village Code, and this is not a petition for a parking variance. Commissioner Lundy proposed adding a condition to the motion to require the installation of cameras. The petitioner stated that she intends to install cameras for safety and legal reasons.

Commissioner Bennett stated that many petitioners say they will do something at these meetings but do not follow through, and he feels adding a condition to the motion is a good idea.

The Public Hearing closed at 8:25 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Zumhagen to approve Pet. #2022-20 – Request special use permit for special event space in a C-3 Zoned District at 8821 Ridgeland Avenue, The Opulent Room LLC, petitioner. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piazza.

Roll call: Zumhagen, yes; Piazza, yes; Moriarty, yes; Lundy, no; Duhig, yes; Bennett, no; Adamscheck, yes.

Motion to approve passes: 5-2.

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V. OTHER BUSINESS:

A.) Chairman:

Commissioner Zumhagen announced that today was his last day on the Zoning and Planning Commission. He explained that he has accepted a position with the Village and that serving on this Board would present a conflict of interest for him. He thanked the Commissioners and stated that he has enjoyed his many years on this Board.

B.) Members:

Commissioner Lundy expressed his continued disappointment that Ghosein's continues to have a significant number of cars on their property. He said it is frustrating for him as a Commissioner to hear petitions and for him to make decisions when people do not keep their word. He then stated that there is no accountability. He mentioned the Commissioners' hesitations about granting approval when Ghosein's petition came before the Board because of the large number of cars on their former property. He stated that both the owner and his wife stated that it will be a smaller scale business with only a few cars on the property that will be worked on daily. He said there is no recourse. He expressed that he understands that we must include conditions in the motions, but he is frustrated by petitioners who make promises. He went on to say that it has been over a year since Ghosein's appeared before this Board and that nothing has been done, including adding landscaping at 95th Street and the areas mentioned at their meeting.

C.) Staff:

Drew mentioned that both of the January meetings are on Village holidays. He suggested that if we do receive items for this Board, we hold a special meeting on Wednesday, January 18th.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Moriarty and second by Commissioner Duhig.

Voice vote: All in favor, aye.

Motion to adjourn passes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.