

# VILLAGE OF OAK LAWN

## ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION

Village Hall Auditorium

Monday, June 5, 2023

Meeting Minutes #2023-7

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

**A. Chairman:** Mike Moriarty

**B. Members:** Steve Adamsheck      Bill Lundy  
Dave Bennett      Mike Moriarty  
Tom Duhig      Rich Piazza  
Dan Greene

**C. Staff:** Don McKenna, Building Official  
Drew Guardi, Engineering Technician  
Gary Gudino, CD&GM Director  
Vernon Zumhagen, Controller  
Mike Marrs, Village Attorney  
Deanne Adasiak, Recording Secretary

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Moriarty.

**III. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:**

*A motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes #2023-6 dated May 15, 2023, was made by Commissioner Duhig, and seconded by Commissioner Lundy.*

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

Motion passes: 6-0-1.

*The Oath was administered by Commissioner Moriarty.*

**IV. OLD BUSINESS:**

*None.*

**V. PUBLIC HEARING:**

**A.) AT 7:32 P.M. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING PET. #2023-11 – REQUEST FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR RESIDENTIAL USE AND AN 83.33% PARKING VARIATION IN A C-2 ZONED DISTRICT AT 9724 SOUTHWEST HIGHWAY, SRIRAM KAZA, PETITIONER; THIS MATTER CONTINUED FROM THE MAY 15, 2023 MEETING TO ALLOW THE PETITIONER TO BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING**

*Mr. Sriram Kaza, 6481 Garfield Ridge Ct., Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527*

The petitioner summarized his request for a Special Use Permit. The petitioner explained that he intends to build two residential units on the building's second floor. He indicated that the first floor is a commercial space. He said that the second floor is unfinished. He explained that although the second floor is framed, the interior work was never completed. He said he is ready to complete the interior. He also mentioned that he previously applied for a variation to construct four residential units on the second floor but has changed that plan and will construct two residential units on the second floor. The petitioner stated that there is enough parking for at least one space for each residential unit.

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He said the first floor is a heating and cooling business and although they have 4 to 5 employees, they do not park at the location because it is a service office and they do not have customer traffic. The petitioner said the variation is for parking. He indicated that there are 10 parking spaces and one handicapped parking space.

Commissioner Greene stated that he understands the commercial space business does not have a lot of foot traffic and that he has no concerns about the variation. Commissioner Duhig also stated that he has no concerns. Commissioner Lundy said he does not have any concerns if the petitioner sticks to the plan of constructing two residential units rather than four residential units.

*The Public Hearing closed at 7:35 p.m.*

*A motion was made by Commissioner Piazza to approve Pet. #2023-11 – Request for Special Use Permit for Residential Use and an 83.33% parking variation in a C-2 Zoned District @ 9724 Southwest Highway, Sriram Kaza, Petitioner; The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bennett.*

Roll call: Adamscheck, yes; Bennett, yes; Duhig, yes; Greene, yes; Lundy, yes; Moriarty, yes; Piazza, yes.

Motion passes: 7-0.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

### **A.) Public Hearing: Pet. #2023-17-Request to rezone from an R-1 (single-family) district to PK (Parking) Zoned District @ 9517 Merrimac Avenue, Patrick J. Woytec, Petitioner**

*The Public Hearing opened at 7:37 p.m.*

*Mr. Patrick Woytec, 9501 W. 144<sup>th</sup> Place, Suite 205, Orland Park, Illinois 60462*

The petitioner indicated that he is with Sosin, Arnold & Schoenbeck and represents Family Eye Physicians. He mentioned that Dr. Al-Khudari and Alan Landau from Family Eye Physicians are also present and have signed up for public comments. The petitioner explained that the request is for parking on Merrimac Avenue, a parcel off the southwest side of the Eye Physician's building. He said that limited parking is currently available in front of the building. He mentioned that a Walgreens store used to occupy 6201 W. 95<sup>th</sup> St. before Family Eye Physicians opened. He said that there are a lot of patients from Oak Lawn and the surrounding area. He went on to say that aside from the few parking spaces in front of the building, the only other option is for their patients to park on the street. He said parking on the street is limited to two hours and that patients visiting the facility must frequently park on the street and cross the street during winter or other adverse weather elements, creating a safety issue.

The petitioner mentioned that they had previously been to Zoning & Planning to find alternative parking locations. He said that businesses on 95th Street are constantly subjected to this, and that there are several examples of places on the south side of 95th Street that have converted residential blocks for parking. He said it benefits the facility, the community, and the patients. He said the Merrimac parking lot will primarily be used by staff members that would have direct access to the west side of the building. He said the submitted plans call for 17 additional parking spaces and that ingress would be on Merrimac and egress would be the public alley.

Mr. Landau remarked that this year marks the 20th anniversary of Family Eye Physicians. He indicated that they have 14 doctors that include four MD's and ten ODs, and that they are a growing

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organization. He expressed that the spirit of why they are here is to grow responsibly. He said they have established a credo that governs how they conduct themselves to 1) their patients; 2) their employees, 3) invest in the community, and 4) invest in business. Mr. Landau went on to say that based on those four credo principles, they want to make sure they have enough parking. He stated that they want their patients to be able to park safely and properly and that they also want to respond well to the community.

Commissioner Bennett questioned the petitioner's decision to have a 5' masonry wall rather than a 6' masonry wall. The petitioner responded that the minimum requirement is 5' and the maximum requirement is 6'. Commissioner Bennett asked about the petitioner's plans to add lighting to the proposed parking lot. The petitioner stated that adding lighting is not in their current plan and then said that there is adequate street lighting.

Commissioner Piazza asked as to why lighting was not included in the plan. The petitioner explained that they are not open late given their business hours. He indicated that they can certainly consider adding lighting to their plan. Commissioner Lundy said his concerns do include lighting and safety for both the employees and the patients. He asked if the proposed lot would be an employee only parking lot. The petitioner responded that they absolutely would consider that idea.

Commissioner Duhig asked about the number of employees. Mr. Landau responded that there are 45-50 employees. Commissioner Duhig asked about the number of parking spaces. Mr. Landau responded that the proposed parking lot will have 17 parking spaces, according to the plans.

Commissioner Lundy said when this was previously before this board there was an issue of open space in the basement and if they were bringing more employees into the facility. Mr. Landau stated that this could be the case in the short term to manage workflow. Commissioner Lundy asked whether there is a possibility of more employees other than the 45-50 mentioned. Mr. Landau responded that he believes they have reached their capacity at this time. Mr. Landau said that if they were to expand, they would have to do so in a different location. Commissioner Lundy asked whether the building's total square footage is used. Mr. Landau replied yes.

Commissioner Moriarty asked about the traffic flow to enter on Merrimac and exit out to the alley. He asked the petitioner where the traffic from the alley goes. Mr. Woytec responded that this is the plan, which is currently being discussed with Village staff, but there is certainly the possibility of having ingress and egress on Merrimac because it is wide enough to accommodate both. Commissioner Moriarty then said in that case, there would be no egress through the alley. The petitioner responded that the Village would have to approve the plans. Commissioner Moriarty pointed out that if they use the alley, he is not sure where the cars would go. The petitioner replied that from the alley, traffic would go out on 96th Street to the north. According to Commissioner Moriarty, the alley is more grass than paved. He asked if it was part of their plan to pave the alley. The petitioner asked, "the entire alley" and then said that he does not believe they would pave the whole alley. Commissioner Moriarty said if you need to get to 96th Street, you must go the entire length of the alley and he does not believe there is another option. Mr. Guardi responded that going north is an option. According to the petitioner, there will not be a high volume going in and out because primarily staff will park there rather than patients. Commissioner Moriarty asked how that would be enforced. According to the petitioner, it would be an employee lot and would not be an option for patients. Mr. Landau stated that the intention is to have a controlled environment of in and out.

*Mr. Wally Samhan, 9521 Merrimac, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

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Mr. Samhan pointed out that he lives next to the purchased property. He commented that the petitioner used words like "safety" and "growing," and asked where his children's safety *is* living next to a parking lot. He said he enjoys living on Merrimac and enjoys his neighbors. He expressed that it is a neighborhood and not intended for a parking lot. Mr. Samhan said that his children will wake up to cars pulling in and out, making their safety nonexistent. Mr. Samhan then reported that the grass was 4' tall when he left for work in the morning at 9:00 a.m. He expressed that the petitioner is unconcerned about it right now and will be unconcerned about it tomorrow or one year from now. He said they only care about their pockets and their money.

*Ms. Amanda McKee, 9530 Merrimac, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. McKee said she has lived on Merrimac for the past 13 years and had no intentions to live across from a parking lot. She mentioned that she has three small children, one of whom is disabled, and that she is concerned about their safety. According to Ms. McKee, the Buona Beef no right-hand turn sign is ignored, and traffic continues onto Merrimac. She asked about the impact on her home's value. She said she was told that her property value will be reduced by 30%. Ms. McKee said she appreciates that their company is growing, and while they believed their parking lot was adequate for 15 employees in 2015, she believes their pocketbook should not impact hers. She remarked that she should not have to lose money by selling her home while their business profits.

Ms. McKee expressed that the grass was *miraculously* cut today. She agreed that it was 4' high earlier in the day. She then pointed out that the left side of the building in the alley is overgrown with weeds and debris. She said the place is crumbling and falling apart. Ms. McKee mentioned that she is a CVS Manager who would have been fined for property maintenance in this situation. She said the business owner is unconcerned about the building and will be less concerned about the parking lot. Ms. McKee asked what happens to the parking lot if the business closes or relocates. She then referred to the parking lot lighting and said she believes not adding lighting will make the lot unsafe. She said that it gets dark at 5:00 p.m. in the winter and that the Eye Physician's business is open some nights until 7:00 p.m.

Ms. McKee said the petitioner mentioned that they have 45-50 employees, but the proposed parking lot only has 17 spaces. She stated that the parking lot is only for one-third of their total workforce, and she wants to know where everyone else will park. She stated that the proposed parking lot does not solve their problem. Ms. McKee said that allowing the parking lot, it inconveniences the entire neighborhood. She then said that the physician's employees park on the street, and that when her son's therapist visits, there is no available parking. She said the only person who benefits from this situation is the business; the residents gain nothing. She stated that if the Village did not allow this to happen on Moody in 2020, why would they allow it to happen on Merrimac?

*Mr. Andrew McDaniel, 9530 Merrimac, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Mr. McDaniel said he lives south and across the street from the proposed parking lot. He questioned why the residents are paying the price because a nearby business is growing. He said the building is an eyesore. He claims that they do not maintain their building and that there is garbage all around. He asked what if their business grows even more in a year? He believes the residents are getting the short end of the stick because of a business owner's failure to plan for the growth of his business. He believes that the lot will become an eyesore and lower property values. He stated that there is no upside for the residents.

*Ms. Darlene Bartlett, 9520 Melvina, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

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Ms. Bartlett said she lives in the house directly behind the proposed parking lot. She recalled that in 2015, the physician stated that they only had 15 employees. She said that per the 2020 meeting minutes, they mentioned that they had 28-30 employees. Ms. Bartlett stated that she opposes the petition. She pointed out that the house on the subject property is in good condition. She said the doctor purchased the house after three days on the market. Ms. Bartlett feels that this will alter and affect the character of the entire neighborhood. She believes that employees are utilizing the 2-hour parking spaces all day long, causing parking issues that block mailboxes and driveways. Ms. Bartlett said no one benefits from this besides the petitioner.

*Mr. Jason Ehrlicher, 9529 Melvina, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Mr. Ehrlicher said he lives directly across the street from the business. Mr. Ehrlicher said the petitioner once wanted to build a parking lot behind his property. He claims that if a parking lot is built, the residents will lose 30% of their home's value. He said that when the doctor moved into the neighborhood in 2015, he was welcomed. Mr. Ehrlicher said the petitioner said at that time that he would not infringe on the community, but that he has done so since day one. Mr. Ehrlicher commented that he knows this because he lives there; he pointed out that the residents on the block do not receive mail and are impacted by parking issues from this business. He said he believes that when you add parking, you must have a handicapped parking space, which may take two spaces, bringing the parking count to 15. Mr. Ehrlicher asked as to why the physician is infringing on the residents to obtain more parking. He said that the parking lot will not benefit the community. He then referred to the 2020 meeting minutes, where there was discussion about the basement in the physician's building and said he believes there is activity in their basement. He mentioned that the petitioner was denied a basement expansion. Mr. Ehrlicher said the building at 95th and Melvina is a different location that the petitioner purchased and intends to open an eyeglass retail center. He said he understands that the petitioner will be hiring doctors to work there, making it a medical facility with insufficient parking. Mr. Ehrlicher believes the doctor has been misleading residents since 2014. He asked the petitioners how they would feel if someone put a parking lot next to their home. He then expressed concern that if the zoning is changed, it will not be possible to revert to a residential zoning.

*Ms. Sandy Bury, Complete Vision Care, 6209 West 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Bury said that she has lived in Oak Lawn since 1979 and owns a business adjacent to the Eye Physician's building. She expressed concern about safety, and then commented that what is really being discussed is putting a 40-pound bag of potatoes in a 5-pound bag. She said the burden falls on the neighborhood. She said she has witnessed a chaotic situation down Melvina, Merrimac, across the street by the bank, and so on. Ms. Bury believes that having 50 employees necessitates at least 50 parking spaces. She indicated that they are requesting more parking and that there are no other options. Ms. Bury said that the petitioner could have built parking adjacent to the newly purchased property, but instead chose to have a medical facility. She said that she is unaware of any public meetings for that facility. Ms. Bury pointed out that it is a 4,200 square foot building and that they are required by Village Code to appear before the Zoning & Planning Commission. Ms. Bury said she feels that because of a noncompliance issue with a sign some time ago, and then when he was denied the basement expansion, it could be part of the reason he did not bring the new medical facility to the Village. Ms. Bury then stated that based on what she is hearing, she believes the basement is constructed. She added that she is not certain if there was an inspection. Ms. Bury stated that we are being asked to bear yet another burden. She mentioned that she took pictures of the unkempt property. She mentioned the rodent problem and said that the petitioner's property is not helping matters. She expressed concern for the safety of her employees.

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Ms. Bury said she attempted to work with the petitioner personally when she saw what was going on, and that she decided to lease the petitioner parking spaces a few years ago because she had excess parking. Ms. Bury mentioned that she had to beg for reimbursement of the contract the first year, and then ultimately, she had to include a late penalty. She said that unless you continue to push the issue, they will see a weakness and will continue to take. Ms. Bury urged the Board to not approve the petition. She said the business has caused a lot of stress in the community. She stated that they do not fit in the space they have and that it is their mission to keep bringing people in.

Mr. Ehrlicher mentioned that several residents were approached by the physician's office with a request to purchase their properties, but the residents agreed not to sell.

Mr. Woytec expressed that the physician's practice is doing well and that he should not be faulted for that; he emphasized that there are many vacant spaces along 95th Street and that Oak Lawn does not want another vacancy. He said the one consistent complaint he heard was about street parking. He said this would solve that problem. According to Mr. Woytec, if the expansion is approved, residents will notice that it will alleviate the problems on the north and west sides of the street. Mr. Woytec believes that this parking idea is consistent with businesses to the east and west of the subject business. He said parking is a long-standing issue, and that this is one way of addressing and resolving the issue. He said that if the problem is not resolved, the business may have to close and relocate. He said that this is a necessary business for the residents, and that many people are unaware of how important these businesses are and how beneficial they are to the community. He asked the Commissioners to consider what was being asked and the problem they are attempting to resolve.

Commissioner Lundy mentioned that this was before the Board in 2020, and that he feels the petitioner is threatening to leave if the Village does not approve the parking and that it is not a good way to conduct business. He said this is one of the same issues raised before. Commissioner Lundy pointed out that the petitioner was aware that he would have to appear before this board when he purchased the property. The petitioner responded that he did not mean his comments of leaving as a threat. He said that when the business first started out, they were not aware at that time of the parking they would need. He said that as the years passed and patient volume increased, which is a good thing, parking became an issue. He said he believes this is a similar situation along 95th Street. Commissioner Lundy agreed that parking is the most pressing issue for businesses along 95th Street. The petitioner said if this does not work out, he is unsure what the future holds.

Commissioner Lundy asked when this was presented a few years ago, the petitioner did not intend to build out the basement. He asked whether the basement is finished. Mr. Landau responded that storage is available in the basement. Commissioner Lundy asked whether there any personnel working in the basement. Mr. Landau responded that there are chairs and whatnot; Commissioner Lundy asked whether there are any bodies. Mr. Landau replied yes.

Mr. Landau expressed appreciation for the comments. He said he joined the business in January as a Managing Director to mobilize and execute a purposeful organization rather than to just make money. He reiterated that it is purposeful. He said that they do not want to be disruptive and that this is an approach to finding a solution to the ongoing parking problem.

Ms. McKee asked the petitioner how many parking spaces are available in the current lot, as she was informed that employees cannot park there, and then expressed her concern about where the other employees will park. She asked when it will stop if the parking lot is approved. She asked where the other 30 employees will park if there are only 17 parking spaces. Mr. Landau responded that this is the best approach to solve the parking problem. He acknowledged that there is no room for expansion, so

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they can only generate 17 parking spaces or remain in the current environment. He expressed that they are working to improve the environment.

Commissioner Bennett expressed to staff his concern about the street markings and striping that he talked about at a previous meeting. Mr. Guardi responded that the concern had been communicated to the Public Works Department, and that those streets have been included in the Public Works summer striping program.

Ms. Bartlett said that during the prior public hearing for this property, she suggested approximately 20 parking spaces across the street on Melvina, which is public parking. She went on to say that at any time there are no more than two cars parked in that lot and so there are at least 17 parking spaces that are not being used.

*The Public Hearing closed at 8:20 p.m.*

*A motion was made by Commissioner Duhig to deny Pet. #2023-17-Request to rezone from an R-1 (single-family) district to PK (Parking) Zoned District @ 9517 Merrimac Avenue, Patrick J. Woytec, Petitioner, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Adamsheck.*

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

Motion to deny passes: 7-0.

### **VII. ADOPTION OF TEMPORARY RULES FOR CONDUCT OF PUBLIC HEARING IN MATTER #2023-10.**

Commissioner Moriarty explained that the packet includes temporary rules and procedures for public hearings, which consists of specific rules such as people speaking at the podium and a time limit of three minutes per person. He asked the Board to consider adopting these rules for the public hearing.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Duhig to approve the adoption of temporary rules for conduct of public hearing in the matter of #2023-10. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piazza.*

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

Motion passes: 7-0.

### **VIII. AT 8:24 P.M. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING PET #2023-10 – REQUEST FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A COMMUNITY CENTER, SOCIAL GATHERING, TUTORING, WEEKEND SCHOL, FOOD PANTRY, AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM, CHARITABLE CLINIC, CULTURAL EVENTS & INTERFAITH PROGRAMS IN A SINGLE-FAMILY (R-1) ZONED DISTRICT @ 8840 RIDGELAND AVENUE, CHICAGO ISLAMIC CENTER, PETITIONER (THIS MATTER WAS CONTINUED FROM MAY 1, 2023 MEETING IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE PETITIONER TO CORRECT ITS ZONING NOTICE SIGN TO SHOW THE REQUIRED INFORMATION IN MATTER #2023-10.**

Village Attorney Michael Marrs asked that staff confirm that proper notice was given in accordance with the zoning code. Mr. Guardi responded that notice was provided for the surrounding properties within a 300' radius and that the notice was published in the newspaper.

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*Mr. Ghassan Ballut, Founder and Executive Director of Al-Nahda Center, 8018 Nottingham Road, Tinley Park, Illinois*

Mr. Ballut said that he is the founder of the Al-Nahda Center. He said they are an existing business in Oak Lawn at 9741 Southwest Highway, and that they are expanding their services. He said he would like to have some presenters discuss the various services and programs that Al-Nahda Center offers, as well as how the center will impact the Village of Oak Lawn.

*Ms. Nesreen Ballut, Managing & Operating Director of Al-Nahda Center, 212 West Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606*

Ms. Nesreen Ballut said there will be a few presenters throughout the presentation. Nesreen gave an overview of the Al-Nahda Center's history. She said they were established in 2014 and have since become a well-known hub for individuals and families seeking personal and communal development. She said the purpose of opening the center is to provide opportunities for those in need or who need to seek out different resources, regardless of race or religion. Nesreen stated that they want to bring the community together. She said another aspect of the community center is fostering spiritual growth, educational enrichment, which is where their programs come from, and cultural appreciation regardless of one's culture. She then went on to explain their mission. She said they promote unity, understanding, and service regardless of race or religion. She believes they contribute to the well-being of the Oak Lawn community. She mentioned that their southwest center, for example, already does a lot for Oak Lawn. She said the presentation will show programs that are already in place in Oak Lawn. She also stated that they strive to have a community in which diversity is celebrated, knowledge is shared, and compassion thrives, as this is at the root of everything they do and is their bloodline. She stated that they want to ensure that everyone is heard, respected, and appreciated, and that everyone brings their ideas and voices to the table. Nesreen expressed that they want to be a leading center of excellence and establish a legacy of harmony and social responsibility. She introduced the Al-Nahda Center representatives and gave brief bios.

*Ms. Fatema Mirza, Cofounder & Executive Director, Be Well Clinic, 397 Snow Drift Ct., Bartlett, Illinois 60103*

Ms. Mirza explained that the Be Well Clinic is a community health organization. She explained that she began working with Al-Nahda in 2013, and that the organization serves the greater Chicagoland area. Ms. Mirza said that the Be Well Clinic program was established in response to the pandemic need. She said that they began to explore where and what the needs are for the surrounding communities. She said Oak Lawn was an area identified as having a high need. Ms. Mirza said she reached out to Ghassan and asked if she could assist, and that he responded that assistance is desperately needed here. She said that they seek out partnerships, and that with those partnerships, they create programs, and that they are currently operating at an optimal level. She pointed out that the community's need is growing, which is why they are looking forward to fruitful collaborations to help people with their well-being.

*Ms. Najah Habbiiyich, Case Manager, Al-Nahda Center, 10833 S. Nagle Avenue, Worth, Illinois 60482*

Ms. Habbiiyich explained that the food pantry is one of the Al-Nahda Center's programs. She explained that one-tenth of Oak Lawn's residents are living in poverty. She said most of these residents rely on ABT, food stamps, or a food pantry provider. Ms. Habbiiyich reported that since 2019, they have distributed 52,000 pounds of food to 18,000 residents. According to Ms. Habbiiyich, families rely on food pantries, especially since the pandemic. She explained that most of their consumers are



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low-income families and the elderly. She mentioned that Salwa is their flagship program, with the goal of alleviating hardships through job opportunities, education, and counseling, as well as providing and serving those in need. Ms. Habbiiyich said that they track and analyze data on families to see trends. She said they look for signs of mental and/or social stress, and because some people have lost their health insurance, they require resources, including information on how to apply for insurance. She said that the food pantry volunteers then take the information and refer families to the Be Well Clinic for resources, information, and services. Ms. Habbiiyich mentioned that meeting families in the food pantry is where they get most of their food pantry volunteers.

*Ms. Moon Goldstein, 914 West 31<sup>st</sup> Place, Chicago, Illinois*

According to Ms. Goldstein, 17% of Oak Lawn's 57,000 residents are foreign born. She said that Oak Lawn has a rich history of embracing people with diverse backgrounds. Ms. Goldstein commented that Al-Nahda embodies the spirit that Oak Lawn manifests in the community through their monthly sessions. She explained that the monthly sessions are interfaith and intercultural in nature and include educational and networking opportunities for community members to interact with one another. According to Ms. Goldstein, it is a great way for the community's youth and seniors to get involved with each other and really bridge the intergenerational, intercultural, and interfaith gap. Ms. Goldstein stated that she began her career at Al-Nahda as a youth volunteer and that many of her colleagues in her department also began as youth volunteers. Ms. Goldstein discussed the organization's youth programs. She pointed out that youth make up 22% of the Oak Lawn population, which is very exciting for Oak Lawn because investing in more than 20% of the population means that Oak Lawn has a good, formidable future for sustainability. She said that they really encourage giving back to the community and that they use youth volunteers in the food pantry, packaging food for people, handing out food, interacting with community members, and conducting information intake.

Mr. Ballut thanked the audience and stated that the Al-Nahda Center would not be possible without the community's donations and partnerships. He summarized the center's values by reading a few testimonials.

*Ms. Lara Ali Ali, 5601 West 99<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Ali Ali said that she is an Oak Lawn resident, a supporter and volunteer of the Al-Nahda Center and works for an Oak Lawn business. Ms. Ali Ali said she is speaking on behalf of the Al-Nahda Center to demonstrate the dedication that the center's staff provides to the residents of Oak Lawn. According to Ms. Ali Ali, the Al-Nahda Center is a community center for people of all backgrounds. She said every employee, volunteer, and worker were very emotional when sharing when sharing their stories, and she wishes to thank the residents of Oak Lawn for welcoming the Al-Nahda Center back in 2015. She spoke of why Oak Lawn. She explained that Oak Lawn is a welcoming community for the Al-Nahda Center, welcoming to their programs and the community center, and so they wanted to give back to the community, which is why Oak Lawn was chosen.

Commissioner Moriarty referred to comments made during the presentation about the distribution of 52,000 pounds of food and asked about the location of the food pantry. Mr. Ballut responded that most of the distribution came from Worth, but also from their Oak Lawn location. Mr. Ballut said that people came from Oak Lawn, Chicago Ridge, Worth, and other areas to get the benefit of the services. Commissioner Moriarty asked as to whether the actual food pantry is in Worth. Mr. Ballut said that the main location is 9741 Southwest Highway, where the clinic and the main office are located. He said people come into the office and apply for services.

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Commissioner Greene expressed concern for the residents who live nearby. He asked about plans for adjacent residents to maintain privacy in relation to the driveway at the rear of the property. Mr. Ballut said that they had blocked the back area because cars were using it as a shortcut. He said they have temporarily placed posts at that entrance but will permanently close it. Commissioner Greene asked if there are plans to reduce traffic around 87th and Ridgeland and if volunteers will be directing traffic. Mr. Ballut responded 100%, stating that they have over 25-30 volunteers for their food pantry.

Commissioner Lundy said he recalls this board hearing the variation for 9741 Southwest Highway. He said that when the variation was originally granted to the petitioner, he recalled that it was for a pre-school/learning center. He said it appears that use has expanded. Commissioner Lundy expressed concern about traffic. He pointed out that the front parking lot has 170 spaces, and the back lot has 19 spaces. Commissioner Lundy said there are nine (9) requests in one petition and that the parking demand is exceeded once you get to four of the nine requests. He said that much of the information overlaps. Mr. Ballut said that they have over 300 parking spaces that will minimize traffic in the area. Mr. Ballut stated that he has heard from other businesses at his current location that would like him to limit the number of cars, and he believes that having this property will solve the problem. Commissioner Lundy asked about Mr. Ballut's facility at 10555 Southwest Highway in Worth, and whether there are any traffic or parking issues, as well as resident complaints. Mr. Ballut said that they did receive complaints at first, but that the parking issues have since been resolved. Mr. Ballut said that location will not be relocated or closed. He stated that the Worth location is a prayer center, whereas the Oak Lawn request is for a community center. Commissioner Lundy asked whether the community center offers overnight services. Mr. Ballut replied that they do not provide overnight services. Commissioner Lundy mentioned that he drove by the clinic on Southwest Highway earlier this morning and noticed at least 30 cars parked there. Mr. Ballut responded that there is a medical center across the street, and the parking across the street is full, so they are parking 15-20 cars in the Al-Nahda Center's lot. He stated that those vehicles have nothing to do with the center.

Commissioner Moriarty pointed out to Mr. Ballut that in his comments he references 300 parking spaces for the proposed Oak Lawn location. Mr. Ballut said he believes there are over 200 and possibly close to 300 parking spaces. Commissioner Moriarty responded that the paperwork shows that there are only 189 parking spaces.

Commissioner Moriarty then referenced Commissioner Lundy's remarks that some of the nine items in the center's scope of services overlap. He said for example that special holidays show an average of 350 people, while the food pantry shows that 200 families per day could visit the center. He went on to say that there will be 150 people for the interfaith program, and he wondered how you would park all of them with only 189 parking spaces. Mr. Ballut stated that all services are by appointment only. Mr. Ballut clarified and said that every hour, 3-5 people will pick up food from the food pantry; he said that for all these services, including the food pantry and clinic, people do not arrive at the same time. Commissioner Moriarty stated that the petition paperwork indicates that the food pantry is open every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., but the presentation informed us that the food pantry is only open twice a month. He asked whether it would be once a week or twice a month. Mr. Ballut responded that it will be twice a month, every other Wednesday. He said they are currently doing it every other Saturday.

Commissioner Piazza mentioned the time slots provided in the scope of services for 250 people and said that the center will have six hours to service 250 people from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He pointed out that the services show that the food pantry is open every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for 200 families. Mr. Ballut stated that, if necessary, they will schedule for the following day. He stated that typically, 200 people will arrive within a month's span, but that they could also schedule on

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Thursday or Friday but keep the main day on Wednesday. Commissioner Piazza said that he has not seen any renderings of the center and asked the petitioner if he has any. Commissioner Moriarty then mentioned the area at the rear of the property that will be blocked off and asked the petitioner if he had anything to show the neighbors how it will look. Mr. Ballut responded that they do not have anything available right now. He said at the rear of the property there are posts to block access. Mr. Ballut stated that several people approached him and asked about the rear access. He said he understands the residents' concerns and that the residents complained about the access even when it was previously a church. He stated that he has no problem addressing any concerns expressed by residents.

Nesreen added that the important thing is that everyone agrees on this. She said that they want to hear feedback and that residents are welcome to ask any questions.

Commissioner Piazza asked about lighting, security, landscaping, and noise barriers. Mr. Ballut said that there will be a fence for residents near the property, and that he will be adding security cameras and more lighting in the parking lot. Mr. Ballut stated that he wishes for the neighbors to be involved, happy, and safe. He stated that if the neighbors engage him, he will respond. That, he said, is why we are here today. Commissioner Piazza said he is aware that traffic is an issue that must be addressed. Mr. Ballut responded yes.

Commissioner Adamsheck asked about the house on the property. The petitioner replied that the house will be used for clergy and for guest resident(s), and that it will also be an administration office.

Nesreen stated that in terms of parking, they will not have many visitors at the same time. She reminded everyone that the proposed location is an expansion. She explained that there are only a few parking spaces available at the current location, and she thinks everyone assume there will be a car in every spot at the new location. She pointed out that the parking lot at this location is much larger. She said as they continue to grow, it is important to consider a five-year plan. She predicted that perhaps in five years they may require more parking. She stated that she does not believe parking will be a problem in the next five years due to the programs in place. She said the programs are monthly. Nesreen pointed out that their volunteerism revolves around the food pantry. She then said that the Be Well Clinic will have specific hours so that it can be controlled as much as possible and reiterated that she does not anticipate any parking issues.

Commissioner Bennett pointed out that the scope of services show that the Math/Science Tutoring program runs from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mr. Ballut clarified and said the tutoring program is an "after school" program. Nesreen apologized and said the schedule is incorrect and that tutoring is only available after school if there is a need.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether the food for holidays and celebrations is catered or prepared on-site. Mr. Ballut responded that they would cater but that most people go to restaurants or banquet halls and that they do not cook at the center.

Commissioner Bennett mentioned that the paperwork indicates that the children will play basketball twice a month, which he finds hard to believe. He commented that he is only trying to fully understand the schedule. Mr. Ballut responded that the basketball program is intended for teams. He said they are open for basketball from 12 to 5 p.m. Nesreen said that because it is a court within the building, she does not anticipate any problems and does not believe it will affect parking or traffic.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether the health clinic is by appointment only. Mr. Ballut replied yes. Commissioner Bennett asked what would happen if someone arrived without an appointment. Mr. Ballut said that they can see the walk-in if their schedule allows it or if there is a cancellation. Ms.

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Mirza explained there are various levels of patient visits, such as case manager visits, physician visits, and nurse programs. She said it is usually one-on-one, but that all services are by appointment only. Commissioner Bennett asked for clarification that there is no immediate medical care provided. Ms. Mirza responded that there are no immediate care services. She explained that the clinic focuses on health and wellness. She said they do not service immediate care needs. Commissioner Bennett asked as to how much growth they anticipate. Ms. Mirza said it all depends on the needs of the community. She said the more people who are aware of their services, the greater the need. She went on to say that each community has a unique amount of need. She explained that right now, the need is determined by how many people are aware of the clinic. Ms. Mirza said she expects the needs to increase, but she does not know how much; she stated that they constantly perform data analysis on the numbers.

Commissioner Bennett asked about the number of employees. Mr. Ballut responded that they currently have four employees. Commissioner Bennett asked whether a full-service center can be run by four employees. Mr. Ballut responded that they typically rely on volunteers but that they only have four core employees. Commissioner Bennett asked if only four employees are being paid. Mr. Ballut responded that right now there are only four but that there may be a possibility to add on 3 or 4 additional employees. He explained that they intend to engage the community because volunteers are the foundation of the center. Commissioner Bennett asked Mr. Ballut if he is a full-time employee. Mr. Ballut responded yes. Commissioner Bennett then asked Nesreen if she is a full-time employee. Nesreen responded that because she is a Board Member and a relative, so all her work is voluntary. She said that she is the Operations Director. She then explained that the center is a grassroots project, and they hope to get to the point where they can employ others. She reiterated that they hope to hire full-time employees. Commissioner Bennett asked whether anyone other than the four employees received money from the organization.

Mr. Ballut said no unless someone needed assistance. Commissioner Bennett asked how the organization is funded. Mr. Ballut responded with monetary or food pantry donations. Commissioner Bennett asked about government funding. Ms. Mirza responded that they receive charitable clinic funding for clinic work. She said as an example the case manager is paid from this funding. She mentioned that as a component of their AmeriCorps Vista agreement, they have an AmeriCorps Vista Member from North Carolina in town. She mentioned that another Vista will be arriving from Florida to assist them with data analysis. Ms. Mirza then mentioned Nancy Romanchek, a nurse who volunteers at the clinic as part of the clinic's nursing program. She went on to explain how Advocate Aurora was the center's founding practice for the physicians who come out. She expressed that they have an excellent partnership. She explained that she was able to form a free certified clinic for the community through IAFCC (Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics). Ms. Mirza then mentioned Melissa McGuire, an Oak Lawn resident who used to work at Christ Medical Center and collaborated with her on the initiatives for the Be Well Clinic program. She explained that the framework they use is supported by the social services used by both the federal and county governments. She added that the county health ranking model is the framework they use, and that all their data managers are drawn from it. Commissioner Bennett asked if the medical equipment is donated. Ms. Mirza responded yes.

Commissioner Bennett said funding appears to be in place to run the center. Mr. Ballut responded yes. Commissioner Bennett expressed hope that the center will be maintained and not fall into disrepair. He said that he is aware of the Southwest Highway center, and said while he believes it is nice, he also believes it does not look great. He mentioned a tow truck outside on the property. Mr. Ballut stated that there are no tow trucks present. Mr. Ballut explained that that center's parking lot is a community parking lot where everyone parks. He said because it is a public space, he has no authority to tell

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anyone to leave. Mr. Ballut went on to say that the parking lot at the center is overcrowded because everyone parks there. He said that he did request a parking variation, but that the center was only granted two parking spaces. Commissioner Bennett said he hopes the Oak Lawn location will not require any containers. He mentioned the container at the rear of the property on Southwest Highway. Nesreen expressed that the container belongs to someone else and said she is confident the Oak Lawn location will not require a container.

Commissioner Piazza said that there are 96 volunteers and asked as to where they come from. Ms. Mirza asked if he was referring to the Be Well Clinic. Commissioner Piazza said it is outlined in the list of services and programs. Ms. Goldstein explained that the volunteer pool is primarily serviced by people they work with directly in the food pantry, after school programs, and the clinic. She said a large portion of the volunteers are high school students from Oak Lawn and the surrounding areas. She also mentioned that they have older volunteers from the community. According to Ms. Goldstein, the volunteers are mostly from the region's Arab American community. She stated that the volunteers are recruited directly from the community. She said that while volunteers from other areas come in, most of them are from Oak Lawn and the surrounding areas.

Commissioner Duhig commented on the programs, and said the data submitted mentions 250 people on average, and he is attempting to match up the parking because there appears to be a parking problem. Commissioner Duhig expressed that he understands residents' concerns. He then mentioned holidays and said that only three are listed on the submittal but the website lists 11-12. He said the dates would be helpful, and he is concerned about how the parking will accommodate 350 people when there are only 189 parking spaces.

Mr. Ballut stated that they will hold two events per month on average. He reiterated that no one would arrive at the same time. He stated that, while the website lists more holidays, the center only observes two of them in a calendar year. Commissioner Duhig stated that knowing the dates would be helpful. Nesreen commented that the holidays will change from year to year. She also stated that the monthly sessions are for the interfaith programs and that it is a small group of about 50 people. She added that there are other holidays, but that the center only observes two specific Islamic holidays. She pointed out that other holidays are on the calendar but are not celebrated at the center. She mentioned two specific holidays and said those are the holidays observed at the center. For example, she said the next holiday is on June 28th. She said the dates will change each year. Nesreen said that the interfaith comes into play for the monthly sessions, which are smaller groups of approximately 50-75 people at the most. She stated that the monthly sessions include interfaith, community outreach, educational seminars such as resume writing, "do's and don'ts" during interviews, and so on. She stated that attendance is limited.

Commissioner Duhig said according to the paperwork, the average number of people listed in community services, counseling, and youth basketball is 250 people twice a month. He expressed concern that 250 people will be present, which is likely to be the number of cars. Commissioner Duhig said that he knows the residents are concerned about the increased traffic and congestion. He said if you combine some of the services, you can have 500 people on any given day. Nesreen said that they are not currently experiencing any of these concerns and do not anticipate them in the future. She said that because the events they provide are usually attended by families, there are usually four people in each car because most people tend to come to the center with their families. She emphasized that the sessions are attended by families, not individuals. Commissioner Duhig asked if there was a way to determine how many people each program would expect and, more specifically, how many cars.

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Commissioner Moriarty said that the Commissioners were given a sheet of information, but from the questions, he noticed that a lot of information does not match up. He mentioned that he is taking notes, and that almost every item has a small note indicating that it should be corrected more clearly. Commissioner Moriarty said as an example it was stated twice a year for holidays, but the sheet reads five times. Commissioner Moriarty said it comes off as misleading. He then mentioned that basketball is shown as twice a month but now it appears to be more than that; he restated that the information is not very clear.

Mr. Ballut mentioned that there are specific holidays celebrated such as Eid Al-Adha, but that there are other holidays and that most people stay at home on those other holidays. He then mentioned Eid Al-Fitr which is celebrated in Saudi Arabia, but that people remain at home. Commissioner Moriarty stated that he understands, but feels the list is unclear. Nesreen said she agrees and said she wished she had eyes on the paperwork. She said that they will reassess and provide more direct information because she does not want the list to inaccurately reflect the size of the gatherings. She restated that this is very much a grass roots project, and it is difficult to determine, but that she knows it will not reach the level that is listed, and she wants to provide the right information.

Commissioner Adamsheck asked if this is a Worship Center and if there is traffic like the traffic that comes out of Bridgeview. Nesreen responded that the sole purpose of this center is that it is an expansion. She stated that it is not a place of worship. She then said that this is solely a community center for the purpose of giving back to the community. She stated that there are no plans to convert this into an Islamic center or place of worship in the near future.

Commissioner Lundy explained to the petitioner the role of the Zoning Commission. He said when this Board changes something or grants a special use, it stays with the property forever. He said he still has a problem with the 9741 Southwest Highway location because he is 99% certain that it was supposed to start out as a school. He asked if they needed to go get any other permits to make it a community center. He expressed that he is somewhat lost in the special use permit for that property. Mr. Ballut responded that his application was for a cultural center, with educational and teaching components. He said it is not a school per se, but rather an educational and cultural center for teaching language and culture. Commissioner Lundy said that is what is misunderstood, and said he thought for sure that it was for an educational facility. He expressed that this is the problem, when something is changed, and the use is not followed through. Mr. Ballut responded that every year when he applies for the license, he writes cultural and educational center.

Commissioner Bennett asked whether they had any facilities in the city. Nesreen responded that they do not.

*Ms. Joann Majewski, 9208 S. Nashville, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Majewski asked as to whether additional buildings would be constructed. No, said the petitioner. Ms. Majewski then asked if the existing building will be renovated to meet the needs of the center. Yes, said the petitioner. Ms. Majewski then asked about the special permit process and whether a special use permit covers a charitable clinic and a food pantry. Commissioner Moriarty explained that the petitioner submitted a list of uses for the special use permits. Mr. McKenna agreed and said all the uses are individually listed. Commissioner Moriarty then said that the petitioner will need to clarify the list and scope of services, but that each item listed will require a special use permit. Ms. Majewski asked whether the owner was required to conduct a traffic impact study. Commissioner Moriarty responded that a traffic study might be requested. Ms. Majewski asked whether it was the Commission's decision to request that. Commissioner Moriarty responded that given the discussion he believes it will reach that point to request a traffic study. He mentioned some of the concerns, such as

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how renderings of what the center will look like will be important for the area residents to see, as well as information about the fence and whether it will be a pylon fence or another type of fence. Commissioner Moriarty explained that in many of the petitions that are presented to the board, recommendations for a traffic study are made, and he reiterated that the list for the center needs to be corrected. Ms. Majewski asked if the back entrance will be closed permanently, not just during construction or rehab. Mr. Ballut replied that if that is the recommendation, they will comply. Ms. Majewski asked whether the closure would be permanent. Commissioner Moriarty responded that the petitioner has not yet stated their intentions. Ms. Majewski asked if any concept plans had been presented to the board. Commissioner Moriarty said no, but that it would be addressed tonight.

*Mr. Tim Pender, 9221 S, Crescent Ct., Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Mr. Pender asked if the Special Use Permit is approved if the petitioner would have to stick to the plans or if they could change the plans after receiving the zoning change. Commissioner Moriarty said approvals with conditions are possible. He said that this has been done in the past and that a Special Use can be dependent on its conditions, and that after hearing the community's concerns, conditions can be added. Mr. Pender asked again whether the petitioner could change their plans. Commissioner Moriarty responded that they would have to return to the board to make a change.

*Ms. Laura Zelaya, 6457 West 88<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Zelaya said that she heard tonight that the house in the front of the property will be for administrative personnel, but the house is listed "For Rent", and she is wondering why they gave different information. She said her other question is whether they will block the entrance into the neighborhood; she said she heard it will be used for emergencies, but she is wondering if it will be permanently closed. Mr. Ballut said closing the back area is important, as is completely blocking it. He said that if the Village or the neighbors see something different, they will go along with it, but that completely blocking that access will help the center a lot. Mr. Ballut explained that he does not want the cut through traffic and said he is concerned about safety. He then explained the "For Rent" sign, saying that when the property was put up for sale, the house had a "For Rent" sign on it. He stated that it has since been removed from the list and that they do not intend to rent it because it will be used for clergy, guests, and as an administrative office. Commissioner Moriarty asked whether anyone will be residing there. Mr. Ballut responded clergy and out-of-town visitors. Commissioner Adamsheck questioned why clergy would live on the property if the center were not a place of worship. Mr. Ballut said that the clergy are on site for religious studies and classes, but not for prayer service. He reiterated that the clergy are only there for classes.

*Ms. Cindy Lally, 6460 West 88<sup>th</sup> Place, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Lally said that there are currently temporary poles blocking off the back and then said drivers have driven on the side lot with their cars and do donuts, which is dangerous. She said she has lived at her residence for 33 years and that there were once concrete blocks up that prevented cars from parking on the side lot. Ms. Lally asked what will be added to the side lot. Mr. Ballut asked Ms. Lally if she was referring to the grass area. He said he can see cars going there, and so they will completely block it.

*Ms. Nancy Born, 6455 West 88<sup>th</sup> Place, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Born said that everyone is talking about traffic, and she feels that that there will be a lot of people walking to the center. She said it was mentioned that the community center will have a clinic and asked if they are going to be a rehab center. She asked if addicts would be given free medication. She asked if they would turn addicts away even though it was mentioned that they will welcome

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everyone. Ms. Mirza explained to Ms. Born that the free clinic is run through collaborative partnerships and is based on the community's needs of which they are responding to. Ms. Born responded that there is a lot of addiction. Ms. Mirza responded that they have spotted substance abuse but do not have studies on that; she explained that studies are in the works. She went on to say that on a quarterly basis they analyze data to determine the type of patients and their needs. She said as an example, Nancy Romanchek runs the center's nurse programs and they observed smoke shops in this area. She said as a result, Nancy is implementing smoking cessation programs. She stated that they counsel them one on one. Ms. Born responded that she is concerned about people with addiction coming into the community, not kids vaping. She expressed concern for all the houses surrounding the property. Ms. Mirza responded that the center's clinic is not a substance abuse facility. Ms. Born then said, "You say you are not, but you also say you do not turn people away". Ms. Mirza agreed and explained that because it is a free clinic, they are limited in what they can do. She explained that they use community asset maps to direct people to specific locations where they can get assistance. She explained that running a substance abuse program is difficult and requires a lot of technical assistance. Ms. Mirza said volunteers are not equipped to do that. She explained that most of the programs are run by volunteers and that they cannot put volunteers in that type of situation. She said there are experts in the community funded by the government and by the healthcare industry, so the clinic primarily provides referrals to those places.

Ms. Born talked about the center's volunteers. Ms. Born said while it is assumed that the volunteers are qualified to be counseling or there are nurses volunteering their services, she asked who monitors that? The Village Attorney responded that the Village of Oak Lawn does not license medical professionals. He explained that medical use is regulated by the state. He asked that the petitioner address some of their employees' qualifications. Ms. Mirza reiterated that the residency program is run by Advocate physicians. Ms. Born then told Ms. Mirza that she is saying that, but she has no way of knowing whether it is true. Mr. Ballut stated that anyone is welcome to visit the clinic and speak with a doctor or a nurse who are professionals who conduct their business and have the necessary certification. He stated that these are licensed professionals who work at the center as part of a partnership. He stated once more that Advocate sends doctors and nurses to the clinic.

Ms. Ali Ali commented that she hears the concerns. She stated that she is a longtime resident of Oak Lawn raising her family here. She said every concern that everyone has today was once a concern of hers. She said she understands because this is her town and her family lives here. Ms. Ali Ali said all the concerns about this petition make sense. She said the programs that are being presented include the Be Well Clinic and that clinic has a partnership with Aurora Advocate and that all the licensing is in place. She said it is not a program run by the center, rather it is a program because of the partnership between Aurora Advocate and the Al-Nahda Community Center. Ms. Born asked if the partnership is volunteer based. Ms. Ali Ali responded that Aurora Advocate is like any organization that gives back to the community. She said other examples of organizations that give back to the community are Walgreens, CVS, and banks. She said the Al-Nahda center like many other centers partner up with those organizations that give back to the community. Ms. Ali Ali then said that the Al-Nahda center can provide the contracts or program agreement with Aurora Advocate to help any resident alleviate this area of concern.

*Nancy Romanchek, 51 Cambridge Lane, Lincolnshire, Illinois*

Ms. Romanchek introduced herself, stating that she is a convert to the faith and is an American Islamic. She said she believes some of the issues are because of information not translating well and some information is being missed. Ms. Romanchek described herself as a Professor of Community Health and Population with a specialization in nursing care, which she also teaches. She said that she



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comes to the clinic with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She said she is paid by the university and that she supervises the students directly. She said the process is the same for Aurora Advocate. She said for Aurora Advocate, the fellow is always present and that they supervise the medical students. She said the medical students are never alone. She said medical students are not even permitted to touch the electronic medical records. According to Ms. Romanchek, the Be Well Clinic is a chronic care clinic that treats people with chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. She said that they work with people who do not have health insurance and that if the uninsured did not come to the clinic, they would be in the ER, burdening the cost and leading to extra challenges.

Commissioner Moriarty asked whether the Be Well Clinic provides on-site care. Ms. Romanchek responded that they only manage chronic conditions as a chronic care center. She said that if a patient came to the clinic with a fracture, they do not have Xray equipment and must refer them to the emergency room. She said that if someone arrives at the clinic short of breath or with an urgent need, they must call an ambulance. She said the clinic does not provide emergency care. She reiterated that they manage people with hypertension, diabetes, etc. She said that they occasionally receive children who require school physicals and if the children qualify for insurance, they can provide the physical on site. She said sometimes people qualify for insurance, but they just do not know how to navigate the process. She reported that 17-22% immigrants qualify but do not know how to navigate the insurance process. She said they help people translate and get them in the system. Ms. Romanchek said she makes the hour drive every week because she wants to work with this population.

Commissioner Lundy said that he is aware that people experience chronic stress during the night, so he asked what would happen if someone arrived at midnight. Ms. Romanchek responded that they only take clinic appointments. She said that one of the main reasons they schedule appointments is to learn about the patients' financial circumstances. She said that they work with many people in poverty. She did say that they almost always have a walk-in or two, and that if someone shows up, they let them know they are full. She stated that they make every effort to fit a patient in and then ask them to wait or reschedule for the following week. Commissioner Lundy expressed that he understands, but he would like to know if there will be overnight services and if there will be set hours. He asked what would happen if someone arrived in the middle of the night. Ms. Romanchek stated again that they are not an urgent care facility. Commissioner Lundy clarified and asked if there are any staff available overnight. Mr. Ballut responded no.

*Ms. Amy Bush, 6434 West 88<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Ms. Bush asked the Commissioners what information needs to be provided to the Committee to warrant the need for a change in zoning. She said she heard in the presentation that 57,000 pounds of food were distributed and asked how many of those people are Oak Lawn residents. She said she heard in the presentation that 10% or 12% of the population lives in poverty. She expressed that is quite good given that over 40% of the US population lives in poverty. She asked the Commissioners what data has been given to prove that there is a need for these changes. She asked if any information was provided. Commissioner Moriarty explained that the petitioner presented information after he purchased the property and has the right to request this type of variance. Ms. Bush asked if the Village needed to know there was a need for this or if they just wanted to do it. Commissioner Moriarty explained that the petitioner is petitioning the board to obtain special use permits for the property they purchased, and that they have the right to do so, which is why we are here tonight to hear their petition. Ms. Bush then asked whether Oak Lawn had any requirements to obtain the permit. The Village attorney explained that there are a set of standards for when a special use is requested, and that is what the Commission and the Board of Trustees look at; he said need is not a requirement, and it is up to the individual property owner to determine whether there is need for that service or retail good,

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much like a business. He stated that we are considering whether the use will be detrimental or endanger the public health, safety, or general welfare of the community; whether it will be harmful to the properties or diminish property values; whether it will impede development of the surrounding properties for other uses; are the utilities provided with access roads; is the coming and going designed to minimize traffic congestion; and does it comply with the village's zoning requirements?

Ms. Bush pointed out the zoning currently is residential. Yes, the Village Attorney responded, the current zoning is residential. Ms. Bush then asked if she could request the same zoning provisions as a homeowner. "That you want to run a community center?" asked the Village attorney. "Sure, why not," Ms. Bush responded. She went on to say that Oak Lawn already has seven community centers, thirteen daycares, forty-three clinics, and seven food pantries. None of those, she claims, are in residential areas, but this one is. She mentioned the busy Jewel store across the street, which is open until midnight every night. She asked what will the traffic flow be?

Commissioner Lundy told Ms. Bush that she is making valid points, but that this was a private transaction between the Archdiocese and the petitioner. He said that private sales have nothing to do with the Village of Oak Lawn. Ms. Bush said the paperwork provided by the petitioner does not match the intent discussed here today. She said at some point, we must determine whether the paperwork matches the intent and whether the safety of the surrounding residential area can support this.

Ms. Ali Ali thanked everyone again for their concerns. She said the concerns are valid. She acknowledged that she heard the presentation and that she will bring the concerns back to the center and request that they provide better facts and numbers. She apologized because, as a volunteer and supporter, she understands that there is a lot of work that needs to be done to work the numbers to support the facts. She then stated that the Manager, Director, and Founder has work to do around those numbers to address everyone's concerns. She told the residents that their concerns were also her concerns. She said that if she was in the resident's seat, she would ask the same questions. Ms. Ali Ali then said the most important thing is that the Founder of Al-Nahda is willing to work to address every concern raised. She said that Al-Nahda's intention is to be in the community to serve the community and not to be a burden to the community.

*Mr. Warren Walls, 6419 West 88<sup>th</sup> Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453*

Mr. Walls commented on a recent incident in which vehicles parked in front of his house. He said four gentlemen got out of their car and walked around the block, cutting through driveways, and then got back in their car and pulled into the rectory/church. He said he confronted the gentleman and asked if anything was wrong and if they needed anything, to which they replied that they were "guests." He was curious as to who had access to the center. He said there is constant traffic coming and going. He is worried about "guests" showing up at all hours of the day and night. He mentioned that the cars arriving have out-of-state license plates. He referred to the gentlemen walking through the neighborhood and said that he is concerned about safety and access. He also commented that there is a lot of work being done at the property.

Commissioner Moriarty said that based on the discussion among the board and the audience, he believes that additional work is required. He said he currently has three items on his list that should be address before moving forward, 1) Traffic Study; 2) The scope of services must be amended/updated/accurate, and 3) A rendering that includes landscaping and how the building will look so the neighbors can see a visual of the front and rear of the property. He expressed that this would go a long way. He also mentioned that the rendering should include signage. He said it would be ideal if the neighbors could see the locations of the food pantry, clinic, etc., on the rendering so that they are aware of the proximity to the residential area and traffic, among other things. The Village

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Attorney asked to include the stacking of cars for the food pantry to show how the cars will be arranged and where the volunteers will be located.

Nesreen stated that they will make certain that they have everything. She said that they will take all the programs and make them clearer. Commissioner Moriarty said he believes that signage will be beneficial. He said for example, to show the food pantry's entrance and exit, as well as the flow of traffic. He said he feels we need this information to move forward.

Commissioner Adamsheck asked whether anyone was working at the property. Mr. Ballut replied that no one works there. He then mentioned that some volunteers were changing the lights. The audience then commented that there are always cars and workers there. Mr. Ballut replied that they have only been cleaning up. Commissioner Adamsheck asked Don about the possibility of doing work on the property at this time. Mr. McKenna responded that no permits have been pulled but that some work can be done without permits.

Nesreen said as a reminder, that the location was previously a school and church, and there is so much in the building that needs to be taken care of; she said a lot of equipment, books, and materials are still on the site. She said there is a lot of work that needs to be done internally, which is why they are at the property. Nesreen said as far as remodeling, they are still looking for the community's support to provide an opportunity to improve internally. Nesreen said she invites all residents to tour the property and contribute to the community center, which serves as a hub and is a community center for all of Oak Lawn.

*A motion was made by Commissioner Moriarty to continue the public hearing to July 17, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adamsheck.*

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

Motion passes: 7-0.

**IX. PET. #2023-16 – REQUEST TO AMEND SECTION 4-3-3B OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE PERTAINING TO THE EXTERIOR WALL CONSTRUCTION, VILLAGE OF OAK LAWN, PETITIONER**

Mr. McKenna explained that this is an existing Ordinance that staff is looking to amend. He explained that this Ordinance was clearly written by an attorney. He then commented that after sitting down and trying to change it, he believes it is probably the best way it could be written. He stated that this Code is primarily concerned with commercial properties, which include all properties other than single-family and two-family dwellings. He pointed out that it is only dealing with the exterior walls as we do not want exposed concrete, cinderblock, wood sheet metal, brick veneer, or frame construction. He stated that when he mentions frame construction, we do not want wood or metal frame construction. In other words, Mr. McKenna stated, "Think of a typical house with brick veneer and a wood frame; we do not want that in our commercial construction."

Mr. McKenna said we are essentially saying that we want brick and block, as well as other material such as glass, steel columns, and precast concrete. He said there is an exception in which we allow split face block. He stated that recently, there have been many requests, and one of the things we are amending is to prohibit horizontal lap siding, as well as to include a statement that we will allow an appeal to this code. Mr. McKenna stated that it is important to remember that the variations should be about hardship. He mentioned two recent businesses that came before this Board, Napleton and the

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Cadillac dealer. He stated that both petitioners were presenting existing buildings of which they were replacing existing frame construction. He explained that some of the frame construction was above some glass work, which gets outrageous with the cost, which is the hardship. Mr. McKenna said we want to be able to inform some of the businesses that we are open to a variation if it is acceptable, but we do not want to change this completely.

Mr. McKenna stated that, to the best of his recollection, he has been here 37 years and believes that this Ordinance dates back before we had the BOCA building codes, when the community saw frame or masonry construction as the best way to create fire safety. He stated that today, buildings can be built that are both fire safe and structurally sound without the use of masonry. He went on to say that this code is not a structural issue. He explained that we can construct any type of structure without using brick or block and still be fire safe and aesthetically pleasing. He believes the point is to keep the riff raff out. For example, he stated that we do not want a wooden shack on 95th Street. He believes that the Ordinance keeps the riff raff at bay. He claims that larger businesses that want to move into Oak Lawn will not “bat an eye”. He recalled that the board recently denied the Panda Express on 87th Street and Cicero and the next day Panda had plans for brick and block construction on his desk. Mr. McKenna indicated that we are only slightly changing the language to specify no horizontal lap siding and to include the phrase "open to appeal." Commissioner Moriarty ask if this applies to existing or new businesses. According to Mr. McKenna, any business can make their case. Mr. McKenna stated, "We're not saying they'll get it; we're saying show us your hardship and why we should grant you this variation."

Commissioner Lundy asked about the material percentage. Mr. McKenna said that there is no percentage listed. He said the idea was discussed but that it is difficult to carry out. He said the residential code requires 50% masonry, but then does not specify is it at the top or bottom? Is it in the front or back? How do you decide what that is? He said we looked at it and let's say we said 50% masonry; he mentioned the Dunkin' Donuts across the street and said they have a little bit of stone, brick, composite, and it's all modular and he asked, how do you write a code for that? He expressed that the code is written as well as it can be written.

Commissioner Piazza asked what other municipalities, such as LaGrange and Orland, do. According to Mr. McKenna, there is a little bit of everything. He stated that he spoke with the code official for Orland, who was previously the code official for Tinley Park, and that he was less concerned about the masonry and more concerned about the fire-resistant aspect of it. He said for example if a structure is close to the lot line, it will need a one-hour fire rating. He stated that most of that type of information is already in our code, but that he went a step further and required additional sprinkler requirements. Mr. McKenna stated that we have that in our code. He stated that our building code is stricter than that of Orland Park. That is not what this code does, according to Mr. McKenna. According to him, this code keeps the riff raff out. He stated that if someone has a better idea, he is willing to consider it. He stated that he worked with Trustee Desmond and our staff, and that there is no simple solution. He stated that there is always a catch in saying 50% masonry or opening it up to a certain amount of something else. He said this amended code is what staff came up with without making drastic changes. He said, “make your pitch” if you have something that does not comply but is still attractive and fire safe. Commissioner Bennett commented that there are so many different products out there. Mr. McKenna commented that we still look to the building code for fire safety and structural soundness, but this is not the case. He said this code does not add or subtract from it; this is a separate issue. It is purely aesthetic. He mentioned that at one time we had an Appearance board but that went away. He said Appearance boards can be difficult, as it is subjective, and if you do not have it in your ordinance, you are opening yourselves to lawsuits.

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*A motion was made by Commissioner Greene to approve Pet. #2023-16 Request to amend Section 4-3-3B of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the exterior wall construction, Village of Oak Lawn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Piazza*

Roll call: Adamscheck, yes; Bennett, yes; Duhig, yes; Greene, yes; Lundy, yes; Moriarty, yes; Piazza, yes.

Motion passes: 7-0.

### **X. OTHER BUSINESS:**

A.) Chairman: *None.*

B.) Members: *None.*

C.) Staff: *None.*

### **XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

*A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Adamscheck and second by Commissioner Bennett.*

Voice vote: All in favor, aye.

Motion to adjourn passes.

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 p.m.