

**MINUTES
VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
PLAN COMMISSION
MAY 8, 2013
MEMORIAL HALL
7:30 P.M.**

Chairman Byrnes called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 8, 2013 in Memorial Hall, the Memorial Building, 19 East Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale, Illinois.

PRESENT: Chairman Byrnes, Commissioner Crnovich, Commissioner Stifflear, Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner McMahon and Commissioner Brody

ABSENT: Commissioner Sullins, Commissioner Cashman and Commissioner Nelson

ALSO PRESENT: Robert McGinnis, Director of Community Development/Building Commissioner, Lance Malina, Village Attorney and Sean Gascoigne, Village Planner

Chairman Byrnes opened the meeting and took a moment to acknowledge that this was the last meeting for Commissioner Brody. He thanked him for his commitment and participation and wished him well.

Commissioner Brody thanked the Commission and expressed his appreciativeness for the experience.

Approval of Minutes

The Plan Commission reviewed the minutes from the April 10, 2013 meeting. Commissioner McMahon motioned to approve the minutes of April 10, 2013. Commissioner Crnovich seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Findings and Recommendations

26-32 E. First Street – Garfield Crossing – Site Plan/Exterior Appearance Approval for a New Two-Story Development with a Surface Parking Lot.

Chairman Byrnes provided a brief summary of the discussion that took place on this agenda item at the last Plan Commission meeting and highlighted the findings and recommendations that were included based on these discussions. The Commission discussed changes to the findings as it related to the language regarding the potential for an alley, the responsibilities of the electrical service and the signage on the second floor. Commissioner Stifflear motioned to approve the findings and recommendations for 26-32 E. First Street – Garfield Crossing – Site Plan/Exterior Appearance Approval for a New Two-Story Development with a Surface Parking Lot, as amended. Commissioner Brody seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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30 S. Lincoln – Site Plan/Exterior Appearance Approval for Façade Improvements.

Chairman Byrnes provided a brief summary of the discussion that took place on this agenda item at the last Plan Commission meeting and highlighted the findings and recommendations that were included based on these discussions. Commissioner McMahon motioned to approve the findings and recommendations for 30 S. Lincoln – Site Plan/Exterior Appearance Approval for Façade Improvements. Commissioner Crnovich seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Exterior Appearance/Site Plan Review

12 Salt Creek – Site Plan/Exterior Appearance Approval for Exterior Modifications and Façade Improvements.

John George, attorney for the applicant, introduced himself and summarized the request which included various improvements to the façade, as well as parking lot improvements.

Steve Saunders, project architect, introduced himself and summarized the proposal. He discussed several of the major changes proposed which included enclosing the entrance, increasing the amount of landscaping and increasing the size of the existing parking spaces to make them code compliant.

Mike Tripetti, landscape architect, presented the landscape improvements proposed. He acknowledged the substantial amount of existing vegetation due to the lot's location, but identified where the property could use some improvement and what they were proposing to do that.

Mr. Saunders offered some final thoughts regarding the improvements and welcomed any questions.

Commissioner Brody clarified that the third floor cantilevered, creating an element of overhang.

Mr. Saunders confirmed this and indicated that they would in fact be cantilevering the third floor, while offsetting the floor area by removing portions of the second floor directly below the overhang.

Chairman Byrnes questioned how the parking lot improvements would affect the parking counts.

Mr. Saunders indicated that the requirement was 204 spaces and they currently had 192 non-conforming spots. He then stated that the proposed changes would result in 204 code compliant spaces and increase the number of handicap spaces.

Commissioner Stifflear identified some concerns regarding parking lot landscaping and asked if the applicant had availability for additional parking spaces to offset the potential for parking lot islands.

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Mr. Saunders indicated that while they did, they were hoping that given the number of mature trees and extensive vegetation surrounding the parking lot, plus the new peninsula running through the middle of the lot, that would satisfy any concerns the Commission may have had regarding the parking lot landscaping.

General discussion ensued regarding the existing vegetation and the Commission agreed that they were comfortable with not requiring additional landscaping islands due to the extensive number of trees and existing landscaping already on the property.

Chairman Byrnes requested some additional clarification regarding the drive aisle.

Commissioner Crnovich motioned for Site Plan Approval for Exterior Modifications and Façade Improvements at 12 Salt Creek Lane. Commissioner Johnson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stifflear suggested that the Findings and Recommendations document that the Commission's comfort with not requiring additional parking lot islands, was due to the extensive landscaping and the number of trees existing within and around the site already.

Commissioner Johnson motioned for Exterior Appearance Approval for Exterior Modifications and Façade Improvements at 12 Salt Creek Lane. Commissioner Brody seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

A-04-2013 – 302 S. Grant Street – Hinsdale Historical Society – Amendment to Special Use Ordinance (Transcript of the following Public Hearing on file).

Chairman Byrnes introduced the case and summarized the request. He indicated that the request was specifically to amend the existing Special Use and was not related to site plan or exterior appearance issues. He then opened the public hearing and suggested that anyone intending to comment, be sworn in at this time.

Cindy Klima, President of the Hinsdale Historical Society, introduced herself and summarized the request which included amending the existing Special Use for Immanuel Hall. She indicated that this request was a result of direction from the Village and that they were not looking to intensify the existing uses currently in practice. She then went on to further summarize their request and explain the need for the amendment.

Chairman Byrnes requested that the applicant clarify how they intended to amend the request and then welcomed comments from the public.

Jane Coyne introduced herself and expressed her support for the request. She summarized some of the financial obligations of the Society and how the amendment would allow them to continue using the hall as they always have to support those costs.

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Mark Alder introduced himself and expressed some of the concerns of the neighbors, including certain areas where he felt there were specific conflicts with the Special Use standards such as the adverse impact to the neighbors.

Jan Grisemer stated her support for the proposal. She identified several points for the Commission to consider, which she believed garnered support for the request.

Maria Banks and Maria Baksay, both spoke in opposition to the request stating several reasons why they felt the application should not be approved.

Frank Gonzalez introduced himself and asked for clarification regarding the language and what exactly was changing.

Chairman Byrnes summarized the list of existing uses and some examples of the functions held over the past couple of years. He indicated that the only item he identified on the list of activities currently taking place that he didn't see in the ordinance was weddings, and there had only been three.

Commissioner Stifflear requested some clarification on the history of Immanuel Hall and the Historical Society. He clarified his thoughts and his understanding of the existing allowances, based on the history of events.

General discussion ensued amongst the Commission regarding the history of Immanuel Hall, as well as other zoning requests the Hall had received approval for.

Karen Lopez introduced herself and identified herself as a member of the Historical Society's Board. She offered her support for the request and indicated that her family lives in a different area of Hinsdale, but deals with what she felt were comparable conditions and didn't understand why the Historical Society was being held to greater restrictions.

Ms. Banks offered additional thoughts regarding why she did not feel they were comparable situations.

Tom and Ann Smith introduced themselves. They provided several examples of positive aspects of Immanuel Hall and also identified what their concerns were regarding the existing request. Ms. Smith explained some of the history and indicated that while the Society feels that nothing is changing, the proposed language does not reflect that.

Discussion ensued regarding the Robert Crown event and the Smith's offered their thoughts on the event. She went on to say that while they don't necessarily take issue with many of the Society's events, they have real concerns regarding the elimination of pertinent language that currently exists regarding the frequency of events. Ms. Smith explained that they have always supported Immanuel Hall's uses and ancillary impacts, but has serious concerns now that the language being proposed is so broad.

Lance Malina, Village Attorney, offered a legal position and case law on the interpretation of specific areas within the agreement that posed some confusion amongst the Commission and neighbors relating to an agreement between Immanuel Hall and an individual neighbor.

Barb Thayer introduced herself and summarized the Robert Crown event. She expressed the several benefits that the event provided for Hinsdale and explained that it would be a shame if they were not able to use the Hall for this function in the future.

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Doug Bemiss introduced himself and expressed his opposition to the proposed changes and cited several examples of why he didn't feel the request was appropriate. He indicated that when they built their house, Immanuel Hall was only a construction site and they weren't aware of the uses. He suggested that the uses being held there were not in keeping with the documents filed with several various agencies.

Chairman Byrnes informed Mr. Bemiss that all of the uses he is providing were all in place and had already been approved at the time they moved in.

Mr. Malina suggested that the construction Mr. Bemiss was referring to was for an addition, but the ordinance and the uses precede that by several years. He then stated that while he can't speak to whether the Society is holding uses inconsistent to those in the ordinance, he can say that the uses being held at Immanuel Hall are consistent with those generally operated by a not-for-profit with tax exempt status.

General discussion ensued regarding the types of uses and the frequency.

Mr. Alder re-approached and expressed some additional concerns in response to the comments made by the representative of Robert Crown.

Randi Bemiss introduced herself and offered her thoughts regarding the requested proposal. She suggested that the frequency of the events actually being hosted by the Hall were not as presented and that much of the information they had retrieved, had been kept from them. She continued to summarize much of the information she was able to obtain generally regarding historical preservation and accessibility.

Chairman Byrnes clarified the Commission's purview and explained that many of her comments were relevant to site plan review and their only function tonight was for the uses.

Mr. Malina further explained why it was not the Plan Commission's responsibility to enforce or discuss many of the suggested issues Ms. Bemiss was referencing.

Ms. Bemiss continued her presentation summarizing her findings and suggested involvement of specific Village officials.

Commissioner Stifflear suggested that the applicant not use this opportunity to make the volunteers of the community scapegoats and asked if she could please limit her comments to issues related specifically to the uses.

Ms. Bemiss requested to continue her presentation and general discussion ensued regarding the relevance of the information being presented and the request before the Commission. Certain Commissioners cautioned Ms. Bemiss against making mischaracterizations and debating personal issues.

Ms. Bemiss continued her presentation and provided the Commission additional documentation she had obtained.

Commissioner Stifflear asked Ms. Klima to respond to some of the claims that the Society's functions would have an adverse impact on the neighborhood.

Ms. Klima reiterated that they were not looking to intensify the existing uses, only to continue operating as they have for the past 12 years.

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General discussion ensued regarding the clarification of the proposed language and the frequency of the scheduled events.

Commissioner Brody expressed some concerns with wedding receptions and general discussion ensued regarding the frequency of larger events.

Ms. Smith expressed the desire to protect the neighbor's interests and concerns with the ambiguity of the language and suggested that while the current board may be well intentioned, future boards may not.

General discussion ensued regarding the existing traffic and parking situations in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Stifflear questioned potential implications with closing the public hearing and Mr. Malina suggested keeping the hearing open due to the number of uncertainties.

General discussion ensued amongst the Commission, which identified both public benefits of the site as well as concerns regarding the ambiguity of the proposed changes to the language for the proposed uses.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she believed the Society provided a very inherent value to the community and although she felt the language as proposed was too general, the Commission needed to work with them on language to afford them the opportunity to be a viable organization. She then suggested taking the existing allowances, adding the additional uses to them and coming to an agreement with the neighbors.

Chairman Byrnes expressed his thoughts and general discussion ensued how to best accomplish the goals of the Historical Society while being sensitive to the concerns of the neighbors.

Certain Commissioners agreed that time was not necessarily of the essence and Commissioner Stifflear suggested that they could ask the Board to extend the temporary use to get it done correctly.

Mr. Malina provided suggestions to consider that may accomplish the goals and desires of both the Commission and the neighbors, which included oversight on all non-Society sponsored events and a special Board approval for events that would exceed the maximum allowance for the building's capacity.

General discussion continued regarding suggested considerations to be taken when working to establish any changes to the existing language and/or uses in the ordinance. The Commission generally agreed that the language and uses should not be as broad as it currently was proposed, but at the same time shouldn't be so onerous and restrictive that it provided the applicant no flexibility to maintain a viable organization.

Commissioner Crnovich provided some additional thoughts regarding her experiences with living across the street from a property in the Institutional Buildings District. She suggested how the parking may be handled as well implementing a plan for frequency. She offered some final thoughts and hoped the two sides could work together to find a compromise.

Ms. Lopez indicated that they have a parking contract with Zion to manage the parking issues for large events.

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General discussion ensued regarding how the current language could potentially be changed to include special events, which the Commission agreed was the only use not currently addressed in the ordinance, as well as frequency.

Mr. Malina made some additional suggestions based on the Commissions conversation.

Amy Haybek offered some thoughts regarding how to potentially address some of the concerns brought forward.

General discussion continued regarding potential language.

Maria Banks presented some final thoughts regarding the Commission's discussion points.

Other residents also offered final thoughts and suggested taking some time to develop language.

Commissioner Stifflear suggested that a subcommittee be formed with a Plan Commission member, a Historical Society member a resident to discuss and present at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Brody made a motion to continue case A-04-2013 – 302 S. Grant Street – Hinsdale Historical Society – Amendment to Special Use Ordinance, to the June 12th, 2013 meeting.

Commissioner Crnovich Seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Commissioner Brody moved to adjourn. Commissioner Crnovich seconded and the meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m. on May 8, 2013.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sean Gascoigne
Village Planner