

Approved
Cashman / Crnovich

**MINUTES
VILLAGE OF HINSDALE
PLAN COMMISSION
October 14, 2015
MEMORIAL HALL
7:30 P.M.**

Chairman Byrnes called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, October 14, 2015 in Memorial Hall, the Memorial Building, 19 East Chicago Avenue, Hinsdale, Illinois.

PRESENT: Chairman Byrnes, Commissioner Crnovich, Commissioner Ryan and Commissioner Fiascone, Commissioner Krillenberger, Commissioner Cashman, Commissioner Unell and Commissioner McMahan

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Chan Yu, Village Planner
Applicant Representatives for Cases: A-21-2015, A-33-2015, A-30-2015
and A-26-2015

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Byrnes asked the Plan Commission (PC) to review the minutes and for any comments from the September 9, 2015 meeting. With no comments, Chairman Byrnes asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Fiascone motioned and Commissioner Cashman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Permit Review

Case A-21-2015 – 54 S. Washington – Luxxe Organix – Sign Color Revisions

Chairman Byrnes welcomed back Luxxe Organix and asked the applicant to please review the revised color scheme.

Jennifer Del Giudice introduced herself and highlighted some of the services and retail offered at her new business. She next asked the PC for any comments in regards to the two (2) sign revisions. Ms. Giudice explained that they made the signs a few shades darker. She then reiterated the importance of the sign on the turret.

Commissioner Ryan asked to clarify, if the background color was more beige and the fonts changed from black to blue.

Ms. Giudice replied yes. She also added it looks classier, nice against the building, and that her landlord is happy.

Commissioner Ryan commented that she likes it better.

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Chairman Byrnes asked if the sign has increased in size.

Ms. Giudice replied yes, and referenced feedback from friends that it was not visible. For this reason, the proposed sign has increased in size.

Commissioner Ryan asked if the exhibit shown in the application portrays the proposed sign.

Ms. Giudice replied yes.

Village Planner Chan asked Jim, the sign company representative in attendance to verify.

Jim verified it is accurate.

Chan also explained the new entrance nameplate sign exhibit better portrays the sign compared to the one in the initial application. The dimensions did not change. However, the illustration is more accurate.

Jim concurred.

Commissioner McMahon acknowledged it is a lot different.

Ms. Giudice explained that she plans to make the sign smaller.

Chairman Byrnes expressed that'd be good since it is out of scale compared to the wall.

Ms. Giudice agreed and proposed decreasing the sign by six (6) inches.

Chairman Byrnes proposed twenty (20) percent smaller.

Ms. Giudice said agreed.

Chairman Byrnes commented it looks good now, and asked the PC for their thoughts.

Commissioner Krillenberger agreed and complimented the pictures in the application.

Commissioner Crnovich agreed with Commissioner Krillenberger.

Commissioner Cashman commented that it was nice that she's been open for business for the past few weeks.

Ms. Giudice thanked Commissioner Cashman and asked the PC for help with spreading the word.

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Chairman Byrnes asked the PC for any further comments. With none, he asked for a motion to approve the proposed two (2) signs with the caveat for the nameplate sign to be twenty (20) percent smaller.

Commissioner Krillenberger motioned to approve. Commissioner Crnovich seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Case A-33-2015 – 1 and 16 Grant St. – Evergreen Bank Group – 5 Wall Signs

Chairman Byrnes introduced this case and asked the applicant to please review the proposed signs.

Al Santa Maria introduced himself from Aurora Sign Company, and presented the proposed signs at 1 Grant Street. The materials, sizes and locations were also reviewed to the PC.

Commissioner Crnovich commented that she has concerns for the number of signs in the application. She explained that she interprets the Zoning Code to allow two wall signs on the building. She referred to section 9-106(i)(3)(b), and believes a wall sign can be proposed on the west and north side of the building. However, the proposed wall sign facing east should not be allowed because it does not face a street or parking lot.

Commissioner Krillenberger commented good point.

Commissioner Crnovich added the west side of the building should only be allowed one wall sign, and that once the building changes ownership, any legal nonconforming signs would lose its status.

Chairman Byrnes asked about the height.

Commissioner Crnovich explained her concern for the proposed height at 24 feet, because the maximum height allowed is 20 feet, or below the second story window (whichever is less).

Mr. Maria replied correct.

Chairman Byrnes asked if it is 24 feet to the top or bottom of the sign.

Mr. Maria replied it is 24 feet to the top of the sign.

Chairman Byrnes asked staff what the regulation is.

Chan replied 20 feet is the highest a wall sign is allowed to be.

Mr. Maria asked if they could lower it to 20 feet.

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Commissioner Cashman asked if the location is in the middle of the gable.

Mr. Maria replied yes.

Commissioner Cashman responded that he wouldn't have a problem with the proposed location.

Mr. Maria mentioned it would be more aesthetically pleasing in the middle.

Commissioner Crnovich explained her concern for the height is due to it being the highest signs in the Village, even though the PC is able to grant a small variation. She asked Chan if he could explain this.

Chan explained that the PC is allowed to consider a maximum height increase of 20%. Thus, the proposed 24 feet can be approved by the PC.

Commissioner Crnovich pointed out that the applicant would need to reference a hardship.

Chan concurred.

Commissioner Cashman asked the applicant what the height of the wall sign is.

Mr. Maria replied 24 feet.

Chairman Byrnes asked if this was to the top of the sign.

Mr. Maria responded yes.

Chairman Byrnes asked to clarify, in this case, if the PC can consider the modification to the maximum height.

Commissioner Cashman replied yes.

Commissioner Unell asked if the Evergreen Bank tree is the third sign.

Commissioner Cashman replied yes, but that is the second sign on the wall facing west.

Commissioner Crnovich explained that she has an issue with this, and the height and location of the third sign.

Chan explained that Commissioner Crnovich's interpretation of the number of signs is correct. After speaking with the Village attorney, the Code allows for one wall sign per face only. Chan explained his initial interpretation allows for one sign per entrance. However, the (separate) entrance turned out to be the prerequisite to allow for a wall sign. In short, you are allowed one wall sign per building face.

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Commissioner Cashman asked if the proposed wall sign facing east could be requested on the wall facing north (Chicago Ave.).

Chan replied yes.

Chairman Byrnes expressed due to the building layout, it may not be the best location for a sign.

Commissioner Crnovich referenced other examples of denied signs based on similar heights and added there needs to be a hardship.

Chairman Byrnes mentioned again the building layout and gable could be a hardship.

Commissioner McMahon mentioned it doesn't look like the sign could be any lower due to the gable.

Mr. Maria asked if the building to the east is the reason why there cannot be a sign facing east.

Commissioner Cashman explained that it doesn't face a street or parking lot. The sign would face private property. However, in lieu of one, they could propose a ground sign.

Commissioner Crnovich stated that they could still put a wall sign facing Chicago Avenue.

Chan explained the wall sign height on Chicago Avenue however, would be dictated by the height of the windows, and must be below them.

Chairman Byrnes expressed that he has an issue with the "tree" sign at the second entrance.

Commissioner Cashman reflected that the "tree" sign is out of the picture.

The notion of a hardship based on the building design and trees for the wall sign facing west ensued.

Mr. Maria asked if there are any directional signs at the property.

The PC in general expressed uncertainty.

Mr. Maria explained that may be the reason his client is proposing for the signage.

Chairman Byrnes and Commissioner Cashman stated there is a sign with a list of tenants at Grant Square.

Commissioner McMahon believes a ground sign would make sense at the north side of the property.

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Commissioner Cashman agreed and explained it may work better than a wall sign due to all the trees and plants near the wall.

Mr. Maria asked for clarification of the north side of the property.

Chairman Byrnes and Commissioner Cashman explained that it is the side facing Chicago Avenue.

Commissioner Crnovich asked if that is permitted.

Commissioner Cashman responded yes.

Commissioner McMahon asked if Evergreen Bank purchased the building.

Mr. Maria said he wasn't sure.

Chan believes they will be tenants, since the owners have been paying "rent" with no tenants for a while.

Chairman Byrnes moved the discussion to the proposed wall signs at the 16 Grant Street location.

Commissioner Cashman clarified that the proposed two wall signs face the parking lot and roughly Chicago Avenue due to the angle of the building.

Chairman Byrnes asked if the proposed wall sign on each side of the building meets Code.

Commissioner Cashman reiterated that he believes it faces the parking lot and the streets given the corner location and angle of the building (which he noted is a bit unusual).

Commissioner Crnovich also reviewed that each wall facing a parking lot or street can potentially propose a sign.

Commissioner Cashman added these signs make functional sense based on the flow of traffic.

Chairman Byrnes agreed.

Chairman Byrnes reviewed the signs considered for the motion, which includes the suggested hardship due to the building design for the proposed 24' height of the "gable" sign.

Commissioner Krillenberger concurred the building design is a hardship.

Commissioner Crnovich expressed that she still wished the PC would stick with the 20' maximum height.

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Commissioner Cashman disagreed, and believes it looks odd due to the gable height and pointed out that there was a sign previously in the location.

Commissioner Crnovich suggested possibly a hanging sign between the pillars in the center.

Chairman Byrnes also believes a hanging sign would look odd.

Mr. Maria asked if the columns are wooden.

Commissioner Cashman expressed he is against a hanging sign and prefers a sign on the gable.

Commissioner Crnovich explained that she admits that she is a bit of a purist with respect to the Zoning Code, and wished that the applicant could come up with another solution.

Commissioner Cashman believes this is a situation where the PC can grant a small variation that fits the relief purpose of the Code for an existing building such as this one.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked if this is called a “variation”.

Commissioner Crnovich asked what it is referred to in the Code.

Chan replied a “modification”.

Chairman Byrnes asked the PC for a motion to approve the (“gable”) wall sign facing west, with the modification to allow the height as submitted (20% increase), with no sign facing east, or secondary entrance facing the west side of the building, and approving the 2 wall signs at the 16 Grant Street (“ATM”) location.

Commissioner Krillenberger motioned to approve. Commissioner Crnovich seconded. The motion passed 7 Ayes, 1 Nay and 0 absent.

Exterior Appearance Review

Case A-30-2015 – 50 S. Washington St. – Lee Wisch – New Awning, Windows and Paint at a Commercial Building in the B-2 District

Lee Wisch introduced himself as the owner of the property and proposed the project as a means to clean the façade up. The scope of work he presented includes new windows, shutters, awning and beige paint.

Chairman Byrnes asked what the dark color is.

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Lee Wisth replied black, and further explained that the colors he chose, he believes, looks nice and would be an improvement to the building.

Chairman Byrnes agreed.

Commissioner McMahon concurred and added it is easy on the eyes and truly an improvement.

Commissioner Cashman asked when the building was originally built.

Lee Wisth replied 1978 and mentioned it was one of the first buildings downtown.

Commissioner Cashman complimented Lee on the improvement plans

Chairman Byrnes asked to clarify if this is only up for exterior appearance review with no site plan component.

Chan replied correct.

Chairman Byrnes asked the PC for a motion to approve the exterior plan as submitted.

Commissioner Cashman motioned to approve. Commissioner Crnovich seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Case A-26-2015 – 125 S. Vine Street – Vine Academy – Major Adjustment – Enrollment for up to an additional 130 Students (180 total)

Chairman Byrnes introduced the next item on the agenda and asked Chan to clarify what the Board has already approved and what the PC is considering.

Chan replied that the Board has already approved the major adjustment for 20 additional students (70 total). The PC is considering the applicant's request for an additional 130 students.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked if the applicant can approach the podium and introduce the request.

While the applicant approached the podium, Chairman Byrnes summarized the application and what the PC will be considering.

Amanda Vogel introduced herself as the director and owner of Vine Academy. She explained that the private school has been slowly growing and been a tenant of Zion Lutheran for the last 3 years. The school started with 11 students and now has around 50 students. She revealed that the school building used to hold a little over 200 students when Zion Lutheran

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utilized it. She explained another purpose of the request is to plan for when the school will potentially outgrow the space. Thus, finding out what is allowed will serve the schools planning process. She wants to remain a small school and does not anticipate the school exceeding 180 students. Ms. Vogel also mentioned that the community has always been welcoming and that she likes Hinsdale.

Commissioner Cashman asked if the school changed its name at some point.

Ms. Vogel replied yes. Nurturing Wisdom Tutoring, she explained was the parent company. However, she mentioned her boss recommended to her being more independent and branching out.

Commissioner McMahon asked which geographical area your students are from.

Ms. Vogel replied 26% are from Hinsdale, and the next largest populations are from Burr Ridge, Oak Brook, Westmont, Clarendon Hills, Western Springs and Westchester. Only about 10 to 15% are from further suburbs. She also explained they are not a therapeutic school or have a high needs population. Therefore, people are not coming from far distances for specific services.

Commissioner Crnovich stated that she asked that question (to staff) and reviewed the breakdowns as: Hinsdale (26%), Western Springs (20%), Burr Ridge (8%), Clarendon Hills (8%), Westmont (6%), Downers Grove (6%), LaGrange (6%), Oakbrook (6%), and other (14%).

Commissioner Krillenberger concluded that the school serves the area, which is great.

Chairman Byrnes asked about traffic and drop off coordination, and referenced the application's staggered plan.

Ms. Vogel explained that there are 4 distinct, grade based programs that already follow staggered pick-up times. She also intends to plan for ways to prevent wrapping around the block as the school grows. Currently, students are dropped off on Second Street but she will have a plan as the school grows.

Chairman Byrnes asked if students are being dropped off coming from Grant Street.

Ms. Vogel replied yes, and parents use a block on Second Street too. She estimates about 35 cars come to pick up the children. A shared bus was also referenced, and it takes away from the aforementioned 35 car figure. She explained that there is no spill over and no guidance needed during the transportation period.

Commissioner Cashman asked if the current school year is already at 70 since it was approved for 70 students.

Ms. Vogel replied no, we are right over 50 students. However, we continue to enroll students throughout the year.

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Commissioner Cashman asked when she believes the school will surpass the 70 student mark.

Ms. Vogel explained that she doesn't know if they would reach that figure this year. However, that means they should be OK for the current school year. She mentioned again that she does not want the school to grow as fast as it has recently. And given the current staff, she would not exceed more than 70 students.

Commissioner Cashman asked what the issue would be if she were to come back next July after experiencing the logistics of 70 students. The reason for the question is due to concerns by some residents; it has nothing to do with the school, and more about traffic and parking in the neighborhood. He also believes parents, traffic and plans do not necessarily always work as expected. He also pointed out that there is no traffic study in the application.

Ms. Vogel replied the school at full capacity, with over 200 students, used to be released all at the same time. However, she's OK with reapplying next year. She also reiterated, that part of the application reflects her long term plan for the space.

Chairman Byrnes asked if the old school used to contain more neighborhood kids, and thus have less traffic in the area.

Commissioner Cashman recalled growing up, most of the people he knew were from town. He also reiterated the issue is the potential traffic in the area. A traffic study by an engineer would help his comfort level to consider the full 180 student request. Commissioner Cashman also asked what the issues were by the Board.

Ms. Vogel replied there was some confusion with which body the application should go to. At the meeting, she explained it was a mixture of how major the application appeared to the Board. On the one hand, they were comfortable with 20 additional students. However, the full 180 requested was referred to the PC.

Commissioner Crnovich stated her concern for the full 180 students and potential 30 staff members as too much for the school and neighborhood. She also explained that the area serves as a buffer zone between the business and residential districts. Commissioner Crnovich also referenced the high number of applications in the buffer zone the PC reviews. She'd also like to know who the other tenants are at the school.

Ms. Vogel replied staff should have emailed that to you, and asked if she received it.

Commissioner Crnovich said yes.

Commissioner Cashman asked if the tutoring school is still operating.

Ms. Vogel responded yes, and they occupy one room. And over time she explained, the church would like the school to take over the building. Ms. Vogel also explained the gym is rented out

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by another group during after school hours and a private tutor also uses a room. Eventually, once the entire school is Vine Academy's, the plan is to invest in the building.

Commissioner Crnovich reiterated that she likes the idea of a school in the building. However, again, she believes the school would be too large for the building. The planned development, is so built up and features very little open space. The buffer zone was mentioned again, and offers little relief between the residential district and business district. She explained that she'd like to protect the residents' property value. Lastly, she believes the school is trying to grow too fast and 200 students is too much.

Ms. Vogel replied that she does not want to grow over 180 students in that building. Moreover, she does not believe it fits the building, and again, is not requesting over 180.

Commissioner Crnovich explained even if you stagger the drop off times, you are still nevertheless dealing with 60 cars, and that will be a problem.

Commissioner Cashman likes the idea of growing into the space. He also reflected that 180 is considered a small school. In addition, he likes the services it provides for the community.

Commissioner Crnovich reiterated her concerns for the neighborhood and the potential traffic and parking by the proposed amount of students. To wrap up, she believes, as the PC, it should look out for the residents in the area.

Chairman Byrnes stated that he likes Commissioner Cashman's suggestion for a two-step process. He also mentioned he'd hate to propose the expense of a traffic study for the applicant.

Commissioner Crnovich added that traffic studies aren't always accurate.

Commissioner Cashman commented that's why a growth period to next July to see the results would be more meaningful.

Ms. Vogel explained again that her staff number is set, so she would not want the school to grow any faster.

Commissioner Cashman replied that's good because we have a couple of concerned neighbors who'd prefer the school to grow organically. With a more gradual approach, he believes the neighbors will eventually warm up to the higher number of students. But at this time, he is not comfortable with recommending the full 180 student figure.

Commissioner Crnovich added she doesn't believe she ever will. The reason being other schools have more open and green space.

Commissioner Krillenberger expressed, on the other hand, the neighbors moved into an area with an existing school. And to that end, would love to see the school flourish, for the reasons Commissioner Cashman mentioned earlier.

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Commissioner Crnovich reminded everyone, that it is still a for profit business. She also referenced the standards for special use permits in Zoning Code section 11-602.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked what it says in the code.

Commissioner Crnovich read section 11-602(E)- (1) parts (b), (c), (e), and (3)(a); and she concluded we must review the project as a whole, protect the residential community and consider the buffer zone.

Commissioner Krillenberger explained but we must also consider the educational and diversity of educational opportunities that are offered here.

Commissioner Cashman agreed, and stated it would better the educational system here. However, the location of the school is the primary concern.

Chairman Byrnes asked what if we met half way to the proposed 180 students.

Commissioner Fiascone mentioned Union Preschool for example, is well over 150 students, grew organically and was able to control their parking and drop off issues. She dislikes potentially hindering the schools growth. However, she would like to see a long term parking lease.

Ms. Vogel concurred, and wants the teachers to know they have parking available for them. This is something she aims to put in the annual parking lease.

Commissioner Fiascone also expressed the need for a detailed drop off and pick up plan, since she is dealing with the same issues despite a plan in place at another school.

Ms. Vogel reviewed that letters were sent out by Chan, on the school's behalf for the public hearings. She was pleased to hear no complaints about the proposal or anyone showing up at the meeting.

Commissioner Cashman explained there were concerns by residents who could not attend the meetings. The letters supported slower growth, versus against the use in general.

Commissioner Fiascone stated that she's been inside the school and feels 180 isn't a reach for the building.

Ms. Vogel replied that she doesn't know if she'd want over 120 students, and is still configuring class sizes.

Commissioner Fiascone expressed that she understands the importance to plan for the growth of the school. In unfortunate cases, some schools fail due to low attendance.

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Ms. Vogel explained last year, the school was around 30 to 32 students. This year, the school year began around 50 students.

Commissioner Cashman asked if she could get through an additional school year if the PC considered an additional 20 students (over the approved 20 additional by the Board).

Ms. Vogel expressed support for that.

Commissioner Cashman explained this would allow you to gradually grow and continue to be successful; and get a feel for 2 years of experience with the additional parking and traffic.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked if the PC can recommend this.

Chairman Byrnes explained the PC can decide on an interim number, and as an advisory committee, makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Commissioner Crnovich stated that she would like to stay at the 70 student mark, and in the meantime, ask the applicant to talk to the neighbors. Thereafter, come back with a growth and parking plan.

Commissioner Cashman asked the PC for their comfort level for 40 additional students (90 students total). This figure, would allow the school to grow incrementally for 2 years.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked the church staff, which may be neighbors themselves, for any comments.

A representative from the church property board, Keith Larson expressed support for the application. He also expressed support for a single tenant rather than multiple tenants in the building.

Commissioner Krillenberger asked if he has received any feedback from the residents.

Mr. Larson replied no.

Commissioner Crnovich recommended having church enrollment figures ready for the Board meeting. And reiterated that as Plan Commissioners, it is our job to follow the Zoning Code, versus whether or not we like something. Thus, she urged everyone to read the section on special use permits (11-602).

Commissioner Cashman mentioned hosting neighborhood meetings half way through the school year to discuss potential issues and what's worked, should they surpass the 90 total students.

Chairman Byrnes asked how many students the Board approved.

Commissioner Cashman replied 70 students.

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Commissioner Crnovich reflected that she likes 70 because that's the number the Board came up with.

Commissioner Krillenberger commented that's as arbitrary as anything.

Commissioner Cashman reiterated 90 students, to allow the potential for progressive growth.

Several other Commissioners concurred with the 90 figure.

Ms. Vogel explained this would allow for an additional classroom at the start of next school year.

Commissioner Cashman continued, and that you would not need to reapply for relief next year. He asked how many students there was initially.

Ms. Vogel responded 11 students, and reflected that these types of schools typically start out at 2 to 4 kids. She added Nurturing Wisdom has been in the community for 10 years. She continues to be the vice president of Nurturing Wisdom, and they chose Hinsdale because of the support shown by the families here.

Commissioner Cashman asked how the school grows.

Ms. Vogel responded, word of mouth. That's the only thing that appears to work she explained.

Commissioner Ryan supports the additional 20 students over the approved 70 because it allows the school to plan in advance. She expressed concern if the school were to fail and vacated the building. A middle ground at 90 is a number she supports.

Commissioner Crnovich and Commissioner Cashman reiterated hosting a neighborhood meeting for feedback to address any potential concerns.

Chairman Byrnes asked the PC for number they are comfortable with.

The PC showed general support for 90 students.

Chairman Byrnes asked for a motion to approve the special use major adjustment for an additional 40 to allow a maximum of 90 students.

Commissioner Cashman motioned to approve. Commissioner Krillenberger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned after a motion was made by Commissioner Krillenberger and seconded by Commissioner Cashman at 8:38 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chan Yu', written in a cursive style.

Chan Yu, Village Planner