

**WINNETKA PLAN COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 3, 2024**

Members Present: Chris Foley, Acting Chairman
Jonathan Alt
Chris Enck
Liz Kunkle
Cyrus Subawalla

Members Absent: Matthew Bradley
Mamie Case
Layla Danley

Non-Voting Members Present: Tina Dalman

Village Staff: David Schoon, Director of Community Development
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community
Development
Chris Marx, Associate Planner

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chairman Foley at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken of the Commission Members present.

Approval of February 28, 2024, Meeting Minutes:

Chairman Foley asked if there were any comments or for a motion to approve the February 28, 2024, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Alt and seconded by Mr. Subawalla to approve the February 28, 2024, meeting minutes. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

AYES: Alt, Enck, Foley, Kunkle, Subawalla

NAYS: None

NON-VOTING: Dalman

Public Comment:

No comments were made at this time.

Community Development Report:

Mr. Schoon stated the Village Council approved the Sacred Heart playground request as well as the Crow Island School subdivision and addition. He also stated the Village Council approved the One Winnetka planned development with the next steps being final plan submission to the Village Council for review and building permit issuance with the earliest activity start being the end of the year or early next year. No questions were raised at this time.

New Applications:

a. **Case No. 24-02-SU: 1110 Chatfield Road - Hubbard Woods Elementary School: An application seeking approval of an amendment to an existing Special Use Permit, which allowed an addition on the southwest corner of the existing school building at 1110 Chatfield Road. The requested amendment would allow improvements to existing playgrounds on the school property. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this request.**

1 Ms. Klaassen stated the request is to amend an existing special use and identified the property's location
2 and zoning classification. She stated the Comprehensive Plan designated the site as appropriate for
3 institutional uses with the applicant's use being consistent with the Comprehensive Plan land use
4 designation and zoning. Ms. Klaassen then described the three separate play areas along with the changes
5 to the surface materials, play equipment and equipment relocation. She also stated a new sandbox and
6 other play pieces are proposed for the upper play area by the school building and identified the existing
7 play equipment location. Ms. Klaassen identified the asphalt area to be removed and converted to lawn
8 area and play equipment installation in that area. She also identified the play area legal nonconformity
9 from Hamptondale with the proposed west play area complying with the west setback. Ms. Klaassen also
10 identified the extensive landscape improvements on the southwest lot line adjacent to the residential
11 neighbors and the mechanical equipment and refuse container enclosure landscape screening. She
12 informed the Commission that although not the purview of the Commission, two variations for the front
13 yard setback and impermeable lot coverage are being requested for the improvements. Ms. Klaassen then
14 stated the ZBA and DRB recommended approval of the request and no written comment was received
15 and that one neighbor spoke at the ZBA meeting and expressed strong support. Ms. Klaassen stated
16 following the applicant's presentation and public comment, a Commission Member may wish to make a
17 motion to recommend approval or denial as indicated on page no. 15. She then asked if there were any
18 questions.

19
20 Mr. Alt asked with regard to impermeable surface if the wood chips would allow for water to be absorbed.
21 He also asked if with the asphalt surface reduction if there would be an offset in the numbers. Ms. Klaassen
22 provided the Commission the figures showing a net increase of 1,395 square feet of impermeable lot
23 coverage. Trustee Dalman referred to neighbors' prior concerns relating to flooding and asked if there are
24 storm water improvements as part of the project. Ms. Klaassen informed the Commission storm water
25 detention was included as part of the addition project that is currently under construction with it being
26 constructed to accommodate the proposed playground improvements. She noted the Village Engineer
27 reviewed preliminary engineering plans for the improvements and is confident the final engineering plans
28 will be approved. Ms. Klaassen also confirmed notice of meetings was provided. No additional questions
29 were raised at this time.

30
31 Chairman Foley swore in those speaking to this matter. Katherine Talty, the landscape architect,
32 introduced herself to the Commission and offered to answer any Commission Member questions.

33
34 Mr. Subawalla asked if the new storm water detention allowed for the addition and the new impermeable
35 area. Ms. Talty confirmed that is correct and noted the proposed plan greatly reduced the asphalt to
36 balance the amount of impermeable surface added to the site. She then described how storm water
37 detention would be managed on the site and added there would be no issues with floating wood chips,
38 since all the wood chips would be removed as part of this project. Mr. Alt asked where the drains are
39 located and if they would be graded to run water away from neighboring properties. Ms. Talty confirmed
40 that is correct and explained how the drains would be graded toward the new lawn area. She also
41 explained how the new material replacing the wood chips is counted as being 100% impervious in
42 connection with the calculations although it has some impermeability to it. Ms. Talty informed the
43 Commission they met directly with the adjacent neighbors relating to the project. Trustee Dalman then
44 questioned if there would be a problem programmatically for the school in removing so much of the
45 asphalt. Adam Rappaport, with District 36, confirmed they spoke with the school administration, staff,
46 students, etc. and have worked with them to make sure the space would be adequate. Mr. Enck
47 questioned the durability of the grass in the new lawn area. Ms. Talty described how they planned to
48 manage the grass consistency in terms of its use.

1 Chairman Foley asked if there were any comments from the public. No public comments were made at
2 this time. He then called the matter in for discussion.

3
4 Ms. Kunkle described the project appeal as much more palatable and well designed. She also referred to
5 the neighbor's comments in support of the request. Ms. Kunkle then referred to an illustration of the
6 amount of lawn area and asphalt and the fact drainage would be improved. She concluded she would be
7 in support. Trustee Dalman stated she would also be in support of the request. Ms. Kunkle added she
8 appreciated the project's design improvement over the prior proposal in terms of its adjacency to the
9 west homeowners. Mr. Enck agreed thought was given to the landscaping improvements along the fence
10 line which would serve to soften the appearance. Mr. Alt agreed with the comments made and stated he
11 would be in support. Chairman Foley noted the nonconforming setback dated back to 1927 and referred
12 to the ZBA and DRB unanimous recommended approvals. He stated he also appreciated the applicant's
13 working with the neighbors.

14
15 Chairman Foley then asked for a motion to recommend approval of the request as noted on page 11 of
16 the staff report. A motion to recommend approval was made by Mr. Alt who referred to the findings. Ms.
17 Kunkle seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

18 AYES: Alt, Enck, Foley, Kunkle, Subawalla
19 NAYS: None
20 NON-VOTING: Dalman

21
22 **b. Case No. 24-04-SU: 847 Elm Street - Toned Yoga: An application seeking approval of a Special**
23 **Use Permit submitted by Toned Yoga 2 LLC, as the prospective lessee of the property located at 847 Elm**
24 **Street to allow a personal fitness facility in the C-2 General Retail Commercial Overlay District. The**
25 **property is currently owned by Helen James Family Limited Partnership, L.P. The Village Council has**
26 **final jurisdiction on this request.**

27 Mr. Marx distributed written public correspondence regarding the application to the Commission for its
28 review of the special use permit application for a non-retail use in the retail overlay district. He identified
29 the applicant, and the property's location and zoning classification, noting that the first 50 feet of the
30 property is located within the Commercial Overlay District. Mr. Marx also identified the previous tenant
31 and surrounding businesses. He described the proposed space's measurements and the applicant's
32 proposed use, along with some of their retail offerings, class sizes and employees. Mr. Marx explained the
33 applicant's reasoning for choosing the proposed space and identified the hours of operation.

34
35 Mr. Marx stated with regard to parking, he identified one employee parking space at the rear of the
36 building and explained that parking needs were discussed with the applicant. He stated the applicant was
37 provided with the recent Chase Bank parking study that was completed for the proposed planned
38 development at Elm Street and Green Bay Road, which measured customer and employee parking in the
39 same area as the proposed business to determine whether the business' use can be accommodated. Mr.
40 Marx explained to the Commission how parking would be accommodated for the employees and patrons.
41 He referred to the special use standards on page nos. 68 and 69 for the Commission to consider and stated
42 the Commission may make a motion to recommend approval or denial of the request. Mr. Marx stated
43 the applicant is present to answer questions and asked if there were any questions for the Village staff.

44
45 Chairman Foley also asked if there were any questions. Trustee Dalman asked how many parking spaces
46 are on Birch and referred to the surrounding parking spaces available. She noted concerns were raised
47 from West Elm business owners. Mr. Marx responded some of the Birch Street parking is limited in terms
48 of availability to customers, and Mr. Schoon further described the available public (customer) parking

1 spaces, including more than 20, 4-hour parking spaces on the east side of Birch between Elm and Spruce
2 and additional public parking for customers with limited hours during certain times. Mr. Marx referred to
3 the inventory of parking in the agenda packet with one employee space available at the rear of the
4 building. Trustee Dalman questioned whether the cleaners and nail salon received special use permits.
5 Mr. Schoon stated that special use approval was not needed at the time they occupied the spaces, but
6 would now, as the Overlay District special use classifications having been subsequently amended in 2019.
7 Trustee Dalman then referred to the Commission's previous discussions regarding removing land uses at
8 the ends of the overlay district from the district. Mr. Enck referred to the Berkshire Hathaway vacancy.
9 Mr. Marx responded the space is vacant and available for leasing and an office use would need special
10 use approval to locate in that space.

11
12 Mr. Subawalla asked why there is opposition from surrounding business owners and reference made to
13 the March 29, 2024, letter. Chairman Foley stated the Commission would address the issue during their
14 discussion. No additional questions were raised at this time.

15
16 Chairman Foley asked for the applicant's presentation and swore in those speaking to this matter. Jim
17 Nash of Farnsworth Hill introduced himself as the property manager and provided the Commission with
18 the history relating to the difficulty in leasing the narrow space. He then stated with regard to parking,
19 the rear parking space can fit two vehicles tandemly and he informed the Commission the Stephens family
20 owned most of the buildings on the north side of Elm Street between Chestnut and Birch Streets, and they
21 are very involved with the properties. Mr. Nash then read a letter from the property owner into the
22 record. He informed the Commission it appeared that the Berkshire Hathaway space is vacant, though
23 their lease has not expired, and the property owners were not aware of it being vacated but have been
24 actively marketing the space with a letter of intent recently received from a retail user.

25
26 Maddie and Rob Zonino introduced themselves as the founders/owners of Toned Yoga and described the
27 proposed business to the Commission. Mrs. Zonino stated they opened a studio in Lake Bluff last year and
28 have over 200 active members with some being Winnetka residents. Mrs. Zonino stated they have worked
29 with local Winnetka representatives to see if the proposed use would be a good fit and stated there is a
30 need in the community. She referred to the comments made from the local businesses and noted they
31 would have a large retail portion as part of the business and are very involved in partnering with the
32 community and businesses.

33
34 Chairman Foley asked if there were any questions. Trustee Dalman asked how long the space was vacant
35 prior to Ellen's on Elm. Mr. Nash responded he did not specifically remember. Mr. Subawalla asked if there
36 is programming involving music and if so, he asked that sound attenuation be done to benefit the
37 neighbors. Mrs. Zonino agreed with Mr. Subawalla's suggestion. Mr. Enck asked if the space would not
38 have a dedicated restroom. Mr. Nash described the shared restroom configuration and proposed change
39 to its access directly from the proposed space. Mr. Enck asked if there is a way to encourage patrons to
40 park in certain locations. Mrs. Zonino confirmed that is correct and it is being done at their other location.
41 No additional questions were raised at this time.

42
43 Chairman Foley asked for public comment. Max Weigandt, 887 Spruce Street, stated the classes are
44 busiest in the morning at the time when other businesses are not open. He then stated his wife Leslie is
45 very involved with yoga classes around the area and commented that the proposed use would be a good
46 fit for Winnetka. Mr. Weigandt stated the use would be a community builder and is the definition of foot
47 traffic and would support surrounding businesses. He concluded by stating they are in favor of the
48 request.

1 Chairman Foley called the matter in for discussion and asked for the Commission's comments. Mr. Alt
2 described the proposal as a wonderful idea and a wonderful business for the community especially for
3 this space which is virtually unleaseable. He then stated with regard to the neighboring business owners
4 who would benefit from the business, they should hear their comments in connection with parking and
5 noted Chase Bank would be taking up an additional 30 parking spaces. Mr. Alt then asked if a stipulation
6 should be included with an approval, he referred to the applicant's willingness to ask patrons to park in
7 certain locations which would please everyone in the West Elm business district.
8

9 Ms. Kunkle stated she is also in favor of the request and since it is located at the end of the overlay district,
10 she is not as concerned. She referred to the very narrow space making it very difficult to lease and referred
11 to the public comments made. Ms. Kunkle also stated the hours of operation would benefit the
12 surrounding businesses as well as the fact that there would be a retail component. She concluded by
13 stating she is in favor. Trustee Dalman stated certain existing businesses are concerned with parking and
14 referred to previous high vacancy rates which led to more available parking but now with more
15 occupancies parking spaces seem more limited. She described the situation as difficult and referred to the
16 business as one that is desired by the community. Trustee Dalman referred to the parking survey
17 submitted to the Village Council which was done by those who signed the submitted letter and
18 commented an existing business does not have the right to block a new business from coming in. She
19 described the proposed use as fantastic which had local support with no conflict with the hours of
20 operation. Trustee Dalman noted for the record parking is an ongoing discussion at the Village Council
21 level.
22

23 Mr. Subawalla described the concerns relating to parking as overrated and identified sound attenuation
24 as his only concern. Mr. Enck stated for special use discussions, he referred to real estate offices and a
25 bank which serve customers coming in for a certain purpose and not patronizing other businesses. He
26 described the proposal as positive which would serve other businesses with its location at the west end
27 of the central business district making it walkable. Mr. Enck also referred to the applicant's offer to ask
28 patrons to park in certain locations and described the request as a positive addition to an underutilized
29 retail overlay district area. Chairman Foley described parking and the retail overlay district as being issues
30 in connection with requests of this type. He then stated for the location at the edge of the overlay district,
31 it bore careful consideration and referred to the public comment for and against the request. Chairman
32 Foley referred to the applicant including retail as part of the business in the appropriate location inside
33 the building and agreed with the comments made relating to parking and questioned whether a parking
34 condition should be included as part of the approval.
35

36 Ms. Kunkle stated she did not feel a parking condition should be included. Mr. Enck suggested the
37 applicant speak with the Village staff and for any concerns that arise from other business owners, it could
38 be addressed informally.
39

40 Chairman Foley concluded the request is consistent with special use criteria nos. 1-12 and asked for a
41 motion to recommend approval as indicated on page 68. A motion was made by Ms. Kunkle to
42 recommend approval of the requested special use to allow Toned Yoga 2 LLC to operate a personal fitness
43 facility at 847 Elm Street within the C-2 Commercial Overlay District based on the findings of fact and
44 being subject to no conditions. Mr. Enck seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion
45 unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

46 AYES: Alt, Enck, Foley, Kunkle, Subawalla

47 NAYS: None

48 NON-VOTING: Dalman

1 **New Business.**

2 a. April 24, 2024 Meeting – Quorum check.

3 An update with regard to the post office site near Dwyer Park was provided by Mr. Schoon and Trustee
4 Dalman. Trustee Dalman also informed the Commission the Village Council continued to discuss parking
5 issues in the Village. Mr. Schoon confirmed there would not be an April 2024 meeting since none of the
6 items on the meeting agenda were continued.

7
8 **Adjournment:**

9 Chairman Foley asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Kunkle and seconded
10 by Mr. Alt. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

11 AYES: Alt, Enck, Foley, Kunkle, Subawalla

12 NAYS: None

13 NON-VOTING: Dalman

14 The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

15
16 Respectfully submitted,

17
18 Antionette Johnson

19 Recording Secretary