

**WINNETKA PLAN COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 23, 2024**

Members Present:

Layla Danley, Chairperson
Jonathan Alt
Mamie Case
Chris Enck
Cyrus Subawalla

Members Absent:

Matthew Bradley
Liz Kunkle

Non-Voting Members Present:

Rob Apatoff

Village Staff:

David Schoon, Director of Community Development
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community
Development

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Danley at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Klaassen took roll call of the Commission Members present.

Approval of May 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes:

Chairperson Danley asked for a motion to approve the May 22, 2024, meeting minutes. A motion to approve the May 22, 2024, meeting minutes was made by Ms. Case and seconded by Mr. Subawalla. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

AYES: Alt, Case, Danley, Enck, Subawalla

NAYS: None

NON-VOTING: Apatoff

Public Comment:

No comments were made at this time.

Community Development Report:

Mr. Schoon provided an update with regard to the Winnetka Public School Nursery playground. He also stated the proposed development at Centennial Park and Beach was presented to the ZBA and the matter was continued to the November 2024 ZBA meeting. Mr. Schoon stated the earliest the item would be presented to the Commission would be the December 2024 meeting.

New Applications:

a. **Case No. 24-14-SU: Grace Presbyterian Church of the North Shore (440 Ridge Avenue and 760 Cherry Street): Applications seeking approval of (i) a Final Plat of Subdivision to consolidate the two existing lots known as 440 Ridge Avenue and 760 Cherry Street into a single Lot of Record; (ii) a Special Use Permit to allow the consolidation that is greater than two times the minimum required lot size and more than two times the minimum required average lot width for a corner lot in the R-5 Single-Family Residential Zoning District; and (iii) an amendment to an existing Special Use Permit to allow**

construction of additions to the existing church and a parking lot on the proposed consolidated lot. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this request.

Ms. Klaassen identified the property's location and the adjacent home to be demolished and identified the zoning classification. She also identified the limited types of allowed special uses in the district with the Comprehensive Plan designating the existing parcel as appropriate for institutional uses. Ms. Klaassen stated the Comprehensive Plan identifies the Cherry Street parcel is appropriate for single family uses and noted the site is located in a transitional area. She then referred to existing site photos and described the proposed two-story church additions and elevations. Ms. Klaassen stated the combined parcels would create a single buildable lot via a plat of consolidation and identified the existing utility easement noting no additional easements are being requested.

Ms. Klaassen stated the proposed lot consolidation complied with the standards and a special use is required due to the proposed lot's size. She explained how the existing church lot is four times the minimum required lot area and twice the minimum required lot width. Ms. Klaassen also explained how the typical special use standards are used to evaluate the consolidation. She then referred to the proposed additions' illustrations and fence, and explained how the parking lot would be reconfigured. Ms. Klaassen also referred to the east and south elevation renderings and the proposed landscape plan which she explained to the Commission. She noted the applicant submitted preliminary engineering plans in connection with storm water management which have been reviewed by the Village Engineer who is confident the final engineering plans that are required to be submitted with the necessary permits to construct the proposed improvements could be approved, based on the preliminary engineering plans and discussions between the Village Engineer and the applicant's engineering team.

Ms. Klaassen explained to the Commission how zoning relief is necessary to allow the proposed improvements. She stated the Historic Preservation Commission considered the demolition permit for 760 Cherry Street and required that an HAIS be done, which has yet to be reviewed by the Commission. Ms. Klaassen then provided the Commission with an update on the DRB's review which recommended approval with conditions and noted the ZBA meeting has not yet been scheduled.

Ms. Klaassen went through the Commission's role with regard to the application's consideration and noted the applicant provided a traffic study and parking analysis which concluded there would be no material impact. She stated following the applicant's presentation and public comment, the Commission can continue the hearing to a date certain to provide the applicant or staff time to address questions and comments of the Commission, or consider a motion recommending approval or denial with draft language included on page nos. 23 and 24 of the agenda packet. Ms. Klaassen noted that no additional public correspondence was received and asked if there were any questions.

Chairperson Danley also asked if there were any questions. No questions were raised at this time. She then asked for the applicant's presentation and swore in those speaking to this matter.

Marshall Brown, Grace Presbyterian Church Senior Pastor, stated the proposed plan addressed the church's concern relating to accessibility, security, and improved educational space. He then introduced the applicant's team.

Karl Camillucci of the Taft Law Firm provided background with regard to the history and context of the project which included a pre-application meeting with church and Village staff, and meetings with neighbors. He described the multiple meetings held with the neighbors and the plans which were revised as a result of those meetings. Mr. Camillucci also referred to an illustration of the property and

1 Comprehensive Plan land use images and descriptions of the transitional mixed uses in the area and
2 outlined the church's programming.

3
4 Mr. Camillucci then described the difficulties in terms of ADA accessibility and the proposed plans to
5 increase ADA accessibility. He also explained the proposed classroom space to increase functionality to
6 provide better service to the church community. He referred to illustrations of the proposed additions
7 and parking lot improvements.

8
9 Joe Buehler of Present Future Architects, the project architect, identified the two proposed additions and
10 explained in detail the first-floor plan, the ADA accessibility entries, and the proposed addition
11 enhancements. He also explained the second floor of both of the additions, the basement level and their
12 uses in detail. Mr. Buehler referred to elevations which depict the proposed additions' height and the plan
13 to match the existing gables. He noted the south addition would step down to a flat roof in terms of the
14 south neighbors' sight lines and visual impact. Mr. Buehler identified the west elevation and revised
15 rendering based on the DRB's comments. He also referred to the existing and proposed landscaping which
16 would serve to block the south addition and identified several renderings of the proposed additions from
17 various vantage points.

18
19 Mr. Camillucci referred to the parking analysis and its conclusion that the proposed improvements would
20 not have a material impact on traffic and parking conditions around the church and that the low level of
21 traffic activity in general on the roadway system on a Sunday would not be impacted and would
22 accommodate the church. He then provided detail in terms of the conditions in which the parking study
23 was performed.

24
25 Mr. Camillucci referred to a summary of the items the Commission is to consider and their responses to
26 the special use standards. He emphasized that while not under the Commission's purview, a number of
27 the variations being requested are existing conditions. Mr. Camillucci then provided further explanation
28 with regard to the consolidated lots for the Commission to take into consideration. He specifically
29 explained their responses to the first two special use standards in that: (i) the proposed improvements
30 would not be detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety, comfort, morals and welfare and (ii)
31 that the special use would not be substantially injurious to the enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.
32 He then referred to concerns raised relating to stormwater and noted they would be addressing it during
33 the final engineering review. Mr. Camillucci asked if there were any questions.

34
35 Chairperson Danley thanked the applicant for their thorough presentation and also asked if there were
36 any questions. She referred to parking on the south side of Cherry Street and asked if safety measures
37 were considered in terms of ingress/egress from the parking lot. Mr. Camillucci responded the parking lot
38 only held 10-12 spaces and the amount of traffic volume on Cherry Street would not change.

39
40 Stephen Corcoran, Eriksson Engineering Association, stated they prepared the traffic and parking analysis
41 and described the changes taking place with regard to the driveway and the number of parking spaces.
42 He also stated a stop sign is being proposed at the lot exit as well as the use of low level landscaping by
43 the driveway. No additional questions were raised at this time.

44
45 Chairperson Danley then asked for public comment and swore in those speaking to this matter.

46
47 Chris Crooks, 422 Ridge, agreed there has been a long dialog between the church and the neighbors and
48 stated there is a mutual disagreement with regard to what is appropriate. He stated he did not agree with

1 the scale and that the neighbors are no longer attending the meetings which he described as
2 nonproductive. Mr. Crooks referred to the traffic study which he described as flawed due to the increased
3 attendance with an increase of 40% to the church's square footage. He stated he would be the most
4 impacted by the proposed structure and the proposal would represent a significant change to the
5 residential neighborhood and identified the standards affected by the proposed addition. Mr. Crooks
6 suggested the that the allowed square footage only be increased by the amount of the adjacent parcel
7 purchased and that additional landscaping be implemented.

8
9 Steve Sanders, 429 Linden, stated their home faced the church parking lot and the adjacent purchased lot
10 and described the reasons they are opposed to the expansion, including privacy concerns, sight lines and
11 the effect to their property value. He also stated the church had difficulty in dealing with the neighbors in
12 good faith and asked for any rendering to be architecturally true, correct and without exaggeration. Mr.
13 Sanders provided the Commission Members with photos of the Arbor Vitaes to be installed which were
14 reduced from 17 feet to 8-10 feet in height. He then stated based on the requested exceptions, he asked
15 for the proposal to be rejected.

16
17 Nancy Riddle, 761 Cherry Street, referred to the traffic study and the amount of traffic coming from the
18 east. She stated there are safety concerns and asked for clarity if the basement would be used for multi-
19 purpose rooms. Ms. Riddle suggested the church renovate the existing square footage instead of
20 expanding. She asked to hear from the Village Traffic Engineer as opposed to a private consultant with
21 regard to accidents. Ms. Riddle also commented the north side two story addition is too close to the
22 sidewalk and that parking can be reconfigured.

23
24 Dan Kinsella, 420 Linden, read an excerpt from the Comprehensive Plan into the record and stated the
25 applicant has not adhered to it. He stated the Commission is to give effect to the Comprehensive Plan and
26 the proposal is not compatible to the residential neighborhood and that burden has not been met by the
27 applicant. Mr. Kinsella referred to the scale and stated they have been suggesting alternatives since
28 February. He also commented on the problematic amount of traffic on Cherry Street and the effect on
29 property values. Mr. Kinsella stated any approved special use permit should have strong restrictions
30 relating to landscaping and water issues.

31
32 Chuck Murphy, 426 Linden, agreed with all of the neighbors' comments and stated the applicant does not
33 understand the fundamental effect of the project on the neighborhood. He implored the Commission to
34 deny or delay the request and referred to the less than fruitful meetings they have had with the applicant.
35 Mr. Murphy concluded the neighbors would like to come to a meeting in support of the changes and they
36 are nowhere near that and asked the Commission to consider alternatives and find a solution that worked
37 for the neighbors.

38
39 Chris Nyland, 800 block of Oak Street, stated his family are church members and identified their reasons
40 for attending the church. He referred to the amount of capital expended by the church to maintain the
41 historically important building and allow it to remain a viable part of the community and neighborhood.
42 Mr. Nyland stated the proposed addition would allow them to do that.

43
44 Missy Chanel, 510 Elder Lane, stated the church is part of the reason they live in Winnetka. She described
45 the activities she and her family have benefited from as church members and discussions she had with
46 the Police Chief relating to what steps to take in the event of an active shooter to make the building secure
47 which included a single entry point. Ms. Chanel stated the proposal would address all of the challenges
48 the church has had and described the terrible condition of the staircase. She commented it is vital to make

1 the building welcoming for all attendees in terms of ADA accessibility.

2
3 Terry Dason, 134 Green Bay Road, a church member, described the difficulty with regard to the stairs. She
4 stated they have been working with the neighbors to come up with a solution to resolve the church's
5 interior issues. Ms. Dason stated the proposed addition is necessary to fulfil the children and adults' needs
6 and described the proposal as a great idea and a beautiful addition.

7
8 Michael Holmberg, 435 Linden, commented he loved having a church in the neighborhood and described
9 the process as not being efficient. He agreed with the suggestion that the church and neighbors meet and
10 come to a solution that everyone can agree on. Mr. Holmberg stated the scale is off and he asked the
11 Commission to reject the request or continue so that there can be real conversations between the church
12 and neighbors.

13
14 Ruth Ann Kinsella, 420 Linden, commented on the proposed rendering which does not accurately depict
15 the site during most of the year.

16
17 Chairperson Danley asked the applicant if they would like to respond. Mr. Camillucci responded they did
18 not agree the church has not acted in good faith and provided additional information in terms of the
19 photographs taken from the neighbor's backyard. He stated with regard to the comment on the plantings'
20 height, Arbor Vitae are generally not sold in the height shown on the renderings and the renderings show
21 what they would look like at maturity. He referred to the proactive dialog with the neighbors to adjust
22 solutions to mitigate their concerns and while there may never be total agreement in terms of the project
23 that satisfied everyone, the project addressed the church's needs. He also stated with regard to the
24 comment made relating to the Comprehensive Plan, they have addressed the fact that the church is
25 compatible with both current and future land uses. He specifically referred to Section 1.4 of the
26 Comprehensive Plan and stated they have discussed how the church has been a part of the neighborhood
27 since the 1930's, its contribution to the character of the locality and would engage in the same types of
28 uses following the plan's completion.

29
30 Chairperson Danley then asked if there were any questions from the Commission. Mr. Enck asked the
31 applicant if they considered replacing the home with a new two story building addition to the west as
32 opposed to the building addition to the south. Mr. Camillucci identified the existing utility easement which
33 made it more difficult to build to the west. He also stated with regard to that lot's dimension, the building
34 addition would have to be long and deep. Mr. Buehler agreed utilities represented the biggest challenge
35 and they initially discussed that alternative as well as it representing suboptimal spatial concerns. He also
36 stated they considered impermeable surface and roofed lot coverage concerns. Mr. Buehler then stated
37 the most practical ADA accessibility location was their primary concern and also clarified their response
38 to the landscaping issue. Josh Anderson, an Eriksson Engineering landscape architect, provided additional
39 information relating to the Arbor Vitae installation height.

40
41 Ms. Case referred to the applicant's response that the church fit in with the Comprehensive Plan and
42 stated while they want the church to be welcoming to its members and neighbors, she is concerned with
43 the proposed addition's size and possible traffic issues and suggested alternative solutions.

44
45 Trustee Apatoff asked if there would be a wood stockade fence around the property. Mr. Camillucci
46 responded the existing cedar fence is the neighbor's fence with the plan being to install one contiguous
47 fence around the property. The Commission Members and the applicant discussed the fence's installation
48 and location. Trustee Apatoff agreed with the applicant's position regarding ADA accessibility and

1 commented on the proposed tree size at installation. Mr. Camillucci informed the Commission the DRB
2 discussed having the proposed addition in its proposed location and determined aesthetically, it would be
3 better to have it on Ridge rather than further west on Cherry.

4
5 Chairperson Danley then called the matter in for discussion and identified the specific items the
6 Commission is to consider. The Commission Members agreed they are in favor of the lot consolidation.
7 Mr. Alt stated setbacks represented the biggest concern as well as stormwater and the suggestion that
8 the traffic study be performed by a neutral party. He commented the church is phenomenal and in
9 alignment with the community although there is a major disagreement in terms of what it ultimately
10 looked like. Mr. Alt also stated ADA accessibility and safety are the important issues.

11
12 Chairperson Danley noted the Village Engineer will address stormwater concerns and agreed that safety
13 is a big concern as well as the traffic and parking study comments. She also stated she is concerned with
14 construction and the general design and referred to the items not within the Commission's purview. Mr.
15 Subawalla indicated there may be a way to address both sides' concerns relating to the project outcome.
16 He also commented on the neighbors' view of the large structure and asked to see the DRB's deliberation
17 in coming up with that decision.

18
19 Ms. Case questioned whether they are able to ask them to address the size and scale concerns before
20 issuing a special use, noting that there would not be consensus on both sides. She also agreed with Mr.
21 Subawalla's comments and referred to the narrow Cherry Street condition.

22
23 Mr. Schoon suggested the Commission focus on the standards and provide direction to the applicant in
24 terms of the items not in compliance with the special use standards. He stated if the Commission wanted
25 to continue the matter, they are to provide direction in terms of what the consensus would be with the
26 applicant responding whether they want to continue the application and address the Commission
27 Members' concerns. Mr. Schoon stated the Commission can recommend approval or denial, and include
28 conditions.

29
30 Chairperson Danley referred to the special use permit to allow an amendment to the existing special use
31 for the ordinance to allow the construction of the proposed additions and site improvements and referred
32 to items (a)-(f). She highlighted items (d) and (e) as those standards representing issues and that the
33 proposal does not satisfy those conditions. Chairperson Danley then asked for the Commission Members'
34 comments. Ms. Case agreed with Chairperson Danley's comments and added items (c) and (d) as
35 presenting concerns. Trustee Apatoff also referred to landscaping issues concerns.

36
37 Chairperson Danley stated she was under the impression that the neighbors and church were closer in
38 agreement and referred to the fact that there is so much neighborhood opposition to the request. She
39 stated the Commission is not likely to get a consensus to approve this portion of the application and
40 identified their options in terms of the vote. Trustee Apatoff stated the proposal is difficult and the
41 applicant realized the neighbors' opposition from the beginning. Chairperson Danley referred to the fact
42 that the neighborhood is mixed-use and Goal 1.4 from the Comprehensive Plan is that institutional uses
43 are to be compatible with residential neighborhoods, compatible in terms of everybody coexisting
44 together. She explained what that compatibility looks like isn't necessarily one way, which is what it
45 sounds like the neighbors are feeling at this point is that it is not compatible with the residential
46 neighborhood, it is currently compatible but given what it is they are wanting to do moving forward it isn't
47 compatible. Mr. Alt referred to the amount of time and money spent by the applicant on the project and
48 stated it would not be prudent to deny the request. He stated he would recommend the matter be

1 continued until a point of agreement is reached with accessibility and security being paramount.

2
3 Chairperson Danley referred to the number of issues on the table and asked Mr. Schoon if the Commission
4 should continue the matter or require the applicant to address these issues before the Village Council.
5 Mr. Schoon responded it can be done either way and identified the Commission's specific concerns as: (i)
6 parking lot safety and its access onto Cherry Street; (ii) meeting the special use standards in terms of scale
7 and placement of the building additions; and (iii) appropriate landscaping relating to the building size and
8 scope. He stated the Commission can ask the applicant how they want to respond.
9

10 Chairperson Danley asked for the applicant's response in terms of timing to address the issues raised. Mr.
11 Camillucci discussed their options and agreed to attempt to address the neighbors' concerns with the
12 continuance proposal being acceptable to the church. He then clarified the issues to be addressed. The
13 Commission Members and the applicant discussed the timeline. Mr. Schoon then suggested the
14 Commission can make a motion to continue the request to a future meeting with the meeting to be re-
15 noticed when the applicant is ready. The audience members discussed options to form a committee to
16 make communications easier with the applicant. Mr. Camillucci asked for the matter to be continued to a
17 date certain as opposed to leaving the continuance open ended. Mr. Schoon confirmed they would work
18 with the applicant and neighbors in terms of continuing the matter to the December 18, 2024, meeting.
19 The Commission Members then discussed their availability.
20

21 Chairperson Danley then asked for a motion to continue the matter to the December 18, 2024, meeting.
22 Ms. Case moved to continue the application of Case No. 24-14-SU for Grace Presbyterian Church of the
23 North Shore to the December 18, 2024, meeting. Mr. Alt seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the
24 motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

25 AYES: Alt, Case, Danley, Enck, Subawalla

26 NAYS: None

27 NON-VOTING: Apatoff
28

29 **New Business.**

30 a. **November 20, 2024, Meeting – Quorum check.**

31 The Commission Members discussed their availability.
32

33 **Adjournment:**

34 Chairperson Danley asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Alt and seconded
35 by Mr. Enck. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 5 to 0:

36 AYES: Alt, Case, Danley, Enck, Subawalla

37 NAYS: None

38 NON-VOTING: Apatoff

39 The meeting was adjourned at 9:46 p.m.
40

41 Respectfully submitted,

42
43 Antionette Johnson

44 Recording Secretary