

**WINNETKA PLAN COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 22, 2025**

Members Present:

Layla Danley, Chairperson
Jonathan Alt
Matthew Bradley
Mamie Case
Chris Enck
Liz Kunkle
Cyrus Subawalla

Members Absent:

None

Non-Voting Members Present:

Rob Trustee Apatoff

Village Staff:

Scott Mangum, Community Development Director
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community
Development

Call to Order & Roll Call:

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Danley at 7:01 p.m. Ms. Klaassen took roll call of the Commission Members present.

Approval of April 10, 2025, Special Meeting Minutes:

Chairperson Danley asked for a motion to approve the April 10, 2025, special meeting minutes. A motion to approve the April 10, 2025, special meeting minutes was made by Mr. Bradley and the motion was seconded by Ms. Case. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 7 to 0:

AYES: Alt, Bradley Case, Danley, Enck, Kunkle, Subawalla

NAYS: None

NON-VOTING: Apatoff

Public Comment:

No comments were made at this time.

Community Development Report:

Mr. Mangum informed the Commission Members of the status of the final plat of subdivision for the consolidation, and the special use permit for 473 and 499 Sheridan Road.

New Applications:

a. **Case No. 25-03-SU: Hubbard Woods Metra Train Station (1065 Gage Street): An application seeking approval of a Special Use Permit to allow renovation of the existing train depot and train platform and construction of a new pedestrian bridge, new accessible ramps, new stairs and elevators to the train platform and new warming shelters. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this request.**

Ms. Klaassen summarized the special use permit application for the train depot renovation, new pedestrian bridge construction, new ADA accessible ramps, stairs and elevators to the train platform as well as new warming stations. She then identified the property's location, zoning classification and allowable uses via special use permit approval as well as the Comprehensive Plan designation. Ms. Klaassen referred to site photos of the existing improvements and various elevation renderings. She then

1 stated that due to the ongoing review by the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) of the proposed site
2 improvements, Metra and the applicant have provided options for the pedestrian bridge railing which she
3 described for the Commission and explained the need for a variation from the UP for option 2, which is
4 suggested by the applicant. Ms. Klaassen informed the Commission the ZBA and DRB were supportive of
5 option no. 2. She then identified the proposed landscaping plan which was reviewed and approved by the
6 Village Forester. She also summarized the DRB's and ZBA's review of the application and
7 recommendations of approval.

8
9 Ms. Klaassen stated following the applicant's presentation, public comment and Commission discussion,
10 a Commission Member may make a motion to either continue the matter to a date certain or consider a
11 motion recommending approval or denial with draft language included on page nos. 21 and 22. She stated
12 additional public correspondence was provided to the Commission and asked if there were any questions.

13
14 Chairperson Danley asked if the DRB's review only related to the elevator towers. Ms. Klaassen responded
15 that the DRB's only concern was with respect to the design of the proposed elevator towers and that they
16 were supportive of the application in other respects. Chairperson Danley asked if there would be no
17 landscaping in front of a sign she identified. Ms. Klaassen stated the applicant can provide more details
18 with respect to the proposed landscaping, but the intent would be that proposed landscaping would not
19 block the sign.

20
21 Mr. Enck asked if there is usable space underneath the east ramp. Ms. Klaassen responded no, the
22 renderings may not correctly depict the improvements below the ramp. Mr. Enck also asked if the elevator
23 towers are similar to those at the Elm Street station. Ms. Klaassen responded they are not similar and the
24 applicant can provide further information to explain the differences. Mr. Enck then referred to the railing
25 height discussion and asked if there are other 6 foot high railings in the Village. Ms. Klaassen confirmed
26 the Elm Street railings are not 6 feet. Mr. Bradley summarized the ZBA's discussion of the options and the
27 option presented would require a variation. He stated there would ultimately be a mandate for all of the
28 stations to be retrofitted to follow this railing height recommendation. Mr. Subawalla asked if the
29 applicant considered using a lift versus the ramp, which would have been less obtrusive. Ms. Klaassen
30 stated the applicant could respond to that question. No additional questions were raised at this time.

31
32 Chairperson Danley swore in those speaking to this matter. Glen Peters, Metra Senior Director of Capital
33 Projects, Patricia Davidson, TYLin International Project Manager and Roya Basirirad, Metra Project
34 Manager, introduced themselves to the Commission. Ms. Davidson asked if there were any questions.

35
36 Mr. Subawalla asked if there would not be warming shelters on the northbound side and questioned the
37 thought process behind the selection of option no. 2. He also questioned why the restored windbreaks
38 are so close to the warming shelter. Ms. Davidson referred to the greater amount of ridership going south
39 and noted the lower level of the elevator tower would be heated which would provide shelter. Mr. Peters
40 stated the 42 inch railing height would be similar to that at Elm Street but UP insisted on safety in terms
41 of the proposed height. He further explained the rationale for the proposed railing height. Mr. Alt stated
42 there have been no incidents in terms of safety. Mr. Peters stated they can start the request at 42 inches
43 and explained the timeline in terms of receiving a response from UP.

44
45 Ms. Case suggested there be warming shelters on the north side as well. Mr. Peters stated there is also
46 the depot in addition to the elevator tower to provide warmth. He added they do not want to overbuild.
47 Ms. Case asked for an explanation in terms of the elevator towers. Mr. Peters summarized the DRB's
48 concerns. He also stated adjustments can be made to the speakers in terms of noise, if necessary. Trustee

1 Apatoff asked if a lift was considered. Mr. Peters responded in terms of meeting ADA requirements; he
2 identified the main concern as inclement weather in connection with maintenance of a lift. Mr. Bradley
3 summarized the ZBA's concerns relating to whether the ramp can be mitigated in size and scope. Ms.
4 Davidson confirmed the ramp size met the minimum ADA requirements.

5
6 Mr. Enck referred to the Green Bay Trail and the gap between the road and the train below. Mr. Subawalla
7 referred to the massive retaining wall. The Commission Members and the applicant discussed an
8 illustration showing the proposed landscaping in that area and possible alternatives. Ms. Davidson
9 identified the precast wall elements and asked the Commission Members if they would prefer for them
10 to be left open. Mr. Bradley questioned why the bridge height is set where it is to justify the steps in
11 relation to the grade. Ms. Davidson responded it is a UP requirement to raise the bridge at that level which
12 necessitates the switchback. Mr. Peters provided further information relating to the bridge height
13 requirements. Mr. Bradley stated that the design of the west ramp was not presented or discussed at the
14 ZBA meeting and it appeared to be very steep. Ms. Davidson confirmed it would be fully ADA accessible
15 at a 5% incline. The Commission Members and the applicant discussed the ramp positioning in detail.

16
17 Chairperson Danley asked if there are speaker volume standards in terms of announcements. Mr. Peters
18 responded the riders need to be able to hear the announcements and with more speakers added, the
19 volume can be reduced. The Commission Members and the applicant further discussed the length and
20 width of the ramp and its elevations. No additional questions were raised at this time.

21
22 Chairperson Danley asked for public comment. She then swore in those speaking to this matter.

23
24 Michael Egan referred to the deteriorating bridge in downtown Winnetka and asked if the new bridge
25 would be more suitably constructed to endure the weather. Mr. Peters confirmed it would be constructed
26 with a reinforced polymer with a non-slip surface. No additional comments were made at this time.

27
28 Chairperson Danley then called the matter in for discussion. Mr. Bradley described the project as long
29 overdue and he did not want to hold up the project which is needed with it only being a matter of time
30 before there is a safety incident. He suggested they move with haste to get the approval done. Ms. Kunkle
31 described the Hubbard Woods station as unsafe and as an EFC member, she has received numerous
32 questions asking if anything can be done with regard to the train station. She described the request as a
33 no-brainer and added she would be okay with any of the height option iterations. Ms. Kunkle commented
34 a good job was done on the elevator towers and all of the aspects of the request with minor aesthetic
35 concerns that can be addressed later. Ms. Kunkle concluded she is in favor of the request. Mr. Enck agreed
36 with the comments made and initially would have suggested a compromise be reached in terms of a lower
37 bridge height. He concluded he is in favor of the request. Mr. Alt thanked the applicant for their
38 presentation and stated he would be in favor of option no. 1. Ms. Case stated she would be in favor of the
39 option presented, not the third option, and the applicant addressed her questions relating to noise
40 reduction. She added she would like to see another shelter on the west side and would be in favor of the
41 request. Mr. Subawalla agreed with the comments made and suggested consideration be given to
42 covering the retaining wall with landscaping and that a 42 inch railing height would be fine. Trustee
43 Apatoff stated a 6 foot height would make it appear more urban and he would be in favor of approving
44 the request. Chairperson Danley agreed the renovation is far overdue and with regard to the railings, the
45 smaller railing would be more contextually consistent with the neighborhood although the applicant has
46 numerous bodies administering requirements that must be adhered to. She agreed they do not want to
47 delay approval of the request and the Commission Members are not suggesting conditions be included
48 with an approval recommendation but suggestions be presented to the Village Council.

1 Chairperson Danley asked for a motion to recommend approval. A motion was made by Ms. Case to
2 recommend approval of the special use permit as outlined on page 16 to allow for the renovation of the
3 existing Hubbard Woods train depot and platform, construction of a new pedestrian bridge, new
4 accessible ramps, new stairs, elevators to the train platform and new warming shelters on the property
5 based on the evidence on record and findings of fact nos. 1-2 and (a)-(f). The motion was seconded by Ms.
6 Kunkle. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

7 AYES: Alt, Case, Danley, Enck, Kunkle, Subawalla

8 NAYS: None

9 NON-VOTING: Apatoff, Bradley

10
11 **b. Case No. 25-04-SD: 557 Orchard Lane and 561 Orchard Lane: Applications seeking approval of a**
12 **Final Plat of Subdivision to consolidate the two existing lots into a single lot of record. As part of the**
13 **Final Plat approval, the application includes a request of approval of a zoning variation to permit the**
14 **existing residence at 561 Orchard Lane to observe less than the minimum required side yard setback**
15 **from the west property line, which is due to an increase in the minimum required side yard setback as**
16 **a result of the proposed increase in total lot area and increase in average lot width. The Village Council**
17 **has final jurisdiction on this request.**

18 Ms. Klaassen identified the property's location, size and zoning classification and summarized the final
19 plat of subdivision application for the Commission. She stated the Comprehensive Plan designation
20 identified the property as appropriate for use as single family residential development and the applicant's
21 use of the property is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and zoning. Ms. Klaassen identified the
22 site's current photos noting a demolition permit was submitted for 557 Orchard and approved by the
23 Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) without delay. She summarized the lot's measurements as a
24 result of the plat of consolidation with the shed on the 557 Orchard parcel and the detached garage on
25 the 561 Orchard property to be removed and construction of an addition on the 561 Orchard parcel along
26 with new driveway configurations.

27
28 Ms. Klaassen stated the proposed consolidation complied with zoning standards with both lots being
29 nonconforming with regard to the existing lot area and minimum required average lot width. She then
30 explained why the proposed lot consolidation did not require a special use permit as well as why the home
31 at 561 Orchard would become nonconforming. Ms. Klaassen stated the Village Engineer reviewed the
32 plans and noted additional storm water detention would be required and explained how the storm water
33 system would be rerouted to allow storm water to be managed on site. She then summarized the HPC's
34 and ZBA's consideration of the application and its recommendation of approval.

35
36 Ms. Klaassen noted there are no audience members present and stated following the applicant's
37 presentation and Commission Member discussion, a Commissioner may wish to make a motion to either
38 continue the matter to a date certain or recommend approval or denial with draft language provided in
39 the application packet. She then asked if there were any questions.

40
41 Chairperson Danley referred to page 7 and the combination of two R-5 lots into an R-3 lot. Ms. Klaassen
42 confirmed the application process did not rezone the parcel, but the size of the proposed lot would be
43 similar to lots in the R-3 District. Trustee Apatoff asked if any neighbor comment was received. Ms.
44 Klaassen informed the Commission that one email was received in support of the request and is included
45 in the agenda packet. Mr. Bradley summarized the ZBA's consideration of the application. Trustee Apatoff
46 stated he was also concerned with regard to setting precedent and spoke with Village Attorney Peter
47 Friedman who assured him such applications are considered on a case by case basis. No additional
48 questions were raised at this time.

1 Chairperson Danley swore in those speaking to this matter. Katherine Kirkpatrick informed the
2 Commission they sent 21 letters to their neighbors concerning the application and no negative feedback
3 was received rather they received overwhelming support of the project. She provided the Commission
4 Members with background regarding the request to alleviate driveway congestion and the renovation plans
5 to accommodate an in-law suite. Ms. Kirkpatrick stated the current property represented a hazard and
6 four existing nonconformities would be eliminated. She also stated the request would also not alter the
7 neighborhood's immediate character.

8
9 Ms. Case asked if there would be any access from the second floor into the new addition. Ms. Kirkpatrick
10 explained how it would only be accessed from the first floor. Ms. Case then questioned the Village's stance
11 on in-law suites. Ms. Klaassen explained that separate dwelling units are not allowed which are accessed
12 independently. As proposed the second floor living space above the garage would not be accessed
13 independently. Chairperson Danley asked if 557 Orchard was listed on the market. Ms. Kirkpatrick
14 responded it may not have been listed on the MLS and explained it has been unoccupied since 2019. She
15 informed the Commission of their discussions with the property's trustee in terms of acquiring the
16 property. Ms. Case asked if the large tree in the front would remain. Ms. Kirkpatrick confirmed that is
17 correct. Mr. Subawalla questioned the new addition's size. Ms. Klaassen referred to page 10. Ms.
18 Kirkpatrick stated their home measured approximately 4,700 square feet. Ms. Klaassen explained the
19 existing home's permitted GFA with the addition resulting in it measuring 5,052 square feet. No additional
20 questions were raised at this time.

21
22 Chairperson Danley called the matter in for discussion. Mr. Enck summarized the HPC's consideration of
23 the demolition application for 557 Orchard. Ms. Kunkle stated she had no concerns regarding the request
24 and specifically referred to the fact the neighbors are in support of the request. Mr. Bradley referred to
25 the amount of time spent by the Commission in connection with the Comprehensive Plan to preserve
26 diverse housing stock. He suggested additional plans be implemented to achieve the goal of preserving
27 housing stock and not reduce it by allowing lot consolidations. Mr. Alt thanked the applicant for going
28 through their due diligence with regard to the application and referred to the setback next to 565 Orchard.
29 He stated after consulting with the neighbors, they were very much in favor of the abandoned home being
30 removed and he would be in favor of the request. Ms. Case stated the variation is minimal and as a result
31 of the applicant's testimony, she is in favor of the request. She also agreed with Mr. Bradley's comments.
32 Trustee Apatoff stated the matter would be added to the Village Council study session agenda. Mr.
33 Subawalla agreed with the comments made. Chairperson Danley also stated she had concerns with
34 consolidations of this nature and the change to the neighborhood character. She agreed the home at 557
35 Orchard needed to come down and with the suggestion that the matter be raised at a Village Council
36 study session. Chairperson Danley also stated she is in favor of the request although she is concerned with
37 regard to the loss of R-5 lots in the Village.

38
39 Chairperson Danley then asked for a motion. A motion was made by Mr. Alt to recommend approval of
40 the 557 Orchard and 561 Orchard final consolidation plat into a single lot of record which required a zoning
41 variation for 561 Orchard to allow a minimum west side yard setback of 5.98 feet which met the
42 subdivision code standards for approval and that the proposed subdivision is consistent with the
43 Comprehensive Plan's land use map designation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kunkle. A vote was
44 taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

45 AYES: Alt, Case, Danley, Enck, Kunkle, Subawalla

46 NAYS: None

47 NON-VOTING: Apatoff, Bradley

48

1 **New Business:**

2 a. May 28, 2025, Meeting – Quorum Check.

3 The Commission Members discussed their availability.

4

5 **Adjournment:**

6 Chairperson Danley asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bradley and
7 seconded by Mr. Alt. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 7 to 0:

8 AYES: Alt, Bradley, Case, Danley, Enck, Kunkle, Subawalla

9 NAYS: None

10 NON-VOTING: Apatoff

11

12 The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

13

14 Respectfully submitted,

15

16 Antionette Johnson

17 Recording Secretary