

1 **Winnetka Design Review Board/Sign Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes**  
2 **April 16, 2026**

3 **Members Present:**

Katie Moor, Chairperson  
Chris Baggett  
Westley Barker  
Colin Kennedy  
Heather Niehoff  
Peter Evanich

9 **Members Absent:**

Fritz Duda

10 **Village Staff:**

Davorka Kirincic, Building and Code Enforcement  
Manager  
Scott Mangum, Community Development Director  
Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community  
Development

16 **Village Attorney:**

Peter Friedman

17 **Call to Order & Roll Call:**

18 Chairperson Moor called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken of the Board Members present.

19 **Public Comments:**

20 No public comments were made at this time.

21 **Approval of Minutes:**

22 Chairperson Moor asked if there were any comments or corrections to the March 26, 2026, meeting  
23 minutes. A motion to approve the March 26, 2026, meeting minutes was made by Member Baggett and  
24 seconded by Member Barker. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed, 6–0.

25 AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Niehoff, Moor

26 NAYS: None

27 **Continued Applications:**

28 **a. Case No. 26-02-DR: 1050 Scott Avenue — Hubbard Woods Public Parking Structure: A Certificate of**  
29 **Appropriateness to allow installation of a new externally illuminated wall sign above the entrance of**  
30 **the public parking structure (Amended case).**

31 Ms. Kirincic summarized the revised application, noting the Board previously requested alternative  
32 designs. Four options were presented: two plaque sign options and two pin-mounted letter options.  
33 Lighting was reduced from four fixtures to three as directed by the Board.

1 The applicant, Tom Powers, Director of Public Works, noted that gold lettering was not recommended  
2 due to low contrast and indicated preference for black or bronze. Option 1 was believed to offer best  
3 visibility and alignment with Village streetscape signage.

4 Board members discussed contrast, visibility, aesthetics, and consistency with Village design guidelines.  
5 General consensus favored Option 1 plaque sign with black lettering and three black gooseneck fixtures.

6 Chairperson Moor asked if there was any public comment and there was none.

7 A motion was made by Member Niehoff, second by Member Barker, to approve Option 1 as presented  
8 with three black gooseneck light fixtures. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously passed, 6  
9 to 0:

10 AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Niehoff, Moor

11 NAYS: None

12 **New Applications:**

13 **a. Case No. 26-03-DR: 588 Lincoln Avenue — Rail Splitter Capital Management: A Certificate of**  
14 **Appropriateness to allow storefront improvements at Subject Property.**

15 Ms. Kirincic reviewed the façade changes. No new signage was requested.

16 Dave Szafarz, representing Downey Szafarz Architects, explained that the proposal for 588 Lincoln  
17 Avenue was intended to refresh and modernize a worn storefront while maintaining its existing layout  
18 and overall character. He stated that the new design keeps the door and windows in their current  
19 locations but replaces them with a new wood door and new wood-framed windows. The surrounding  
20 storefront panels would also be replaced with real painted wood to provide an updated and more  
21 refined appearance. He also described the plan to install three new LED lighting fixtures with clear  
22 cylinders, ensuring the lighting would complement the updated materials.

23 Board members responded with questions and comments focused on lighting and long-term flexibility  
24 of the façade. Member Barker asked for clarification on whether the lighting would use a clear lens, and  
25 Mr. Szafarz confirmed that it would. Member Niehoff inquired about why the fixtures were located  
26 within the lower horizontal band rather than the upper band, and Mr. Szafarz explained that the design  
27 team preferred the proportions created by their current placement. Member Niehoff noted that  
28 positioning the lights higher could potentially serve future storefront signage, though this was not a  
29 requirement for the current application.

30 The Board generally expressed appreciation for the clean appearance of the proposed updates and  
31 agreed that the improvements were appropriate for the building and consistent with the Village's design  
32 standards. No concerns were raised about the materials or design approach, and the Board concluded  
33 that the application was straightforward, aesthetically suitable, and ready for approval.

34 Chairperson Moor asked if there was any public comment and there was none.

35 A motion was made by Member Evanich, second by Member Kennedy, to approve the application as  
36 submitted. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed, 6–0.

1 AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Niehoff, Moor  
2 NAYS: None

3 **b. Case No. 25-28-SU: 225 Sheridan Road — Centennial Beach: A Certificate of Appropriateness to**  
4 **allow installation of fencing on the existing beach. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this**  
5 **request.**

6 Ms. Klaassen presented a thorough overview of the two fence proposals submitted for Centennial Beach  
7 and explained the procedural context for the Design Review Board’s review. She emphasized that the  
8 DRB’s role was limited to evaluating the design appropriateness of the proposed fencing and did not  
9 include consideration of land-use questions or the merits of the off-leash dog beach itself. Ms. Klaassen  
10 reviewed both the original plan, which was the plan presented to the Plan Commission, which consisted  
11 of galvanized chain-link fencing extending into the lake, and the new plan, which was the plan presented  
12 to the ZBA, which consisted of black vinyl-coated chain-link, mounted to the existing steel groins and  
13 reduced the overall footprint of the dog beach. She noted that both the Plan Commission and the ZBA  
14 had previously recommended denial of the related special use permit, but that those decisions were  
15 independent of the DRB’s design-focused evaluation.

16 Ms. Klaassen also explained that the Village’s design guidelines were originally created for commercial  
17 districts and institutional buildings and therefore did not perfectly align with lakefront conditions. She  
18 highlighted compliance matters such as allowable fence height, described the planned seasonal removal  
19 of some fence sections, and summarized the procedural steps available to the Board. Ms. Klaassen then  
20 asked if there were any questions for staff. There were none at this time.

21 Mr. Kutulas spoke on behalf of the Winnetka Park District and explained that the intent of the project  
22 was to restore and properly manage Centennial Beach as an off-leash dog beach in compliance with  
23 Village and Cook County regulations. He stated that fencing was intended to keep dogs safely contained,  
24 prevent movement to adjacent beaches—including the soon-to-reopened Elder Lane Beach—and  
25 ensure that the Park District met all regulatory obligations.

26 Mr. Kutulas described how the revised plan was developed in response to community feedback, noting  
27 that it significantly reduced the size of the fenced area and added a dedicated pedestrian bypass so  
28 people could walk the shoreline without entering the dog area. He explained the choice of black  
29 vinyl-coated chain-link fencing as a pragmatic response to harsh lakefront conditions, emphasizing  
30 durability and reduced visual impact compared to galvanized metal. He also outlined the seasonal  
31 removal of fence segments to prevent ice damage, the shift of key-fob access from the bluff to the  
32 beach level, and the functional reasons for placing fencing on existing steel groins.

33 Mr. Kutulas presented fence material samples to the Board and acknowledged that decorative or  
34 heavier architectural fencing had been considered but determined such materials would be vulnerable  
35 to wave action, ice, and shifting sand, making chain-link the only feasible option for a temporary but  
36 necessary containment solution. He concluded by reiterating that the Park District attempted to balance  
37 safety, public access, environmental conditions, and community feedback while preserving this  
38 long-standing community amenity.

39 Chairperson Moor asked for public comment and swore in those speaking to this matter.

- 1 Kim Marsh, 360 Forest – Expressed long-term use of the dog beach and strong opposition to fencing.  
2 She stated that chain-link fencing would further harm already obstructed views, diminish the natural  
3 beauty of Centennial Beach, and be “unconscionable.” Ms. Marsh then provided a photograph  
4 illustrating the vista concern.
- 5 Joanna Karatzas, 476 Provident Avenue – Argued that the DRB cannot meaningfully separate design  
6 aesthetics from shoreline conditions such as groins, breakwaters, and property lines. She raised  
7 concerns specifically about the south fence, stating the geometry “pinches” awkwardly and does not  
8 work in plan view. Ms. Karatzas suggested that fencing into the lake may be unnecessary because  
9 existing rock structures discourage dog passage. She recommended a simpler gate at the top of the  
10 south steps instead of extending fencing lakeward.
- 11 Susie Schreiber, 152 Glenwood – Provided comments from the perspective of lake users (swimmers,  
12 paddlers, kayakers). She stated that Lake Michigan conditions can change rapidly and black chain-link  
13 fencing may be difficult to see from the water, posing collision or entrapment risk. Ms. Schreiber raised  
14 concerns about obstructing rescue operations and creating new safety hazards. She also noted potential  
15 accumulation of invasive mussels on fence structures.
- 16 Linda Welch,– Opposed fencing based on aesthetics, safety, and community sentiment. She noted that  
17 past fencing remnants caused hazards. Ms. Welch expressed concern that new fencing would mar the  
18 beauty of the beach and could trap dogs, wildlife, or people. She concluded that if fencing is required,  
19 the area should revert to a people-only beach rather than degrade a natural setting.
- 20 David Stevens, 333 Sheridan Road – Noted that chain-link fencing contradicts the design standards  
21 applied to the rest of the Village. Mr. Stevens argued the lakefront should not be treated like a  
22 residential/commercial site and that extending fencing into the lake is inappropriate. He believes fencing  
23 is unnecessary, unsafe, and unattractive.
- 24 Peggy Martay, Sunset Road – Spoke about Winnetka’s identity as “beautiful land.” She compared the  
25 proposed fencing to other rejected aesthetic elements in Village history (e.g., “golden arches”). Ms.  
26 Martay urged the DRB to deny the request based on aesthetics and to preserve the appearance of  
27 Centennial Beach.
- 28 Tom Borders, Old Green Bay Road – Framed comments around public access and civic responsibility. He  
29 asserted that a fenced dog beach serves a small percentage of residents while restricting shoreline  
30 access for families. Mr. Borders believes the Park District’s investment in fencing contradicts traditional  
31 concepts of shared public land.
- 32 Steve Juliusson, 1436 Asbury Avenue – Criticized the proposal as unnecessary (no major incidents over  
33 30 years), unreliable (prone to damage by lake conditions), and unsafe (barrier could slow rescue efforts  
34 or create hazards). He called the fencing “ugly” and predicted that the consequences of installing it  
35 could be worse than the aesthetic impact.
- 36 Melissa Mizel – Argued that fencing and some associated signage act as “repellents” to public beach use.  
37 She criticized wording on recently installed signage as intentionally discouraging the public from using  
38 the beach and lakefront. Ms. Mizel described fencing as limiting access and benefiting interests other  
39 than the general public. She urged the DRB to stand for “good, true, and beautiful.”

1 Maggie Hayes, 525 Orchard Lane – Shared personal appreciation for Centennial Beach’s natural beauty.  
2 She explained that she opposed “uglification” of the beachfront through chain-link fencing. Ms. Hayes  
3 expressed concern about cost and about altering a well-used space and enjoyed during all seasons. She  
4 stated long-term use of the beach does not justify physical barriers.

5 Dave Robertson, longtime resident near Centennial – Opposed fencing and expressed concern that  
6 fencing supports private interests over community-wide public access. He characterized the lakefront as  
7 an important public resource that should remain open and unobstructed.

8 Chairperson Moor emphasized the DRB’s limited purview — design appropriateness, not policy or  
9 land-use decisions. She highlighted the Board’s responsibility to evaluate materials, quality, aesthetics,  
10 and alignment with Village design standards.

11 Member Niehoff expressed concern that chain-link fencing is materially inappropriate for a natural  
12 waterfront setting. She stated she prefers natural materials and higher-quality design solutions  
13 consistent with Village standards elsewhere.

14 Chairperson Moor stated chain-link fencing is not aligned with design expectations for the Village;  
15 compared it to selecting low-grade materials in commercial design review. She encouraged exploring  
16 alternative materials and more thoughtful design.

17 Member Kennedy supported a motion to deny based on inappropriate design.

18 Member Barker concurred that chain-link fencing is not appropriate and supported the motion for  
19 denial.

20 A motion was made by Member Kennedy, second by Member Barker, to direct staff and the Village  
21 Attorney to prepare written findings recommending denial of the Certificate of Appropriateness for both  
22 the Original Plan and the New Plan. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed, 6–0.

23 AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Niehoff, Moor

24 NAYS: None

25 **Other Business.**

26 a. May 21, 2026, Meeting – Quorum Check.

27 The Board Members discussed their availability.  
28

29 **Adjournment:**

30 Chairperson Moor asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Niehoff and  
31 seconded by Mr. Baggett. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously passed, 6 to 0:

32 AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Niehoff, Moor

33 NAYS: None  
34

35 The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.