Minutes adopted July 16, 2026.

Winnetka Design Review Board/Sign Board of Appeals Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2026

Members Present:	Katie Moor, Chairperson
	Chris Baggett
	Wesley Barker
	Peter Evanich
	Colin Kennedy
	Heather Niehoff
Members Absent:	Fritz Duda
Village Staff:	Scott Mangum, Director of Community Development
	Ann Klaassen, Assistant Director of Community Development

Call to Order & Roll Call:
Chairperson Moor called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken of the Board Members present.

Public Comments:
No comments were made at this time.

Approval of Minutes:
Chairperson Moor asked if there were any comments or corrections or for a motion to approve the May 7, 2026, special meeting minutes. A motion to approve the May 7, 2026, special meeting minutes was made by Mr. Baggett and seconded by Mr. Barker. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:
AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Moor, Niehoff
NAYS: None

Chairperson Moor then asked if there were any comments or corrections or for a motion to approve the May 21, 2026, regula meeting minutes. A motion to approve the May 21, 2026, regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Evanich and seconded by Mr. Kennedy. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:
AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Moor, Niehoff
NAYS: None

Continued Cases:

a. **Case No. 25-19-PD: 901-05, 907-09, 911-13 Green Bay Road and 1007-11 Tower Court – Tower Court Condominiums Preliminary Planned Development: Certificate of Appropriateness to allow construction of a new four-story mixed-use building as part of a planned development. The Village Council has final jurisdiction on this request.**

Ms. Klaassen summarized the amended planned development plan for the Tower Court condominium project and the Board's previous consideration of the application at the June meeting. She noted that in the amended plan the fourth floor would be pulled back an additional 24 feet which resulted in one less residential unit, there would be an introduction of slate on the fourth-floor façade and a building height reduction as well as a balcony design change. Ms. Klaassen referred to illustrations of comparisons of the prior and revised proposals.

Ms. Klaassen then referred to the items the Board is to consider in their Certificate of Appropriateness review as well as the design guidelines for reviewing the project. She stated no additional public correspondence was received and read Mr. Duda's comments into the record. Ms. Klaassen then asked if there were any questions.

Chairperson Moor also asked if there were any questions. No questions were raised at this time. She then asked for the applicant's presentation.

Jon Talty, OKW Architects, introduced the applicant team and stated he would explain the building's modifications. He first summarized how the project developed and stated the housing demand need in the community is important with the development helping to satisfy that need. Mr. Talty then referred to the prior renderings and the issues raised by the Board. He stated the proposal would maintain the street edge appearance while including ground floor commercial space as well as custom residential condominium units. Mr. Talty explained their consideration of the fourth-floor setback, building materials and balconies and how the proposal was revised to address the Board's concerns in detail.

Mr. Talty referred to the revised building rendering which showed an occupied terrace and diminished fourth-floor building mass. He also described the revised proposed balcony material as well as north and east rendering elevations which he described for the Board. Mr. Talty noted the fourth-floor materiality did not change for the condominium entry. He reiterated the fourth floor would not be visible from the street and that the mechanical elements would also not be visible.

Mr. Talty provided information with regard to the first-floor commercial space tenant interest and confirmed there would not be a first floor restaurant tenant. He referred to illustrations with regard to estimates of how the floor spaces would be divided with there being no more than 14 residential units. Mr. Talty stated they are cognizant of the building's context in the community and the detailing associated with it with the proposal resulting in it becoming a befitting neighbor in the community. Mr. Talty then described the material sample board and referred to the proposed generous floor heights with the building's height becoming a function of the floor heights. He also referred to street views of the building context which would read as having a three-story mass and described each floor's material composition. Mr. Talty also referred to a comparison of the proposed building to the existing Europa Motors building, which is a similar height.

Mr. Talty then referred to elevations and sections which include floor-to-floor height information as well as ground floor detailing. He also referred to the shadow study which was performed and stated there would be no negative impact to the neighbors. Mr. Talty stated with regard to landscaping, he explained how the drive aisle would operate in terms of flow and traffic access and that it would be landscaped and adhere to the Green Bay corridor design guidelines and Village design standards. He stated in connection with lighting, there would be individually controlled balcony lighting and wall sconces and there would be street lighting for the retail tenants and modest lighting at the residential entry. Mr. Talty then asked for Board Member comments on the revised design.

Chairperson Moor asked if there were any questions. Mr. Evanich asked where the delivery/pickup area would be. Mr. Talty responded there would be a dedicated parking spot for deliveries and the corridor would not be blocked. No additional questions were raised at this time.

Chairperson Moor asked for public comment. No comments were made at this time. She then called the matter in for discussion.

Chairperson Moor thanked the applicant for making the modifications made and described the site as complex which would become a catalyst for future development. She suggested the Board Members be mindful of the Green Bay Road thoroughfare. Chairperson Moor then stated the fourth-floor setback made a big difference but they should be concerned with scale and they do not want it to overwhelm the block. She described the project as an exciting opportunity for growth and to make sure to preserve and enhance what is there while being cognizant of quality. Chairperson Moor also referred to successful North Shore developments and asked for the Board Members' comments.

Ms. Niehoff stated the changes made went in the right direction and agreed with Chairperson Moor's comments with regard to the project's importance. She stated the building should fit in and enhance the community although there are different building styles around it. Ms. Niehoff stated there is a height issue and referred to the wall expression, especially on Green Bay Road. She asked if studies can be done in terms of other options of design options and commented it did not feel cohesive. Ms. Niehoff referred to the flat roof lines as an example.

Chairperson Moor referred to the illustration of the block view of the surrounding buildings and the line of two-story buildings. She stated she still struggled with the overall mass as well as the length. Mr. Talty agreed in terms of being cognizant of the street wall, which is why the corners were pushed back. He stated from the street, the building mass would be imperceptible. Mr. Talty also stated with regard to neighbor rhythm, he explained the comparison of surrounding buildings in terms of the street wall's rhythm.

Mr. Evanich referred to the south elevation and the lack of setbacks on the second and third floors. He also suggested setting back the third floor by 1-2 feet in order to provide visual setback relief. Ms. Niehoff agreed with the comments made. She also suggested the articulation be broken up to make it appear to be separate buildings which would help break up the perceived scale. Mr. Talty responded they attempted to do that by showing the three bay rhythm and pushing the corners back as opposed to creating two different architectures. He commented the building is not that big and is as long as the building to the south and similar to Walgreen's to the north. Mr. Talty referred to the prior conversation in that the building would be 3 feet 8 inches taller than what is allowed, which he described as imperceptible. Mr. Evanich stated they are specifically discussing the three-story element on Green Bay Road, not the actual dimension of height.

Chairperson Moor stated the Board is to consider whether the proposed building is contextually appropriate for the block and the community. She stated she continued to struggle that it fit in and referred specifically to the corner as well as the two-story condominium entrance. Ms. Niehoff stated the residential entry reads as four stories, and the fourth floor should be set back throughout and at the residential entry. She also noted that the Green Bay Road setback on the fourth floor was successful. Chairperson Moor and Ms. Niehoff stated they are not fans of balconies on Green Bay Road and suggested they be eliminated. Mr. Talty stated the surrounding buildings are 100 years old and were not built with balconies at that time. Chairperson Moor stated fully enclosed balconies would present as a wall and she would like to see options that incorporate that. Chairperson Moor suggested going back to the drawing board to consider other options.

Chairperson Moor stated while it might be frustrating for the applicant to hear these types of comments at this scale, it would be helpful to step back and look at general initial concepts which may work in order for them to feel comfortable with the end result. Mr. Barker agreed with the comments made and stated he appreciated the collaborative dialogue which resulted in the significant change. He stated while cutting the corners back helped the Green Bay Road appearance, they appreciate the difference in pulling the fourth floor back. Mr. Barker agreed the third floor being cut back would help as well. He then stated he appreciated the addition of the driveway off of Green Bay Road and the potential pedestrian corridor on the Tower Court side. Mr. Barker stated the proposal would add neighborhood value, but the massing is still significant and took away from the Hubbard Woods character and charm. He also suggested having a gabled or elevation change to not make it appear to be a massive block would be helpful.

Mr. Talty asked the Board Members if they felt most of the challenge represented it being on Green Bay Road. Ms. Niehoff suggested options to enhance the building entry while noting that façade is critical. Mr. Talty referred to the neighboring property line and their inability to have any effect on that property until that south property is developed. Ms. Niehoff described all the elevations as being important, but in terms of hierarchy Green Bay Road is the most important elevation, but the corner off of Green Bay as it goes east is quite important as well. She explained that the south elevation would probably be priority two and from the east would be priority three.

Chairperson Moor asked if there were any other comments. Mr. Kennedy stated what he struggled with is that Hubbard Woods has a smaller building scale giving a more intimate feel which he read from the design guidelines. He struggled with the buildings on either side and the sight lines, roof lines and the flat third floor roof line. Mr. Talty stated it would be disingenuous to add a Tudor element to the building. He stated in his opinion, the balconies should not be enclosed. Mr. Evanich stated while he did not mind the flat roof, there should be some relief in the façade.

Chairperson Moor stated while they are up against development and changing times, she did not want that. She stated buildings such as this would fit in downtown Highland Park but not in Hubbard Woods. She suggested they take a step back and look at options in a more sketch-drawn form before they fully dive in with the entire building, landscaping, lighting, etc., which they have asked applicants to do in the past.

Mr. Talty stated as a Village resident, they presented something similar to the Village Council to start the planned development process which gave their blessing in terms of the type of housing, retail quality, etc. He stated if they went back to square one and designed the building and site and then go back to the Village Council, they would say this is not what they were initially shown. Mr. Talty stated while they are perceptive to the Board's comments, it would ultimately be reviewed by the Village Council.

Mr. Baggett asked if there was precedent with the Village Council and the Board meeting collectively. Ms. Klaassen responded there has not. She stated the Open Meetings Act would have to be adhered to and the Village Council is looking for recommendations from the advisory bodies. Ms. Klaassen stated while she understood Mr. Talty's concerns, if there is not room for much change to the current proposal, the Board could move forward with a recommendation, even if it is not favorable, with the Village Council having final jurisdiction. She said then the Village Council could send it back to the DRB if it so chooses.

Mr. Baggett stated while they all agreed with the need for this type of housing, the development needed to be done right and match the neighborhood and community sentiment. He commented it needed to change dramatically the way it looked. He suggested figuring out a way to work with the other boards.

Ms. Niehoff suggested Mr. Talty provide several alternatives to the Board which included the Board's comments. Mr. Talty stated they would be willing to take into consideration the Board's comments, and he would agree to provide more sketch drawn illustrations for the Board's review.

Chairperson Moor stated in connection with the retail element, she asked for the windows to be reconsidered to make it fit in better. She stated she also struggled with the arched openings. Mr. Talty explained the reasoning for it. The Board Members discussed the building base materials.

Chairperson Moor stated to recap, the items to consider are: (i) looking at the southside of the building; (ii) breaking down the four story wall that exists over the condominium entrance and bring down the height of the residential entrance, (iii) continuing to provide alternatives for the southwest corner of the building and the northeast view, (iv) potential for breaking up the elevation to change the building appearance to have more of a two building appearance, (v) change the appearance of the outdoor space on Green Bay Road to maintain the village character of Hubbard Woods rather than presenting an urban appearance with the balconies, (vi) for the retail base, revisit the windows to make them look more Hubbard Woods scaled versus the windows to the ground, (vii) explore alternative roof line options.

Mr. Talty stated it would be difficult to reach a consensus but agreed to take the Board's comments into consideration. Chairperson Moor stated the presentation may help the Board reach a direction which would make the building more appropriate for the neighborhood. Mr. Kennedy stated he is worried they are providing too many different contexts.

Peter Witmer, one of the developers and architects, informed the Board with some of their Lake Forest projects, casual workshops were held to consider ideas quickly so that a lot of time is not wasted. He suggested they meet to consider and gather information offline. Ms. Klaassen stated it may be possible to be done in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Chairperson Moor agreed that would be a productive alternative.

Chairperson Moor asked for a motion to continue the matter to the next Board meeting. Mr. Baggett moved to continue Case No. 25-19-PD to the July 16, 2026, meeting. Mr. Barker seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:
AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Moor, Niehoff
NAYS: None

The Board Members decided to appoint Ms. Niehoff and Chairperson Moor as the Board Members who would meet with the applicant in the interim to review more conceptual sketches.

Other Business.

a. July 16, 2026, Regular Meeting – Quorum Check.

The Board Members discussed their availability.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Moor asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Niehoff and seconded by Mr. Barker. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously passed, 6 to 0:
AYES: Baggett, Barker, Evanich, Kennedy, Moor, Niehoff
NAYS: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Antionette Johnson
Recording Secretary