



MEETING MINUTES

LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, May 8th, 2024

7:00 PM

Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle City Council Chambers

Members Present: Matt Rodgers, Max Puchtel, Brian Johnson, Kiril Mirintchev, Kristine Westerberg, George Halik, Myrna Arevalo, Jeanne Lindwall

Members Absent: John Hewko

Staff Present: Neighborhood Land Use Planner Meagan Jones and Zoning Administrator Melissa Klotz

Presiding Member: Matt Rodgers

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rodgers opened the meeting at 7:02 PM. A roll call was then done and a quorum was determined to be present.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Lindwall noted an edit needed to the presiding member of the previous meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Lindwall moved to approve the minutes.

Seconded: Commissioner Westerberg

Ayes: Puchtel, Johnson, Mirintchev, Westerberg, Halik, Lindwall

Nays:

Abstain: Rodgers, Arevalo

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Public Hearing: Special Use | 1819 - 1825 Dodge Avenue | 24ZMJV-0017

John Turner, architect, submits for a Special Use for an addition to expand a Religious Institution, Seventh Day Adventist Church, in the R4 General Residential District (Section 6-8-5-3). The applicant requests expansion of currently existing Special Use Ordinance 21-O-80 that granted the original construction and use of the Religious Institution at 1825 Dodge Avenue.

Expansion for an addition at 1819-1823 Dodge Avenue was subsequently approved by Special Use and Major Variation Ordinance 63-O-09. The approved Major Variation for impervious surface coverage remains in-tact and does not expire; however the Special Use expansion of Ordinance 63-O-09 is expired since the expansion did not occur within one year of Special Use approval (Section 6-3-5-15). The applicant requests re-approval of the expansion for a Religious Institution as was granted in Ordinance 63-O-09 with no substantial changes or modifications requested from that previous proposal. The Land Use Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the determining body for this case in accordance with Section 6-3-5 of the Evanston Zoning Code. PINs: 10-13-214-046-0000, 10-13-214-014-0000, 10-13-214-015-0000

John Turner provided a background on the proposed project, giving some history of the church and design details on what is proposed.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Westerberg inquired about the setback dimensions and fencing plans. Chair Rodgers confirmed plans for the repurposing of the existing sanctuary space and overall changes to the plan.

Staff clarified procedural questions and the reasoning behind the re-approval process.

Public Comment

Rodney Green, Resident of the Fifth Ward, Evanston, stated support of the expansion due to the church's community involvement and history, then highlighted the need for expansion due to increased membership, urging timely approval without delays.

Deliberations

Discussion included the adherence to zoning requirements, the positive community impact, and procedural efficiency. Commissioners discussed potential future adjustments to zoning processes to streamline similar approvals.

The proposed Special Use must follow the Standards for a Special Use (Section 6-3-5-10) For the Land Use Commission to recommend that the City Council grant a special use, the LUC must find that each proposed special use:

6-3-5-10 Special Use Standards

1. It is one of the special uses specifically listed in the zoning ordinance; A religious institution is a permitted Special Use within the residential district so this standard is met.
2. It is in keeping with purposes and policies of the adopted comprehensive general plan and the zoning ordinance as amended from time to time; The Comprehensive Plan does seek to allow institutions to expand or update their

properties in order to meet the needs of their businesses. The expansion is also proposed to go into what is currently a vacant lot so this standard is met.

3. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect, when its effect is considered in conjunction with the cumulative effect of various special uses of all types on the immediate neighborhood and the effect of the proposed type of special use upon the City as a whole; Churches do play roles where they also have positive community impacts and this church has been part of the neighborhood for some time so this standard is met.
4. It does not interfere with or diminish the value of property in the neighborhood; Similar to standard 3, this is an improvement to an existing facility that will make it more functional so this standard is met
5. It can be adequately served by public facilities and services; Nothing stated during the hearing leads to the belief that the property would not be able to adapt facilities and services to meet its needs so this standard is met.
6. It does not cause undue traffic congestion; Churches are typically neighborhood institutions with people coming from a short distance. Expansion of parking will be off of the alley and will limit street congestion so this standard is met.
7. It preserves significant historical and architectural resources; Though not a landmark, the building has existed for sometime and the applicant is seeking to make addition fit with what is existing so this standard is met.
8. It preserves significant natural and environmental features; The proposed addition will maintain mature trees and add additional landscaping so this standard is met.
9. It complies with all other applicable regulations of the district in which it is located and other applicable ordinances, except to the extent such regulations have been modified through the planned development process or the grant of a variation. No reason to believe anything will be done to violate any other existing regulations. This standard is met.

Motion: Recommend approval with conditions as described below:

- 1. Substantial compliance with the documents and testimony on record.**
- 2. The Applicant shall construct a sub-surface stormwater detention system on the subject property that shall be subject to review and approval by the City's Public Works Agency.**
- 3. Recordation of the special use ordinance with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds is required.**

Motion: Commissioner Lindwall

Second: Commissioner Puchtel

Ayes: Rodgers, Puchtel, Johnson, Mirintchev, Westerberg, Halik, Arevalo, Lindwall

Nays:

Abstained:

**B Public Hearing: Special Use & Major Variation | 1567 Maple Avenue |
24ZMJV-0014**

Jeffrey Clements, member, submits for a Special Use for a Religious Institution, 2nd Church of Christ, Scientist, in the D3 Downtown Core Development District (Section 6-11-4-3) and a Major Variation to add zero parking spaces where 4 parking spaces are required to establish a Religious Institution in an existing building in a downtown district (6-16 Table 16-B, 6-16-1-2). The Land Use Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the determining body for this case in accordance with Section 6-3-5 and 6-3-8 of the Evanston Zoning Code. PINs: 11-18-310-028-0000, 11-18-310-033-0000

Mr. Mauck introduced himself as a 50-year resident of Evanston and attorney representing the Second Church of Christ, Scientist. He explained their request for a variation and special use permit to operate a church in a D3 District. Chuck Carrington, part of the church's leadership, then provided a historical overview.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Puchtel asked for clarification on why the church chose the religious institution classification over a cultural facility. Mr. Mauck replied that the church preferred to be transparent and follow the appropriate classification for its primary religious use. Ms. Klotz added the applicant did not wish to have any storefront uses and keep the use to its congregation

Commissioner Halik asked about signage and how they plan to manage window visibility. Jeff Clements stated there are plans to include modest identification signage. Blinds in the sanctuary will be raised during services to avoid distraction. They aim to maintain an open, friendly storefront similar to their Central Street location.

Further discussion occurred regarding typical service times and attendance, possible organizations that the church may partner with and if thought was given to combining the Reading Room activities with this space and parking specifics.

Public Comment

Jeff Borini, 1800 Ridge, expressed respect for the Church representatives and asked that the Commission consider the possible economic impacts of this use and how it fits in a larger plan. Discussion followed on how consideration of the property coming off of tax rolls may apply to the standards of approval and how zoning ordinance made expansion at the existing reading room site difficult.

Deliberations

Several commissioners supported the move to the downtown location, recognizing it as a more suitable fit compared to the Central Street option. The downtown area offers better parking facilities and accessibility for church members. Some additional

discussion occurred around the frequency of use of the space and general encouragement of retail in the downtown area.

Standards for Approval In order for the Land Use Commission to approve the requested variation, the proposed request must meet the Standards for Major Variation (Section 6-3-8-12-E):

1. The requested variation will not have a substantial adverse impact on the use, enjoyment or property values of adjoining properties; The requirement of 4 parking spaces will not greatly impact the neighborhood and there is a potential agreement to use bank parking spaces. Standard is met.
2. The requested variation is in keeping with the intent of the zoning ordinance; Putting parking requirements on existing buildings downtown is different from doing so for new developments so standard is met.
3. The alleged hardship or practical difficulty is peculiar to the property; The parking has been maxed out on this site and does create a practical difficulty so this standard is met
4. The property owner would suffer a particular hardship or practical difficulty as distinguished from a mere inconvenience if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out; Testimony was provided that members of the condominium were spoken to and purchasing spaces was not financially feasible and created practical difficulty. This standard is met.
5. The purpose of the variation is not based exclusively upon a desire to extract additional income from the property, or while granting of the variation will result in additional income to the applicant and while the applicant for the variation may not have demonstrated that the application is not based exclusively upon a desire to extract additional income from the property, the Land Use Commission or the City Council, depending on final jurisdiction under Section 6-3-8-2 of the Zoning Code has found that public benefits to the surrounding neighborhood and the City as a whole will be derived from approval of the variation, that include, but are not limited to any of the standards of Section 6-3-6-3 of the Zoning code; The church is not trying to rent or sell space for an exorbitant amount and will be using the existing office space for services and meeting spaces so this standard is met.
6. The alleged difficulty or hardship has not been created by any person having an interest in the property; Applicant has decided to use the space as it currently exists so this standard is met.
7. The requested variation requires the least deviation from the applicable regulation among the feasible options identified before the Land Use Commission issues its decision or recommendation to the City Council regarding said variation. The site is going from 4 spaces to 0 spaces but because of the off time that the space will be used, the impact would be minimal. Standard is met.

Motion: Recommend approval for the major variation for parking

Motion: Commissioner Lindwall

Second: Commissioner Westerberg

Ayes: Rodgers, Puchtel, Johnson, Mirintchev, Westerberg, Halik, Arevalo, Lindwall

Nays:

Abstained:

The proposed Special Use must follow the Standards for a Special Use (Section 6-3-5-10) For the Land Use Commission to recommend that the City Council grant a special use, the LUC must find that each proposed special use:

1. It is one of the special uses specifically listed in the zoning ordinance; standard is met. It is a special use in the zoning district so this standard is met.
2. It is in keeping with purposes and policies of the adopted comprehensive general plan and the zoning ordinance as amended from time to time; There is some question regarding the tax issue and less active storefront standard, some disagreement as it activates a currently vacant storefront. Standard is met.
3. It will not cause a negative cumulative effect, when its effect is considered in conjunction with the cumulative effect of various special uses of all types on the immediate neighborhood and the effect of the proposed type of special use upon the City as a whole; Increase in presence on the property is a positive so the standard is met
4. It does not interfere with or diminish the value of property in the neighborhood; No reason given to believe this use would appear as different from a typical office use from the street based on testimony received so this standard is met.
5. It can be adequately served by public facilities and services; This is a newer existing building and the proposed use will not add additional burden to services and facilities so this standard is met.
6. It does not cause undue traffic congestion; Typical service times are outside of typical operating hours for other downtown uses and this building is on the edge of downtown so this standard is met.
7. It preserves significant historical and architectural resources; No change to the building so standard is met.
8. It preserves significant natural and environmental features; No change to the existing building so standard is met.
9. It complies with all other applicable regulations of the district in which it is located and other applicable ordinances, except to the extent such regulations have been modified through the planned development process or the grant of a variation. No reason was given to believe that the proposed use will not follow all applicable regulations to operate safely and legally so this standard is met

Motion: Recommend approval for the Special Use for a religious institution subject to the following conditions:

- 1. An Active Storefront is incorporated as much as possible when the facility is open to the public and to its members during its regular business hours is strongly encouraged.**

2. Storefront windows shall not be more than 20% covered and be in compliance with the Sign Code.
3. Substantial compliance with the documents and testimony on record.
4. Recordation of the special use ordinance with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds is required.

Motion: Commissioner Westerberg

Second: Commissioner Puchtel

Ayes: Rodgers, Puchtel, Johnson, Mirintchev, Westerberg, Halik, Arevalo, Lindwall

Nays:

Abstained:

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

V. A

Commissioner Westerberg motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Puchtel seconded, and the motion carried, 8-0.

Adjourned 8:33 PM.

The next meeting of the Evanston Land Use Commission is to be held on **Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in the James C. Lytle Council Chambers in the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.**

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Bock, Administrative Lead

Reviewed by,
Meagan Jones, AICP, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner