

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
Council Chambers, Village Hall
August 3, 2023
7:00 p.m.

A recording of this meeting is available on the Village of Oak Park Website: <https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-commissions/commission-tv>

PRESENT: Chair Iris Sims, Commissioners; Nick Bridge, Jeff Clark, Frank Sullivan, Michael Sturino and Paul Beckwith.

EXCUSED: Commissioners: Miriam Tamayo, Jeff Foster and Jon Hale (recused)

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor-Village Planner and Gregory Smith-Plan Commission Attorney

Roll Call - Roll was called at 7:03pm. A quorum was present.

Agenda Approval: Motion by Commissioner Sullivan, Seconded by Commissioner Beckwith. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was unanimously approved.

Non-Agenda Public Participation – None.

Approval of Minutes – June 1, 2023: Motion by Commissioner Bridge, Seconded by Commissioner Sullivan to approve the draft minutes as submitted. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were unanimously approved.

New Business / Public Hearings & Findings of Fact

PC 23-03: Oak Park River Forest Planned Development: The Petitioner, Oak Park River Forest High School – District 200, is requesting Planned Development approval for a 4-story 170,935 square foot school addition with three (3) allowance requests for: 1) An increase in building height to sixty-two (62) feet, where the maximum height allowed is forty-five (45) feet (an extension of ten (10) feet above the existing building height) as stated in Article 6. Special Purpose Districts, 6.2 Institutional Zoning District, Table 6-2 Maximum Building Height, 2) A decrease in front yard setback to eight (8) feet – three (3) inches where fifteen (15) feet is required (an extension of an existing nonconforming setback along Scoville Avenue) as stated in Article 6. Special Purpose Districts, 6.2 Institutional Zoning District, Table 6-2 Minimum Front Yard Setback, and 3) An increase in illumination at the property line up to four and nine-tenths (4.9) footcandles where the maximum footcandle measured at the property line should be (1) footcandle as stated in Article 9. Site Development Standards, 9.2.B (1) Maximum Lighting Regulations.

The applicant’s representative, Dr. Greg Johnson, District 200 Superintendent, provided an overview of the design, floor plans, sustainability, historic preservation, artwork, public benefits and architecture. The applicant’s architect, Alyson Sternquist with FMG Architects, provided an overview of the allowances and standards. Ms. Nicole Ebsen, Athletic Director discussed parking and traffic indicating the demand for parking after construction would not be any greater than the current demand. Jake with *Gilbane*

Construction discussed the logistics for construction while reviewing the maps submitted with the application. He provided more detail on the timing of each phase of development and any perceived impacts to the neighbors throughout that time frame.

Village Planner Failor provided an overview of the staff's report supporting the proposed development and outlined suggested conditions for Plan Commission discussion.

The Plan Commission asked questions regarding environmental reviews of the property, frequency of use of the new building, solar panel installation, logistic plan enforcement, storage of materials during construction, traffic patterns on Scoville Avenue and geothermal installation applicability.

Cross Examination:

Mr. Arnold Pagnucci, 152 N. Scoville Avenue, began cross examination with questions regarding, when will the building be enclosed, how will dirt and noise be mitigated, what will be the closure of Scoville Avenue entail, will there be monitoring of vibration impacts on adjacent buildings (the School District agreed to install vibration monitoring equipment and would provide reports to adjacent residents – any damage reported would be repaired by the School District), will information be shared with the residents at a neighborhood meeting in September, and, how will mitigation measure be complied with.

Mr. Bruce Phillips, 152 N. Scoville Avenue – Unit 2N, questioned the amount of loud noise from the construction and asked if it would cause hearing damage, and if so are there any mitigations in place, what will be in place to mitigate any air pollution caused by the construction for workers and residents, should the residents open their windows during construction, what issues might the disruption cause to those with mental health issues, how will residential properties be protected, how will this construction impact property values and the ability to sell their property, and, what mitigations can be done to minimize the noise and dirt impacts.

Mr. John Lulu, 152 N. Scoville Avenue - Unit 2S, questioned the impact of vibrations on their historic building (the School District agreed to benchmark the home of each concerned resident by assessing the building before and after construction), will there be any noise studies conducted, what is the acceptable level of decibel levels, can equipment be mitigated to reduce noise levels, will there be any crushing of concrete on site, what is the plan for air quality, will the School District clean porches, what is the dust cleaning protocol, how will the pool be emptied and where, and what is the enforcement protocol.

Public Testimony:

Pete Ryan, in favor, stated his support for the School District and acknowledged there will be a disruption to the neighborhood, but the school district and village will be there to help the neighbors through this process.

Gabriella Moroney, neutral, stated her thanks to all involved and recognized the need for a strong school district. She was disheartened when left out of the conversation, but the School District and Village should take the neighbors comments seriously, compensate for loss of parking and be accountable. Traffic issues should be improved upon.

Eileen Enbar, who lives across the street on Scoville Avenue across from the girl's gym door, notices a great deal of activity and the construction impacts will affect many. The School District should respect the neighbor's concerns.

Gina Senella, 162 N. Scoville Avenue, was concerned about the administration of the project. It should have gone to referendum. Parking will be an issue over the next 2-3 years during construction. Parking isn't enforced now. Parking near homes will be non-existent. There will be poor air quality during construction. The neighbors have no rights. Most houses are old in this area.

Danielle Paris, 152 N. Scoville Avenue, didn't want to impede the project, but it will be a disruption and needs mitigation for dust and dirt, noise, air quality, mental health and wellbeing, and home-based employment activities.

Mary Williams, is hoping there will be the utmost care taken on this project. No shouting by construction workers and taking noise issues seriously.

John Lulu, 152 N. Scoville Avenue, want to know where visitors and their construction workers should park if they can't on Scoville Avenue. There needs to be a balance with all of this. The construction plan matters most to the neighbors on this block. This is the cost the neighbors must bare being across the street from a high school. In the end they will benefit from the construction. Conditions should be in place to help protect the neighbors if approved.

The Commission concluded with follow up questions;

A precondition survey should be conducted with photos and/or videos - (the School District agreed to this as a condition). The School District must be very responsive to the neighbor's concerns. Residents who have any health concerns should reach out to their healthcare provider for advice on how to navigate this construction project.

School District 200, Superintendent, Dr. Greg Johnson provided a summary statement.

Chair Sims asked for a motion. Commission Sullivan made a motion to Approve this application with the condition of requiring a precondition survey in addition to those conditions as noted in the findings of fact report, Seconded by Commissioner Clark with the following roll call vote:

- Sullivan – Yes
- Clark – Yes
- Sturino – Yes
- Bridge – Yes
- Beckwith - Yes
- Chair Sims – Yes

Motion passed to recommend Approval of the Application with a 6-0 vote.

Chair Sims asked for a motion to approve the Findings of Fact report. Commission Sullivan made a motion to approve the Finding of Fact report as amended, Seconded by Commissioner Clark with the following roll call vote:

Sullivan – Yes
Clark – Yes
Sturino – Yes
Bridge – Yes
Beckwith - Yes
Chair Sims – Yes

Motion passed to recommend Approval of the Application with a 6-0 vote.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m. Motion by Commissioner Bridge, Seconded by Commissioner Sullivan. A voice vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by: Craig Failor, Village Planner-Staff Liaison