

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING:

August 14, 2025

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room
2020 Chestnut Street
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sierzega called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, and Chair Sierzega. Present from the Village were Staff Liaison Mesaros Mesaros, Director of Economic & Community Development and serving as Staff Liaison; Assistant Director Schumerth Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic & Community Development; and Charise Campbell, Building Department Secretary. There were 3 members of the public in attendance, and no members of the public were attending on Zoom via webinar.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chair Sierzega asked for any changes to the minutes from the June 26, 2025, meeting.

Member O'Brien stated in the middle of page 4 that he would like to discuss the difference between standards and facts at a later date.

A motion was made to approve the minutes by Chair Sierzega; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members: Bransky, Cap, and O'Brien

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: Castaneda and Chair Sierzega

ABSENT: Members Alfonso and Johnson

The June 26, 2025, meeting minutes were not approved and will have to be brought back up for review at the next commission meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Case 25-07: Site Plan Review for Tequila Raizes Restaurant, 18136 Dixie Highway:

Chair Sierzega asked if any representatives for the restaurant could speak on the project plans.

The applicant, Applicant Ponce Mena Rafael came to the podium. Chairman Sierzega swore him in and Applicant Ponce Mena Rafael stated

Chair Sierzega asked for him to state in his own words what are his plans for the restaurant.

Applicant Ponce Mena stated that Tequila Raizes will be a new authentic Mexican food restaurant. It will not be fast food, and said the restaurant will be indoor dining and patio seating.

Member O'Brien stated that there's one correction needed on the information distributed. Where it states south line of Kroner Lane, O'Brien stated the correct street is Hickory Rd.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that staff will note the change.**

Chairman Sierzega stated that he went before the Appearance Commission, and they had comments. Chair Sierzega asked if the applicant had responded to comments from the Appearance Commission.

- **The applicant, Ponce Mena, stated "Yes" that all comments were addressed and drawings were sent late afternoon with the comments being addressed. He stated that they moved the planted islands next to the garbage enclosure, and they added some planters along the fence where the patio is. Also, they added some green areas where the Appearance Commission recommended and relocated the other.**

Chair Sierzega asked about the color of the building being mentioned by the commission.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that they changed the color of the building to gray. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the original color was black. Assistant Director Schumerth and Staff Liaison Mesaros both stated that it is difficult to see on the updated color renderings from the screen the difference between charcoal gray and black.**

Staff Liaison Mesaros provided the updated color renderings for the Commission on the screen to see the new colors for the building.

Chair Sierzega asked what color you would call the orange in the photo.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that it is a wood-like material with metal siding.**

Member Castaneda stated that after reading through the engineering review, and seeing that the Appearance Commission weighed in on some things, also that the parking lot is allowable at 29 spaces she states that the building will be nice and that those would have been her only questions.

Member O'Brien wants to clarify on page 7 where it indicates that there's 40ft of frontage along Dixie Highway. He says if he's reading the drawing correctly its 150ft? Is that correct?

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the 40ft is describing the building along Dixie Highway on page 7.**

Member O'Brien asked for clarification that the 40 feet was the building alone.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth said this was correct.**

Member O'Brien states that there is no mention of the lot size that could be found. O'Brien said he was unsure if the materials included the Savoia's lot or the parking lot or the total of the two. O'Brien said we ultimately don't have a statement of what the restaurant lot size will be.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that both lots with the old restaurant and the parking lot were sold to them.**

Member Cap asked if the lots were already consolidated.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated "Yes", that it was his understanding that they bought the lots and the park.**

Member O'Brien asked if there was a subdivision application.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that there is no subdivision, only a consolidation of the lots.**

Member O'Brien asked how many employees the business would have.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that it will be about 14 to 16 employees.**

Member O'Brien asked what the hours of operation would be.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated it will be 8 am-10 pm**

Chair Sierzega asked about the hours will be seven days a week.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated Monday through Thursday 8 am-10 am; Friday and Saturday 8 am-11 pm, and Sunday 8 am-8 pm.**

Member O'Brien stated that he has a question regarding the allowances for the requirements on the drawings for two employee parking spaces.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated yes, there are two employee parking spaces. He states the reason for having the two designated spaces in front of the gate for receiving items is to assist with if the delivery truck having a designated area to drop off items.**

Member O'Brien stated that the question was directed to the staff. He's asking if there are 16 employees and a requirement of 30 spaces, then that's a total of 46 spaces. So if you are considering 30 minus the one then why is there a designation? He states that he doesn't recall a designation like this with Maple Tree, the Brewery, or Blue Berry Hill.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that this is a choice not a requirement. The reason for why they have chosen to designate the employee parking spaces are for delivery so that customers do not block the spaces.**

Member O'Brien stated that on page 14 there is a recommended species item list in the conditions, but the new elm species in that list is not part of the arborist list on page 10. Is there an approval from the arborist for the new elm species?

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the arborist has looked at the landscaping plans multiple times and that the list on page 10 is the newer list and has most of the same species that was listed on page 14 but is a little more detailed. The elm species was not included in the list on page 10.**

Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the language from page 14 landscape plans will be removed and be replaced with the landscape plan approved by the Village Arborist on page 10.

Member O'Brien asked if the conditions should include a seventh condition to identify the permit approval for the Illinois Department of Transportation for the driveway modification.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the IDOT information will be added to the list as #7 on page 14.**

Member Cap asked if the architect would be willing to comply with the Village Engineer regarding a storm water storage plan.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that he believes that would be difficult and expensive to comply with. He stated that they are trying to go with a design that will not affect the primary area. We have the parking lot and then the area by the park where the patio is going to be located. Permeable pavers will be used for the patio, and there will be no changes to the existing permeable area. All the areas that are not permeable will be the parking lot and the building.**

Applicant Ponce Mena states that if they need to oversize the pipes, then they will agree to work with the Village. He hopes that the Village does not ask for a complete retention because that will be expensive.

Member Bransky wanted clarification on page 13-14 regarding recommended conditions based on the submitted site plan review. It states Village staff have relisted all recommended conditions from the Appearance Commission. Bransky asked who the conditions are to be approved by – the Board or the Commission.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the conditions listed recommended conditions is for approval by the Commission but there are some overlaps between the Appearance Commission conditions and the Planning and Zoning Commission conditions, where it is relevant to site plan approval.**

Member Bransky, if that means that of all seven of these items with the IDOT driveway approval being added, are these items in various phases of completion. He asked are we approving the recommended conditions or approving that all conditions have been met.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the Commission is approving the conditions and the site plan drawings.**

Chair Sierzega asked what is the building going to be constructed of?

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated it would be metal frame and brick.**

Chair Sierzega asked if the main entrance is going to be located on Dixie Highway.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena said yes.**

Chair Sierzega asked if the entrance on Dixie Highway would be the primary way to access the building.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena said yes.**

Chair Sierzega asked how guests would access the patio.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena said access is provided through the doors along the north elevation, including the overhead doors which will be open at times.**

Chair Sierzega asked how many employees will work at the new business at any one time.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena said he estimates 16 employees on any given shift.**

Chair Sierzega asked why there are only four employee spaces.

- **Member Bransky noted that these spaces are reserved for employees but other employees can park elsewhere. Assistant Director Schumerth said that this was a request by staff to eliminate any conflicts between guests and delivery trucks.**

Member O'Brien asked if having 16 employees but only 30 parking spaces would require 46 parking spaces and a variance.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth stated that 30 parking spaces are required and employee parking is considered in the parking ratios set for new uses. Member Bransky noted that it is based on square footage for the business, not the number of employees.**

Chair Sierzega said in reality, employees will need a place to park, and asked where they may park.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena stated that they will park in the lot or other spaces nearby. Staff Liaison Mesaros noted that there is a large public parking lot available across the street, in addition to street parking.**

Chair Sierzega asked if public parking is allowed on Dixie Highway.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said yes.**

Chair Sierzega asked how many spaces are available in the Hickory public parking lot.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth said there are approximately 30 spaces available in this lot.**

Chair Sierzega asked how many different shifts the business will have with 16 employees.

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- **Applicant Ponce Mena said there will be two shifts – early and late.**

Chair Sierzega noted a parking lot across the street from a Chinese restaurant nearby, and asked if that is included in the total of public parking spaces.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said that there are 51 parking spaces in total across the street, including in that lot, which is also public.**

Chair Sierzega stated that this was an approval of the site plan, and asked if the Commission would see this application again.

- **Staff Liaison Mesaros said no and that it will go to the Building Division for permit review after this approval. Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the Building Division would receive a copy of the approval letter, which includes any conditions placed on the project. Schumerth stated that staff can review this project for compliance with the Planning and Zoning Commission decision once the permit application is given to Zoning for review.**

Member Cap said that the site is 0.58 acres, but the MWRD threshold for on-site storage installation is 2 acres. Cap said that MWRD might need to issue a letter of permit determination, but there might be a situation here that needs to be handled with more infrastructure that might not show up as a full requirement by MWRD.

- **Member Bransky said that this will be included in the utility plan review by the Village Engineer. Schumerth noted that this comment will be provided to the Village Engineer.**

Member Cap stated that Grady's on Harwood Avenue has a small but similarly sized parking lot, and that he is amazed at how many employees walk to work rather than parking at the business. One employee even takes the train to and from work. Cap said he is not oblivious to the need for parking, but notes that the location may have unique factors which improve the parking situation at the site.

Member O'Brien asked about accessibility to the front door from ADA spaces.

- **Applicant Ponce Mena noted that a ramp is provided to the sidewalk from the ADA spaces, and then the front door on Dixie will be ADA-accessible.**

Member O'Brien noted that Homewood Brewing does not have a ramp for ADA access and that chairs sometimes need to be lifted up the curb to access the building. O'Brien noted the need to avoid this situation.

Member Bransky made a motion to approve the case with recommended conditions and including revised drawings, including revisions to replace the recommended landscape list on page 14 with the landscape list on page 10 and an additional condition requiring that the applicant confirm driveway ramp plans and secure IDOT ramp approval prior to building permit issuance.

Member Cap requested language about stormwater storage in the final approval motion. Bransky asked how staff would prefer this condition to be written.

Assistant Director Schumerth asked if this would be a formal condition of approval.

- **Member Bransky recommended modifying Condition 5 on the list of conditions to include language requiring the applicant provide any additional stormwater infrastructure recommended by the Village Engineer.**

Motion to approve by Bransky; seconded by O'Brien.

AYES: Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Alfonso and Johnson

Member O'Brien noted that the color palette of the building is associated with a color scheme which is most conducive to food establishments, and has been used by other businesses such as Jewel-Osco and the former Dominic's.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chair Sierzega asked if there would be a meeting in two weeks.

- **Assistant Director Schumerth said no. While the item was noticed for the meeting date on the 28th, the applicant is not available on that date and requested a continuation to the next meeting on September 11th. This change will be publicly posted as required.**

ADJOURN:

Member made a motion to adjourn Castaneda; seconded by Member O'Brien. The meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.

AYES: Members Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Castaneda, Chair Sierzega

NAYES: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Alfonso and Johnson

Respectfully submitted,

Cherise Campbell

Cherise Campbell, Building Department Secretary

Noah Schumerth

Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development

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