

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: **January 11, 2024**

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 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

In attendance were Members Alfonso, Cap, Castaneda, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega. Present from the Village was Staff Liaison Angela Mesaros, Assistant Economic & Community Development Director Noah Schumerth, and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard. There were approximately 3 people in the audience. The public was able to watch and listen to the meeting via Zoom webinar.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of October 19, 2023. There were no changes.

Member O'Brien moved to approve the minutes; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Cap, and O'Brien

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Member Castaneda and Chairman Sierzega

ABSENT: Members Bransky and Johnson

REGULAR BUSINESS:

CASE 23-28: Zoning Variance to the Parking Requirements to operate a restaurant at 810 Maple Avenue

Chairman Sierzega introduced the case and swore in the petitioners, Emad Abed and Mohammad Majid, and asked them to present their case.

Mr. Abed stated they are proposing to open a fast casual Mediterranean restaurant which would be their third location with the other two being in Downers Grove and Bolingbrook. He stated that about 20% of their business is carryout, approx. 65% is online orders, with the remainder being walk-ins.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there would be any issues with parking.

Mr. Amed stated with guidance from Asst. Direct. Schumerth they did a 2-week parking survey of the use of parking spaces and will be creating 4 additional spaces in the rear of the building and creating an

entrance to the restaurant space in the rear with 3 of the spaces designated for carryout customers only.

Member Alfonso asked if there would be dining in and how many dine in at the other locations.

Mr. Abed stated there will be 3 tables and maybe 1-2 people at the other locations. And added that since Covid they shifted to a majority of online and delivery. The majority of people are in only to wait for their food to be prepared and stated they are like Chipotle or Subway with the style of ordering.

Member Alfonso voiced concern that the parking spaces aren't being used by the other businesses at the location.

Mr. Amed stated that they are newer businesses, but they are "grab and go" types of business. Mr. Majid added that customers are not really there for more than 5 minutes.

Member Cap stated that the improvements on the exterior are an enhancement to the area and asked if the parking review was done by them (the applicants).

Mr. Majid stated they took screen shots from the CCTv feed.

Member Cap stated the parking requirements are based on the square footage of the building and asked the peak hours of the other locations. Member Cap asked how many customers are served during peak hours.

Mr. Majid stated maybe 12-3 with Mr. Abed stating it's more like lunch and dinner hours like 11:30-1 and then 6-7.

Mr. Abed stated they daily estimate is based of the number of tickets, on week days it's 50-60 in a 12-hour span and weekends it's about 80 tickets with online and pickup orders being 65-75%. Mr. Abed stated the business is designed for pick-up and leave not to dine in.

Member Cap asked if the proposed location is the same size as the other locations. Member Cap stated that the requirement is 6 dedicated spaces and there seems to be 5 cars per hour parked on site with 28 spaces and he is satisfied with the information and that the parking is sufficient.

Mr. Abed stated the Bolingbrook location is about 1700 square feet and the Downers Grove location is about 1800 square feet.

Member O'Brien stated that in the minutes from the August 11, 2022 meeting the applicants were asked if there would be a third business on site and they responded "no" and asked if the existing businesses were doing strongly then why did they state financial hardship on the application.

Mr. Abed stated that the space has been empty and the financial hardship is related to the property value and the burden of the tax bill being paid out of pocket with Mr. Majid adding because the space is not being used.

Member O'Brien asked if the 2 other businesses are still strong businesses. Both Mr. Abed and Mr. Majid stating yes.

Member O'Brien stated there is a transposition of numbers in the square footage of the building in #9 of the Findings of Fact and it will need to be corrected.

Mr. Majid stated that the building is 11,980 square feet; it's just under 12,000.

Member O'Brien questioned the square footage of the smoke shop and beauty supply shop because of the square footage numbers that are stated in the August 11, 2022 meeting minutes and asked if the storage space of 653 square feet will still remain with the restaurant going in. Member O'Brien asked if there would be the 3 businesses and a storage space at the location.

Mr. Majid stated that tobacco shop and beauty supply shop switched spaces and the numbers may be from before that happened.

Assistant. Director Schumerth stated the location is 11,940 square feet and that is what comes up on the tax record and he believes the spacing was combined with one of the businesses.

Mr. Abed stated there is no storage space.

Asst. Direct. Schumerth stated they worked with the applicant to reduce the square footage of the restaurant location to what is in the provided memo and the 653 square footage was grouped with another business or will remain vacant and unused and added that the variance is in regards to the proposed restaurant and not the usage in the building.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated the Findings of Fact from 2022 reflect the square footage of the building as 11,940.

Member Castaneda stated she goes by the location often and has been into the beauty supply shop and has always been able to get a parking space in front and is always in and out. Member Castaneda added that the food is not one that is currently available in town and variety is a good thing and added that she believes the closest restaurant offering this type of food may be located in Orland Park.

Chairman Sierzega asked the hours of operation, they type of food on the menu, and other questions regarding the seating and staffing.

Mr. Abed stated the hours would be 10:30-10 Monday-Saturday and closing an hour earlier on Sundays, 10:30-9. They will be offering Mediterranean food, there is no drive-up window, there will be 10-12 chairs and a couple of tables but no wait staff. There will be 3 employees and prep would take place for roughly an hours before opening, but it would be things like chopping of vegetables no cooking.

Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any questions from the audience.

Trustee Ann Colton stated she is a big fan of that type of food and she is looking forward to it opening.

Chairman Sierzega asked how long the other locations have been open.

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Mr. Abed stated the location in Downers Grove has been open 5 years and the Bolingbrook location has been open about 3 years.

Member O'Brien asked why it was classified as fast food and not restaurant.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that it is not a full service restaurant, but casual style and that it is not defined in the code.

Member Cap stated the old code did take into account for fast casual and carryout. Staff Liaison Mesaros and Asst. Direct. Schumerth stated that is correct.

Chairman Sierzega asked how long before it would open.

Mr. Abed stated 60-90 days to buildout; they hope to be open by June.

Member Alfonso asked the name of the restaurant.

Mr. Abed stated Fill-a-Pita.

A motion was made by member O'Brien to recommend approval of Case 23-28 for a Variance from Table 44-05-01 (C) and General Off-Street Parking Requirements in Section 44-05-01(A) to allow the operation of a new carryout food service establishment at 810 Maple with 28 parking spaces, and incorporate the corrections Findings of Fact regarding the square footage in #9 into the record seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Cap, Castaneda, O'Brien, and Chairman Sierzega

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Bransky and Chairman Sierzega

OLD BUSINESS:

Chairman Sierzega asked the status of Stoney Point and the Brewery.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated they are saying the end of the month, but thinks March 1 maybe more likely.

The Brewery is hoping to open by April.

NEW BUSINESS:

Asst. Direct. Schumerth stated there will be a special use on January 25 with the notice just going to the Southtown. Honeycomb Hideout wants to offer fitness classes, and such does not fall under their current use grandfathered from the previous zoning ordinance, and need to be reclassified as an indoor commercial place of assembly to support a wider range of uses. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated it is located next door to the cycling fitness location on Dixie.

ADJOURN:

Members Alfonso moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Member Cap; all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Mesaros

Director of Economic and Community Development