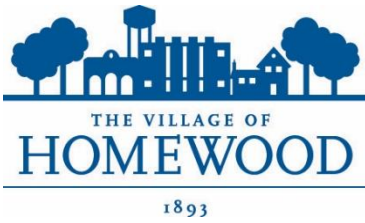


# MEETING AGENDA



## Appearance Commission

Village of Homewood

March 07, 2024

Meeting Start Time: 6:00 PM

Village Hall Board Room

2020 Chestnut Road, Homewood, IL

*Commission Meetings will be held as in-person meetings. In addition to in-person public comment during the meeting, members of the public may submit written comments by email to [pzc@homewoodil.gov](mailto:pzc@homewoodil.gov) or by placing written comments in the drop box outside Village Hall. Comments submitted before 4:00 p.m. on the meeting date will be distributed to all Commission members prior to the meeting.*

*Please see last page of agenda for virtual meeting information.*

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Minutes:

Approve minutes from the December 7, 2023 Appearance Commission meeting.

4. Public Comments

5. Regular Business:

A. Case 23-07 - Appearance Plan Public Comment Updates and Discussion

6. Old Business:

7. New Business:

A. Update on Appearance Commission New Business

8. Adjourn

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The public is invited to the meeting using the link below to join Webinar:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84411188079?pwd=RzFRZzZmeC9RU25CN0ZhYzA0SOV6UT09>

To listen to the Meeting via phone: Dial: 1-312-626-6799  
Webinar ID: 844 1118 8079 Passcode: 170845

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# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## MEETING MINUTES

DATE OF MEETING: **December 7, 2023**

## APPEARANCE COMMISSION

6:00 pm

Village Hall Board Room  
2020 Chestnut Street  
Homewood, IL 60430

## CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Hrymak called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

## ROLL CALL:

Members Quirke, Smith, Scheffke, Kluck, and Chair Hrymark were present. Members Kidd and Preston arrived late to the hearing. In attendance from the Village were Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Noah Schumerth, and Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros.

## APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Corrections to the November 8, 2023 meeting minutes were requested. Commissioner Smith noted that a paragraph discussing the entrance of a member of the public needed to be removed due to the paragraph identifying an event that occurred at the October 19, 2023 Planning and Zoning Commission hearing. Commissioner Quirke noted that a discussion with Village President Rich Hofeld was incorrectly attributed to him, noting that Dan Kluck provided the dialogue with the Mayor. The meeting minutes were approved.

AYES: Members Smith, Scheffke, Quirke, Kluck, Chair Hrymak

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Members Preston and Kidd

## PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Eight members of the public were present at the meeting. No comments were given.

## REGULAR BUSINESS:

### CASE 23-30 – St. John Neumann Parish Church

Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Noah Schumerth provided introductory information about the sign variance and signage design proposed for St. John Neumann Parish, including site location and current conditions on the property. Assistant Director Schumerth noted an error in the packet which stated that the new signage is to be 100' south of the existing sign; however, the sign is to be 100' north of the existing signage.

Assistant Director Schumerth presented graphics of the proposed design for the signage. Assistant Director Schumerth then discussed the arguments expressed in support of a variance from Section 30-4 of Village signage ordinances for the proposed signage, allowing the construction of an electronic changing message sign in the B-2 zoning district for a civic/charitable institution, a use which is normally allowed the construction of a civic/charitable institution by right.

Member Preston arrived to the meeting.

Assistant Director Schumerth noted that a similar variance was approved for Faith Lutheran, a place of worship located on South Dixie Highway, under similar zoning circumstances. Schumerth also identified where similar signs to the one proposed by St. John Neumann have been constructed, including at the Homewood Village Hall in the PL-1 zoning district, and identified that similar signs can be constructed for places of worship and civic institutions in other zoning districts.

Chair Hrymak requested information about the graphic depicting electronic changing message signage near the intersection of 183<sup>th</sup> and Governor's Highway. It was noted that the signage belonged to Homewood-Flossmoor Park District.

Assistant Director Schumerth noted that in 2019 after the Faith Lutheran variance approval under similar conditions, it was determined that cases on this type of variance would be heard on a "case by case" basis. Schumerth completed a description of the reasons supporting the validity of the proposed variance and noted that staff recommends approval. Conditions of approval were recommended by Assistant Director Schumerth matching the similar variance conditions proposed in approval of the sign variance at Faith Lutheran.

Susan Gates and Father Edmond Aristil provided additional information about St. John Neumann Parish Church and the purpose of the proposed signage for the church. The two representatives of the applicant team provided their proposed argument for a variance to Village signage ordinances.

Assistant Director Schumerth displayed images demonstrating the current conditions of the Faith Lutheran signage, which was built following approval for a similar variance to Section 30-4 of the Village signage ordinances.

Member Kluck noted that the new signage location will be more visible than the current location, and asked what role signage location plays in the decision to pursue a new signage design and variance for the proposed sign. Susan Gates noted that if effort was to be taken to create a new signage design, the sign should be relocated to be more visible from both directions of travel on Dixie Highway.

Member Quirke asked for information about why the staff is recommending approval when the evidence provided by the staff appears to be contrary. Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros noted the presentation provided a bulleted list of reasons staff was recommending support of the variance. Member Quirke identified that there was difficulty identifying a hardship necessary to support a variance with the previous Faith Lutheran variance making a similar argument in support of the installation of a sign, but there was even more difficulty identifying a hardship with the sign at St. John Neumann. Director Mesaros noted that there is less clarity regarding what is necessary to allow consideration of a variance from signage ordinances, which are a part of the Municipal Code yet have variance powers reserved for the Appearance Commission.

Assistant Director Schumerth noted that the adoption of the land use map included in the 2023 Zoning Ordinance created an extenuating circumstance, given that the property was zoned B-2 (Downtown Transition), but a place of worship or civic/charitable institution is not permitted in this zoning district. Additionally, the civic/charitable institution would have been allowed to build this sign type by right, should it have been located in a zoning district written to support the land use such as the district the church was previously located within. Schumerth noted that the purpose of the ordinance is to limit commercial electronic signage in the B-2 zoning district in alignment with the Downtown Master Plan.

Member Quirke asked why the 2023 Zoning Ordinance did not reflect changes following the approval of the 2019 Faith Lutheran case, which had a similar issue with a commercially zoned civic/charitable institution, and suggested that the current ordinance is designed to limit all signage of this type in the B-2 (Downtown Transition) zoning district. Schumerth replied that signage ordinances were not updated in the 2023 Zoning Ordinance update, and the ordinances requiring variance in both the 2019 Faith Lutheran case and the present case at St. John Neumann are located in the Code of Ordinances chapters regulating signage. Schumerth noted that signage ordinances are currently under review by Village staff. Schumerth also noted that this issue could not have been addressed in the 2023 Zoning Ordinance update, given civic/charitable institutions such as places of worship are not permitted in the B-2 zoning district.

Member Quirke expressed concerns about how new signage code standards and the 2023 Zoning Ordinance will avoid future contradictions. Quirke also had concerns about the precedent set should the St. John Neumann sign variance be approved.

Member Preston noted that many technological changes are occurring in Homewood and surrounding communities which are not addressed in the zoning ordinance. Preston identified the need for churches and other civic institutions to be able to market efficiently and move forward with the technology necessary to operate a modern institution. Preston expressed that it is a good idea to accept this because of the need to be accommodating of technology not yet integrated into ordinances.

Member Scheffke asked the applicant if sign messages would be duplicated on both sides of the proposed sign structure. Susan Gates stated that the signage would be duplicated. Member Scheffke expressed concerns about the north signage face being located such that a tree will be located between the new sign and travel lanes on Dixie Highway, with limited visibility for passing individuals.

Member Scheffke noted concerns about the precedent that an approval of this variance may cause, and asked whether other cases may utilize a similar argument. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that no other places of worship remain within the B-2 zoning district which have not already received a variance.

Member Scheffke asked if the original 2019 Faith Lutheran variance case with a similar argument in support of an electronic changing message sign was supposed to be a “one time approval” for a unique circumstance. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that following approval of the Faith Lutheran variance, it was expressed by members of the Appearance Commission that future cases similar to the Faith Lutheran case should be taken on a “case-by-case basis.”

Member Kluck asked for clarification regarding how future churches interested in locating in downtown Homewood may be treated by zoning use regulations. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that churches are not permitted in B-1 and B-2 zoning districts. Member Kluck asserted that this is likely the last

church to consider this type of variance case. Director Mesaros affirmed the comment made by Member Kluck.

Member Kidd arrived to the meeting.

Member Smith stated that when the sign code is updated in 2024, accommodating technology shifts in ordinances should be a high priority, and that the type of signage is essential for church communication. Member Smith stated that there is likely no distraction risk to drivers based on personal experience.

Member Preston stated support of the proposed signage and variance.

Chair Hrymak stated that his greatest concerns with previous sign variance cases has been the impact on neighbors due to light or message changes. Chair Hrymak noted that there are no neighbors which will have significant impacts from the new signage. Chair Hrymak noted that hardship is difficult to identify.

Chair Hrymak asked if non-electronic signage is more difficult to obtain. Applicant Susan Gates noted that it is increasingly difficult to acquire older letterboard signs and other non-illuminated signs.

Chair Hrymak notes the need and stated reduced concern about the case due to the location of the site in a commercial area. Chair Hrymak reinforced that updates to the sign code are necessary to avoid turning Homewood into "Las Vegas" with large numbers of electronic signs.

Applicant Susan Gates reiterated that the hardship is due to the location of the church in the commercial zone and additional restrictions placed on the church, where a church is generally not allowed by zoning. Applicant Gates identified that the church is a longstanding institution and that the sign otherwise meets zoning requirements.

Chair Hrymak asked the applicant why the sign is being moved. Applicant Edmond Aristil noted that the sign is easier to see from the road in the new location.

Member Quirke stated that other commissioners are suffering from too great of a reliance on precedent. Member Quirke noted the need to restrict the brightness of the signage at the church, citing the previous signage at Faith Lutheran and alleging potential code enforcement issues with the signage approved by variance for the church in 2019. Member Quirke asked how the Commission will say no to future signage variances when needed. Chair Hrymak noted the Appearance Commission's authority to decide variance cases in any direction, and that variance issues will be revisited in future code updates.

Director Angela Mesaros noted that an opportunity for public comment is required before a motion for action on Case 23-30. Chair Hrymak requested comment from the public. No members of the public requested an opportunity to speak.

A motion was made by Member Scheffke to approve the sign variance and proposed signage design at 17951 Dixie Highway, subject to conditions. Seconded by Member Preston.

AYES: Members Smith, Preston, Kluck, Kidd, Chair Hrymak

NAYS: Member Quirke

ABSTENTIONS: Member Scheffke

ABSENT: None

### CASE 23-31 – All Nations Community Church Signage

Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development Noah Schumerth provided introductory information about the proposed signage design proposed for All Nations Community Church at 18620 Kedzie Avenue. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that the proposal includes two signs replacing the two signs currently at the front of the church property along Kedzie. The signage is proposed to have an area of backlit cabinet signage over an electronic changing message sign.

Chair Hrymak requested information about the type of review being considered by the Appearance Commission for All Nations Community Church. Assistant Director Schumerth noted the authority reserved for the Appearance Commission to determine the appropriateness of signage designs. Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros noted the language in Section 2 of the Village Code of Ordinances.

Assistant Director Schumerth noted the specifics of the proposed signage design for the church.

Member Scheffke noted that the elevations of the proposed signage made the backlit cabinet portion of the sign much larger than the backlit cabinet signage present on the current sign, and noted that the electronic changing message sign will take up a lot of area. Assistant Director Schumerth stated that the backlit cabinet identifying the name of the church at the top of the sign will be narrower than on the current sign on the property. Member Scheffke asked for the relative height of the proposed electronic signage area. Assistant Director Schumerth noted that the electronic changing message sign area will be 4' high.

Conditions of approval were recommended by Assistant Director Schumerth.

Applicant Dr. Angel Turner introduced herself as a representative of the church as the Vice President of the church's board of directors and described the purpose of the sign as an identification sign and a bulletin board sign for church events. Applicant Turner noted that the signage will allow for more people to attend the church and learn about church activities. Applicant Turner noted the presence of similar signs at Homewood-Flossmoor High School and other businesses and organizations along Kedzie Avenue.

Applicant Ken Richmond introduced himself as a representative from the contractor Signs Plus for the design of the proposed signage. Applicant Richmond stated that the signage is to be designed to have instantaneous message changes, no delays, and limited brightness. Applicant Richmond noted that the sign will be designed to conform to the conditions of approval recommended by Village staff.

Member Smith stated that while the sign will face residential areas, the impacts of illumination from the sign will be limited due to the distance of the sign. Member Smith added that the sign should not increase distraction for drivers.

Applicant Ken Richmond stated that additional software is provided to ensure that brightness and message display can be carefully controlled. The applicant also noted that landscaping will be improved to beautify the area around the sign.

Member Smith departed from the meeting.

Member Preston stated support for the sign.

Member Quirke asked Applicant Dr. Angel Turner about other types of messaging which might be displayed on the sign. Applicant Turner noted that holiday messages and other church events may be posted on the sign. Member Quirke asked if the same conditions applied to the St. John Neumann signage will be applied to signage at All Nations. Applicant Turner affirmed. Member Quirke asked who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with conditions. Applicant Turner noted that the pastor's executive assistant and other staff members will be responsible for changing messages and turning the signage on and off as required. Member Quirke noted the large size of the church congregation and facility.

Member Kluck stated support for the sign and noted the large capacity of the church.

Chair Hrymak asked whether converting the sign from two smaller signs into one larger sign would be more appropriate for the design of the sign. Applicant Turner noted that the signage will use an existing brick base for the sign, and reconfiguring the base would require more resources from the church. Chair Hrymak expressed that the signage will not cause light impacts on surrounding properties.

Chair Hrymak noted that landscaping improvements and general maintenance around the area of the sign are needed. Applicant Turner noted that the church will take on efforts to improve landscaping and yard maintenance in the area of the new sign.

Chair Hrymak requested clarification on a condition limiting the brightness of the sign.

A motion was made by Member Preston to approve the proposed signage design at 18620 Kedzie Avenue, subject to conditions. Seconded by Member Kluck.

AYES: Members Scheffke, Preston, Quirke, Kluck, Kidd, Chair Hrymak

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Smith

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Member Quirke said that a rehab facility on Halsted Street moved from the east side of the street to the west side of the street, and noted that the facility built a large double sign at the new location. Director Angela Mesaros noted that the facility has a large space, and the building may have a signage area totaling 2.5 x the length of the frontage along Halsted Street, resulting in a very large sign.

### **ADJOURN:**

Member Kluck made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm. Seconded by Member Scheffke.

AYES: Members Scheffke, Preston, Quirke, Kluck, Kidd, Chair Hrymak

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member Smith

Respectfully submitted,

Noah J. Schumerth



# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



**MEMORANDUM**

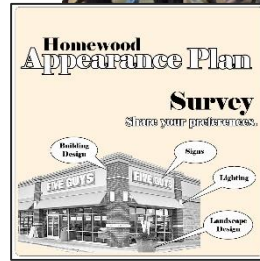
**DATE OF MEETING:** March 7, 2024

**To:** Appearance Commission

**From:** Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development

**Through:** Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development

**Topic:** Case 23-07 - Appearance Plan Public Comment Updates



**DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW**

Title	Pages	Prepared by	Date
Appearance Plan Survey Copy	1	Asst. Director of Econ/Comm. Dev.	12/1/2023
Draft Revised Timeline	5	Asst. Director of Econ/Comm. Dev.	2/29/2023

**APPEARANCE PLAN BACKGROUND**

The Village of Homewood Appearance Plan is the Village’s set of comprehensive design standards, used in the evaluation of development projects in the Village, including commercial, industrial, and multi-family projects. This Plan is regularly used by the Appearance Plan to consider cases related to the design of sites, buildings, landscaping improvements, and other projects. This Plan is also used as a tool for evaluating project proposals and negotiating improved design outcomes with developers and development partners on projects throughout the Village.

The Appearance Plan was last updated in 1998, establishing the authority of the Appearance Commission and adopting a broad set of design standards to apply for all developments. In the 25 years since the last adoption of a Village Appearance Plan, changes have occurred in suburban development markets, land use demands on the Village have evolved, and a growing understanding of the impacts of low-quality urban design on the function and form of American municipalities has emerged. As such, updates are necessary to provide a successful roadmap for new development in the Village.

The Village began the process of updating the Appearance Plan (and the sign code in Chapter 30 of Village Ordinances) in late 2021. Village staff completed public engagement strategies throughout 2022-2023, and began efforts to draw up recommendations for the new plan. However, Village staff has identified areas requiring additional attention in the plan development process, including a closer examination of the proposed scope of the plan, greater data collection on existing community

architecture, and the construction of modernized plan templates and designs. With staff capacity increases in late 2023, staff has restarted work on the Appearance Plan and will continue to develop the plan through early 2024.

**UPDATE INTRODUCTION**

This memo provides information for members of the Appearance Commission on the completion of public engagement efforts related to ongoing revisions of the Appearance Plan and Sign Code. This memo is designed to provide visuals and summaries of the information received from the public during the planning process since the last update to the Appearance Commission in November 2023. This agenda item at the March 14, 2024 Appearance Commission hearing is reserved to spur discussion about key points to draw from the public engagement information to strengthen the effectiveness, quality, and transparency of the Appearance Plan document that is being drafted.

**DISCUSSION**

**Previous Work Completed**

The following table summarizes public engagement activities which have provided direct feedback to Village staff on how to best revise the new Appearance Plan and Sign Code to serve the public interest.

2022
<b>September 2022</b> - Completed public engagement session with interactive materials at Fall Fest 2022
2023
<b>March 2023</b> - Completed Appearance Plan charrette and workshop with survey questions and interactive materials
<b>December 2023</b> - Completed public engagement at Holiday Lights with interactive materials and access to surveys.
2024
<b>January 2024</b> - Completed community survey with questions about building preferences and priorities for the new Appearance Plan, receiving 200+ responses.
<b>January 2024</b> - Completed business community survey with questions about how to construct design guidelines which are coherent with the needs of the business community, receiving 3 responses.

The remainder of this memo is dedicated to the review of the results from our primary engagement opportunities held since December 2023.

**Community-wide Appearance Plan Survey (December 2023 – January 2024)**

Following the 2023 Holiday Lights celebration in Downtown Homewood and additional public comment opportunities at the event, Village staff launched a survey to generate feedback about top priorities for new design standards from the public. The survey asked three questions:

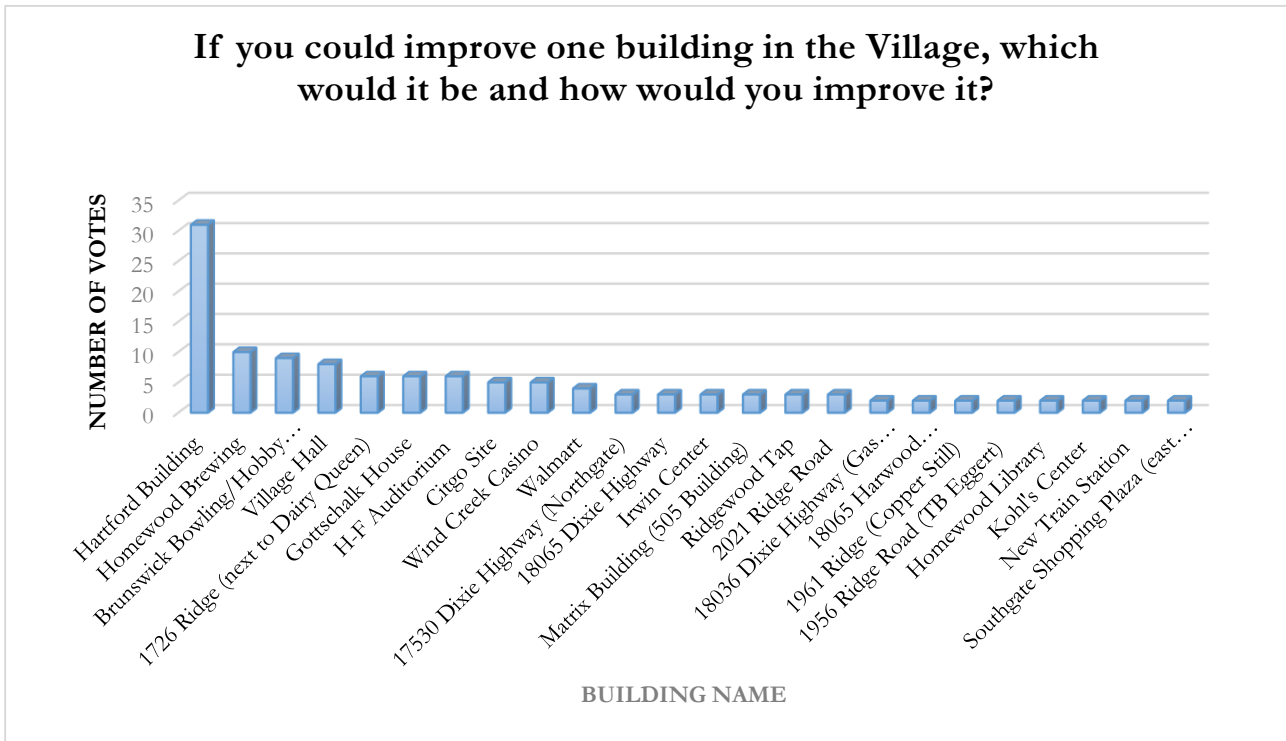
- a. **If you could improve one building in the Village, which would it be and how would you improve it?**
- b. **In your opinion, what makes a beautiful building?**
- c. **Based on suggestions from past public feedback, what are the top priorities for improving architecture and building design in Homewood?**

The survey generated 193 responses by the original closing date of January 20, and has been left open to provide additional opportunities for public feedback throughout the plan development process. As of February 29, the survey has generated over 200 responses.

The following was gathered from the survey:

**1. If you could improve one building in the Village, which would it be and how would you improve it?**

The question included an opportunity to provide feedback on how to improve specific buildings in the Village of Homewood. The question revealed 24 buildings which garnered more than one vote as the building residents would most want to change. This question illustrates priorities regarding what the Appearance Plan should address in its recommendations for new developments.



The survey identified the Hartford Building (completed 2023) as the building residents would focus on first to improve the architectural character of the Village. Residents cited the following areas for improvement of the building:

- Height – avoid excessive height on buildings, especially close to the street
- Materials – use natural materials, avoid vinyl/plastic sidings, use similar materials
- Cohesiveness – integrate materials from neighboring buildings into the new building.

**2. In your opinion, what makes a beautiful building?**

The question provides an opportunity to focus on positive elements of architecture in the Village, identifying the elements which they look for in a building with excellent design. The question received 160+ different responses, which could be distilled into the following essential areas to focus on to produce an excellent building:

- Quality Materials
- Proper Scale and Proportion
- Compatibility and Continuity
- Use of Light and Transparency
- Inviting Open Areas and Landscaping
- Professional and Well-Designed Signage
- Excellent Building Form and Use of Details
- Prioritized Maintenance
- Clear Character/Style
- Good Placement of Building Uses and Activities
- Focus on Adaptive Reuse/Preservation
- Clear Relation to Streets and Surroundings

A sample of frequent comments in each theme is included below:

<u>Area of Focus</u>	<u>Key Responses</u>
<b>Quality Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brick as a preferred material, with other timeless materials focused on in design (brick, stone, wood, etc.)</li> <li>• A mixture of similar materials</li> <li>• Traditional materials applied on modern design (i.e. brick paired with metal)</li> <li>• Materials with patina/detailed finish</li> <li>• Continuity of materials between neighboring buildings</li> </ul>

<p><b>Proper Scale and Proportion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shorter buildings which preserve views of the sky and other buildings</li> <li>• Building scale appropriate with the site and neighboring buildings</li> <li>• Human-scale building design for a person walking, even from parking lots</li> </ul>
<p><b>Compatibility and Continuity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings with a high degree of detail from material but blended with neighboring buildings</li> <li>• Avoid overly eclectic design, using the surrounding landscape for design queues</li> <li>• “Compatibility, not conformity.”</li> <li>• Environmentally responsive building features that show a building belongs in its environment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Use of Light and Transparency</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings with exterior lighting that helps people feel safe</li> <li>• Buildings which are transparent and allow you to see life inside</li> <li>• Bright and welcoming colors with lighting/large windows to invite people inside, add liveliness</li> <li>• Walkways and clear entrances that invite you into the space/development</li> <li>• Ability to see people using a building</li> <li>• Accessible buildings for all people</li> <li>• High ceilings and outdoor space</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inviting Open Areas and Careful Landscaping</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings with small open spaces and nooks that you can explore</li> <li>• Landscaping needed to make traditional design work</li> <li>• Street planters, trees, native plants, and foundation landscaping on good buildings</li> <li>• Water features</li> <li>• New age urban with plants and greenery</li> <li>• Friendly open spaces that invite people in</li> <li>• Landscaping with native species</li> </ul>

<p><b>Professional and Well-Designed Signage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No gaudy signage</li> <li>• Awnings in good condition are a wonderful feature</li> <li>• Signage that is professional and not a dominant feature on a building</li> <li>• Façade maintenance is key to a good building – keep things fixed up!</li> <li>• Consistent signage between storefronts with similar colors, fonts and designs</li> <li>• Signage that is not obvious or defining the view of a neighborhood</li> </ul>
<p><b>Excellent Building Form and Use of Details</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varying roof lines are important for buildings</li> <li>• Attention to detail in design with smaller architectural features (less important which features – just needs detail)</li> <li>• Clean modern lines</li> <li>• Special exterior touches such as murals, lighting, awnings, etc. – building set apart in small ways</li> <li>• Maintains old-fashioned principles of design – faces street, no parking, etc.</li> <li>• Detailed architecture</li> <li>• Successfully integrating traditional design with modern features</li> <li>• Simple structure design</li> <li>• Brick and unique details – think UChicago</li> <li>• Craftsmanship present across building, especially with curves, pillars, and colored details</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prioritized Maintenance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well maintained</li> <li>• Character elements well maintained</li> <li>• Upkept with good maintenance</li> <li>• Cleanliness with maintained building details</li> <li>• Clean buildings that are washed regularly and don't look cheap</li> <li>• No broken windows, material care</li> <li>• Exteriors that are maintained and clean</li> <li>• Maintained landscaping</li> </ul>

<p><b>Clear Character/Style</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic architecture – natural materials with nature around them</li> <li>• Originality and uniqueness in design</li> <li>• Victorian era details were the peak of beauty in Homewood</li> <li>• Small-town feel to buildings, especially pre-1940.</li> <li>• Buildings which “grow” into the community and give the impression they have aged with the community itself</li> <li>• Thoughtful and functional design – you can see how the building works</li> <li>• Art Deco and Rococo are great design styles</li> <li>• True to the era it is built in – today, that is traditional and modern blended</li> <li>• Genuine character and clever design</li> <li>• Draws the eye rather than only serving utility or money</li> <li>• Focus on standards for construction</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good Placement of Building Uses/Activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third places/buildings which bring people together</li> <li>• Buildings with stores/activities for people at ground level and residents above</li> <li>• Buildings that are useful are beautiful – they define us</li> <li>• Thriving small businesses in buildings making them unique, and community-based places around them</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus on Adaptive Reuse/Preservation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic preservation in buildings that nods to the original building but modernizes</li> <li>• Buildings that add up over time – this is how you make variety. Design buildings to make this happen.</li> <li>• Buildings reused and remaining useful over time is beautiful</li> <li>• Modern buildings which nod back to original buildings – evolving but traditional</li> <li>• Restored buildings over rebuilt buildings</li> </ul>

<p><b>Clear Relation to Streets and Surroundings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings that embrace streets and the spaces we are in.</li> <li>• Well maintained streets make for beautiful buildings</li> <li>• Community spaces near buildings, especially walkable sidewalks and other things that make buildings part of our lives</li> <li>• Better organized site planning, especially keeping parking lots organized and beautified.</li> <li>• Ease of access on foot, human scale design of site</li> </ul>
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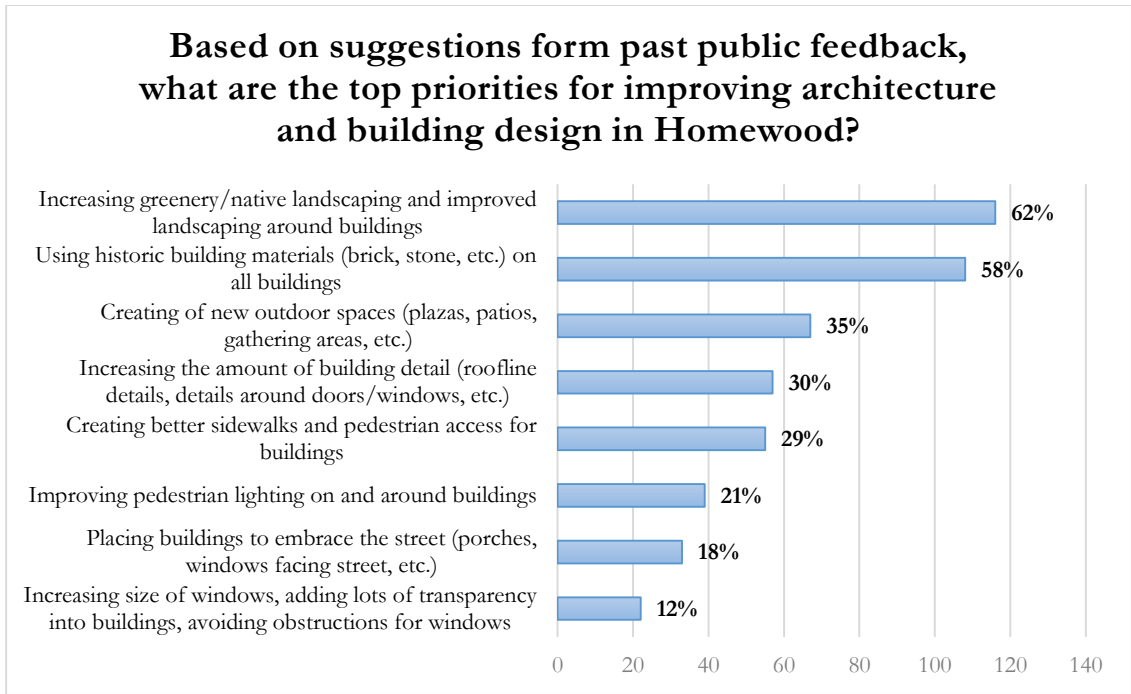
Based on a review of responses, there was a great deal of consistency between responses. Throughout survey responses, Homewood residents expressed the following broad ideas for the future of building design in Homewood:

1. Maintenance was repeatedly as an essential component in creating excellent buildings.
2. There was a clear stylistic preference for some modern design elements mixed with natural materials (brick, stone, etc.).
3. There were many responses citing a desire to see landscaping elements take a more prominent role in the design of new sites and buildings in the Village.
4. A clear response was that buildings need to be more responsive – to their environment and ecology surrounding them (with landscaping/open space), their neighboring structures (through materials and form), and to their surroundings (by showing others the activity and life taking place in them).
5. There was an emphasis on the liveliness and clear use of buildings as a sign of a beautiful building, and stressed the need for the use of the building to be apparent, uses to draw many community residents into common areas, open spaces which are clearly meant for use, and an ease of accessing the building on foot without a vehicle.
6. Responses showed a strong interest in historic preservation and adaptive reuse, seeing the most beautiful structures as ones which are added onto and evolving over long periods of time.

**3. Based on suggestions from past public feedback, what are the top priorities for improving architecture and building design in Homewood?**

The final question of the survey tested building preferences stated in past surveys and workshops developed to guide the Appearance Plan. The survey allowed respondents to choose their top priorities for what the new Appearance Plan should accomplish across the Village. The chart below describes responses to this question.





Based on the results of this survey, Homewood residents expressed that increasing the presence of landscaping/native greenery and elevating the use of historic building materials were clear priorities for the new Appearance Plan for the Village.

**Holiday Lights Event (December 2023)**

Village staff hosted a public engagement activity as part of the Holiday Lights festival on December 1, 2023. Staff set up a booth with posters allowing residents to select buildings they preferred based on different scenarios, such as a developer proposing an industrial development or a new building in Downtown Homewood. Residents used dots to select buildings that reflected their preferences for new structures.

Staff used the following four scenarios:

- a. **If a developer proposed a new building in Downtown Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**
- b. **If a developer proposed a new townhouse complex in Homewood, what would you want the buildings to look like?**
- c. **If a developer proposed an industrial building in Homewood, what would you want to the building to look like?**
- d. **If a developer proposed a new shopping center on Halsted Street in Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**







The activity allowed 74 participants to provide feedback on preferences for buildings in Homewood, and give direct feedback to planning staff on concerns about the appearance and design of the Village.

A summary of responses and input gathered from participants is included below.

**1. If a developer proposed a new building in Downtown Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**

**Question 1**

What types of buildings would you like to see in Downtown Homewood?







	Total Votes	Comments Summary	5	10	15	20	25
	8	Respondents liked the use of brick, the subtle storefronts, and scale of building. Some residents had concerns about plain design and lack of clear building activity.					
	9	Respondents were positive about the use of brick and identified symmetry/ rhythmic pattern. Respondents liked blend of traditional and modern materials.					
	24	Respondants appreciated balconies and private open space, integrating outdoor dining and plazas into buildings, and use of brick.					
	4	Respondants were positive about balconies and storefronts. Respondants were concerns about the use of stucco and busy façade.					
	2	Respondants noted color scheme is too modern. No cornice. Colors should blend well with the existing color palate in Homewood.					
	0	Respondents liked the corner retail component. Respondents were not positive about the materials and lack of detail on buildings.					

Participants stated a strong preference for buildings with private open spaces for residential units, including balconies, patios, and outdoor plazas and terraces. Participants cited that such features add life to buildings and give additional architectural detail that is also useful to residents. Participants noted a preference for brick buildings and those which employ traditional design features in the downtown, citing symmetry, cornices, and simple building massing as essential to good design. A number of participants expressed concerns about the use of stucco and other modern cladding materials, as well as the loss of building details on structures which have embraced more modern design styles. Participants also noted the need for more public open spaces and cited a lack of such spaces in any new development in Homewood, pointing to spaces found in the most popular building image featuring a sidewalk café area.

**2. If a developer proposed a new building in Downtown Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**

**Question 2**

If a developer proposed townhomes/condominiums in Homewood, what would you want them to look like?







	Total Votes	Comments Summary	5	10	15	20	25	30
	31	Respondents liked the use of brick, the subtle storefronts, and scale of building. Some residents had concerns about plain design and lack of clear building activity.						
	9	Respondents were positive about the use of brick and identified symmetry/ rhythmic pattern. Respondents liked blend of traditional and modern materials.						
	8	Respondants appreciated balconies and private open space, integrating outdoor dining and plazas into buildings, and use of brick.						
	4	Respondants were positive about balconies and storefronts. Respondants were concerns about the use of stucco and busy façade.						
	5	Respondants noted color scheme is too modern. No cornice. Colors should blend well with the existing color palate in Homewood.						
	1	Respondents liked the corner retail component. Respondents were not positive about the materials and lack of detail on buildings.						

Participants overwhelmingly noted the need for residential buildings, especially multi-family residential buildings, to have a high amount of landscaping and employ the use of outdoor open spaces. Preference was given for open spaces which are accessible and useful to the public, provide semi-public access, or are at least visible from the street. Residents also cited a desire for mixed-use developments which ensure multi-family residential buildings are both attractive and provide useful features for the community at large. Participants cited concerns about common design practices used on many mixed-use buildings under construction in the Chicago area, including overreliance on stucco, metal paneling, or vinyl cladding. Participants also expressed concern at the scale of many residential units, noting that aversion to multi-family buildings is often due to their scale over other concerns. Residents stated that residential buildings need to do a better job of being designed at a human-scale with useful and comfortable places for both residents and visitors. Open space and site design were heavily emphasized over building design with these townhome examples.

**3. If a developer proposed an industrial building in Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**

**Question 3**

If a developer proposed an industrial building in Homewood, what would you want the building to look most like?





	Total Votes	Comments Summary	5	10	15	20	25
	15	Respondants noted that the building has a "clean" look. Other respondents noted the welcoming outdoor entry space, mix of colors, and cornice.					
	4	Respondants liked the brick finish and "professional" look for industrial buildings. Some respondents said that "not all buildings need traditional design" and discouraged this design for industrial uses.					
	3	Respondants liked the large windows. Respondants expressed concerns about building detail not extended to the whole building, and buildings feeling too "corporate" with stucco/metal.					
	1	Respondents largely lamented the lack of unique visual interest. One respondent stated, "you can just tell it is a tip-up building."					
	12	Respondants liked the large windows and sense of transparency. Respondants also liked the mix of brick and metal and the use of lighting on the exterior of the building.					
	5	Respondants liked the use of building interior light to serve as outdoor passive lighting, and the awning at the entrance. Some respondents did not like metal cladding.					

Participants expressed a clear preference for the use of large window areas and clear entrances in the design of industrial buildings. Participants generally did not have concerns about modern design for industrial buildings, but cast aversion toward “standard” warehouse designed relying exclusively on stucco, EIFS, or metal cladding. Participants expressed positive responses toward buildings which use lighting as a design feature, whether in the design and presence of fixtures or in the careful design of how light illuminates buildings at night and provides a warm and inviting posture toward the rest of the Village. Residents communicated that traditional design is less important for industrial buildings, and that cohesion with neighboring buildings is more important than just mirroring traditional design in these districts. Participants had heavy aversion to parking and industrial loading areas being visible from the street frontage, and cited a need for welcoming open spaces/landscaping or entryways to ensure the building is “still designed for people,” even when activities are predominantly industrial. Participants cited a desire to see more effort placed into the development of more attractive industrial signage, citing a desire to see sign placement become more responsive to the design of the building.

**4. If a developer proposed a new shopping center on Halsted Street in Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?**

**Question 4**

If a developer proposed a new shopping center on Halsted Street in Homewood, what would you want the building to look like?

	Total Votes	Comments Summary	5	10	15	20	25
	2	Respondants liked the front awning and large windows near the front door. Other respondents felt the design was too plain and monochromatic.					
	1	Respondants did not like the stark colors, and noted that the design was too closely linked with a major corporate brand.					
	20	Respondants liked the visual variation of the façade, and the modern design that felt unique. Respondants liked the large windows and gathering areas outside of the store.					
	7	Respondants liked the mix of materials and awnings. Other respondents did not like the lack of visual detail, metal paneling, and flat roofline.					
	3	Respondants did not like the lack of clear front entrance. Respondants also noted that the front entry feature was not integrated into the building and felt "tacked on."					
	9	Respondants like the brick finish and use of large awnings/arcades. Some respondents expressed they felt the design was too traditional for Halsted stores.					

Participants showed a preference for unique design in more traditional commercial center buildings. The use of clear entryways that draw shoppers/site users in was the primary feature sought after by participants. Participants wished to see less “faux” design features that mimic traditional designs, instead opting for variation of the building form, unique signage elements (i.e. blade signs, etc.) and other design features which are not directly tied to brand identities. Participants offered ideas for using more landscaping to buffer the “necessary” large expanses of buildings, and worried about flooding and other impacts on the Village caused by having pavement “with no landscaping or places for the water to go.” Participants again expressed a preference for less traditional designs on Halsted Street, citing the need for buildings to instead focus on being compatible with one another and well-maintained rather than “trying to be downtown Homewood.” Participants cited concerns about the current state of maintenance on the Halsted corridor, and noted that there needed to be more pedestrian areas in parking lots and near store to ensure that there are “people around who care” and place pressure on businesses to maintain meaningful spaces.

**Past Public Engagement (Prior to November 2023)**

There were several additional public engagement efforts conducted in 2022 and 2023 which provided additional information and guidance for the Appearance Commission and staff crafting the new Appearance Plan. These engagement efforts have been previously summarized for the Appearance Commission and are not summarized in this memo.

**Continuing Public Engagement**

The Village will continue to provide public engagement opportunities for Village residents beyond this report. Many of these opportunities are designed to provide continuous public engagement on multiple projects. Feedback will continue to be summarized for the Appearance Commission as necessary.

Group	Proposed Engagement Strategies
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishing a Youth Steering Committee (may become a more permanent engagement opportunity for youth)</li> </ul>
Business Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey for members of the Homewood Business Association to be left open until the completion of the draft Appearance Plan document.</li> </ul>
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey for members of the Homewood Business Association to be left open until the completion of the draft Appearance Plan document.</li> </ul>
Developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to be provided for direct feedback from developers to ensure successful implementation of Appearance Plan.</li> </ul>

**FUTURE TIMELINE**

A revised copy of the proposed timeline for the Appearance Plan and Sign Code updates has been attached to this memorandum. Staff currently plans to complete work on the new Appearance Plan and Sign Codes through the end of 2024.



**STAFF COMMENTS**

1. Staff is continuing updates to the Appearance Plan document; these updates were initiated in early 2022 by the Appearance Commission and Village staff.
2. Public engagement has been ongoing for the Appearance Plan since late 2022, and has been mostly concluded as of February 2024. Some public engagement and comment opportunities will remain through the end of the process of drafting the Appearance Plan and Sign Code.
3. Staff has revised the timeline for the completion of the Appearance Plan, allowing for time to discuss and revise recommendations to the Appearance Plan and create a new structure for the Appearance Plan document.
4. Staff will continue to develop a plan template and document design “in-house,” preparing a modernized version of the Appearance Plan by the end of 2024.
5. Staff will continue to work on revisions to the Sign Code in tandem with the development of new recommended design guidelines in the Appearance Plan. Public engagement efforts have also allowed for dialogue on the preferences around signage.
6. Staff will continue to workshop recommendations and final language for the Appearance Plan between March and August 2024.

**RECOMMENDED APPEARANCE COMMISSION ACTION**

No action required.



# Appearance Plan Input Survey - Homewood Residents

The Village of Homewood is updating the Village Appearance Plan - the Village's book of design guidelines for all new developments coming into the Village. The Appearance Plan was last updated in 1998, and the Plan is being revised to address design concerns from residents and update guidelines to reflect the changes in design and technology made over the last 25 years.

We're asking you to help us write new design guidelines! We've collected feedback from Homewood residents over the past 12 months, and now it is time to identify our top priorities for new buildings coming into Homewood.

### 1. If you could improve one building in the Village, which would it be and how would you improve it?

This question helps us inform design decisions for future projects in Homewood.

Building:

What You'd Change:

### 2. In your opinion, what makes a beautiful building?

This question helps us know your thoughts on what makes our community more attractive.

### 3. Based on top suggestions from past public feedback, what are the top priorities for improving architecture in Homewood? (Pick 2!)

This question helps us identify the most important priorities to list in the plan and advocate for in new development.

- Using historic building materials (brick, stone, etc.) on all buildings
- Increasing the amount of building detail (roofline details, details around doors/windows, etc.)
- Increasing greenery/native landscaping and improved landscaping around buildings
- Improving pedestrian lighting on and around buildings
- Placing buildings to embrace the street (porches, windows facing street, etc.)
- Creating of new outdoor spaces (plazas, patios, gathering areas, etc.)
- Increasing size of windows, adding lots of transparency into buildings, avoiding obstructions for windows
- Creating better sidewalks and pedestrian access for buildings



# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## MEMORANDUM

DATE: 3/7/2024

**To:** Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development

**From:** Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development

**Topic:** Updates to Work Plan for Appearance Plan Development

## Introduction

The Appearance Plan for the Village of Homewood, last officially updated in 1998, is slated for a full update to reflect new development pressures and changes which have occurred in the Village in the past 25 years. The Village began the process of gathering public input and data to revise the Appearance Plan in 2022, and completed this process in early 2024. Staff have begun the work to create a revised Appearance Plan and Sign Code to better equip officials and staff in the work of promoting functional, attractive, and fiscally sound development.

The purpose of this memo is to detail a revised work plan for completing the Appearance Plan by the end of 2024, building off of the previous work completed by staff. At this time, all work is to be completed by Village staff under the supervision of the Appearance Commission and the Village Board of Trustees.

## Revised Appearance Plan Project Timeline

### **Complete Revised Project Scoping – Late September/Early October 2023**

Determine whether additional public input is needed to complete the Appearance Plan draft (Noah)

### **Host Workshop #1 – October 2023 (COMPLETE)**

Revisit plan goals/purpose in new meeting to ensure department cohesion and clear approach after review of initial draft

Determine scope for new plan document

- Determine areas of applicability (zoning districts/areas of focus)
- Consider connection to RTA document/other planning documents

Determine plan type (checklists with need to meet minimum number of criteria? general guidelines set? hierarchical guidelines set? contextual plan?) and plan organization strategy (building typology? street section? neighborhood/planning area? zone?)

- May be worth discussion with Appearance Commission members
- Organizational structure will be based on the priorities the Village has identified in design (what designs are most important to the success of the Village? Where do we take design most seriously? How do we isolate these priorities?)

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



### Complete Public Engagement and Refine Results – November 2023 through March 2024

- Complete follow-up with Appearance Commission for launch of project and opportunity to provide feedback on what they'd like to see in the plan itself (what makes it easier to administer, more useful based on the previous feedback they have provided)
- Engage with young adults through H-F School District, Library, and H-F Park District
- Collect input from business community, arts council, etc. (attend monthly meeting with each to have a presentation on the Appearance Plan goals/progress and collect additional input)
- Conduct outreach with common development partners working with the Village to identify particularly difficult design standards to meet with current market conditions, identify areas where cost implications are high compared to marginal benefit for design and include in outreach report.
- Refine results of input and prepare report to distribute to Appearance Commission; Planning and Zoning Commission; place report on website after release to public boards/commissions.
  - Complete preliminary report of data collected prior to June 2023.
  - Tabulate and summarize data with visually interesting methods; place into report.
  - Complete architectural analysis of the building stated as preferred buildings, summarize in report for Commissioners (include historical analysis as needed).
- Host workshop with Appearance Commission with release of report. Invite the public to participate in the workshop, or on-demand through the website

### Host Workshop #2 – March 2024

- Identify best practices, both visually and organizationally, within planning resources to develop a plan theme and document design template

### Host Workshop #3 – April 2024

- Pair public priorities to plan categories/areas of interest, complete activities to use public comments to develop priorities for design guidelines, prioritize and create a hierarchy of design principles for different types of development

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



### **Develop Plan Draft –May 2024 through August 2024**

- Begin identifying sign code design principles, functional and attractive signage in the Village (see Sign Code section below)
- Organize design principles into categories based on plan organization
- Write draft appearance plan (text with basic structure outline for Appearance Commission reference)

### **Refine Plan Draft – August 2024 through October 2024**

- Present new Appearance Plan text in a public hearing at the Appearance Commission and the public and collect structured feedback.
  - Make the same information available online for those who aren't able to attend in person.
- Complete final draft of new Appearance Plan based on the feedback received from Appearance Commission and any additional input from the public (text and basic structure guide)
- Complete graphic design for the new guidelines with Village branding and design concepts, transfer text into new graphic design format to create final plan draft.

### **Complete Approvals –October 2024 through December 2024**

- Take the final draft to the Appearance Commission for recommendation to the Village Board for adoption.
- Draft revised Municipal Code language for Chapters 2 and 28, or identify area of Municipal Code to amend to codify set of guidelines.
- Draft an ordinance for the revise Municipal Code language and update of the referenced plan.
- Take the final draft to the Village Board for adoption.
- Publish in Municode and on Village website.

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



### Revised Sign Code Project Timeline

#### **Prepare for Sign Code Update – January 2024 through March 2024**

- Collect best practices in signage codes, including best practices on zoning enforceability, presentation of sign types and form regulations, and language to ensure content neutrality.
- Collect guidance and model code language for navigating legal challenges surrounding signage.
- Include Village Attorney in legal review.

#### **Host Workshop #4 – February 2024**

- Complete current code assessment to identify current administration challenges and shortcomings

#### **Host Workshop #5 – March 2024**

- Collect and evaluate signage examples from around the Village to determine constraints for appropriate signage development.
- Use workshop time with staff to determine signage types and sizes deemed appropriate for different districts or development areas.

#### **Prepare and Review Sign Code Draft – May 2024 through August 2024**

- Collect responses from elected and appointed officials and the public.
- Present draft revised regulations to the Appearance Commission, tying into the public feedback collected during the Appearance Guidelines update process. Collect input from the Commission and the public.
- Publish draft regulations on website for review and feedback.

#### **Refine Plan Draft – August 2024 through October 2024**

- Revise updated sign ordinance based on public comments and feedback from public commissions.
- Present final draft of revised sign ordinance to the Appearance Commission for a recommendation to the Board.
- Present final draft of updated sign ordinance to Village Board for adoption.
- Publish in Municode and on Village website.

## VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD

Item 5. A.



### **Complete Approvals –October 2024 through December 2024**

- Take the final draft to the Appearance Commission for recommendation to the Village Board for adoption.
- Draft revised Municipal Code language for Chapters 2 and 30, or identify area of Municipal Code to amend to codify set of guidelines.
- Draft an ordinance for the revise Municipal Code language and update of the referenced plan.
- Take the final draft to the Village Board for adoption.
- Publish in Municode and on Village website.

# VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD



## MEMORANDUM

DATE OF MEETING: March 7, 2024

**To:** Appearance Commission

**From:** Noah Schumerth, Assistant Director of Economic and Community Development

**Through:** Angela Mesaros, Director of Economic and Community Development

**Topic:** Appearance Commission New Business Updates

## NEW COMMISSION MEMBERS

Welcome Christine Banks, appointed to the Appearance Commission in February 2024.

Many thanks to Liz Smith for her service to the Village of Homewood, and for her continuing contributions to the civic and economic health of our community.

## PAST CASES

Below is a summary of progress made on significant cases heard by the Appearance Commission or related to the appearance of the Village since September 2023:

9/7 - Case 23-24: Goodman Insurance: Sign which received variance was installed.

9/7 - Case 23-25: Façade Improvements at 18027 Dixie Highway: Work is nearly complete. Siding is complete (was torn down and replaced in December 2023). Storefront treatments complete. Most recent work includes installation of security systems and improvements to fire/electrical systems in building.

10/19 - Case 23-27: XFA Fitness: The property owner has completed interior renovations and significant improvements to the interior of the storefront facing Dixie Highway. Classes began in February 2024.

11/3 - Case 23-30: Saint John Neumann Parish: No progress currently made. Work to begin in Spring/Summer 2024 as stated by the applicant.

11/3 - Case 23-31: All Nations Church: No progress currently made. Work to begin in 2024 as stated by the applicant.