

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
REMOTE PARTICIPATION
July 21, 2022
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; Tom Gallagher, Jeff Foster, Jon Hale, Jeff Clark and Frank Sullivan

EXCUSED: Commissioner Nick Bridge, Paul May and Paul Beckwith

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor-Village Planner and Michael Marrs, Acting Plan Commission attorney

Roll Call - Roll was called at 7:05pm. A quorum was present.

Village Planner Failor read into the record a statement regarding remote participation and reviewed the public hearing procedures.

Agenda Approval: Motion by Commissioner Gallagher, Seconded by Commissioner Hale. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Gallagher-yes, Hale-yes, Foster-yes, Sullivan-yes, Clark – yes, and Chair Sims-yes.

Non-Agenda Public Participation – None.

Approval of Minutes – June 2, 2022: Motion by Commissioner Sullivan, Seconded by Commissioner Gallagher. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Sullivan-yes, Gallagher-yes, Hale-yes, Foster-yes, Clark-yes and Chair Sims-yes.

Public Hearings & Findings of Fact: PC 22-02: Special Use Permit – 501 Lake Street. The Applicant, Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, has requested a special use permit per Article 9, section 9.2 E of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the installation of six (6) new athletic field light standards in heights ranging from 80 feet to 90 feet surrounding the south athletic field (South Campus Tract) located on Lake Street between East Avenue and Scoville Avenue.

Village Planner Failor provided the staff report giving an overview of the application.

Oak Park - River Forest High School Superintendent Greg Johnson presented an overview and introduced the project team. Ms. Maureen McCarthy with the Park District of Oak Park provided an understanding of the reasons they need to collaborate with the High School regarding the use of their fields. Mr. Johnson then reviewed the calendar of public meetings regarding the High School's proposed improvements.

Ms. Alyson Sternquist, Architect and project manager provided an overview of the proposed revised programming for the subject property and the fields north of Lake Street so the commission and public can better understand the need for the new light standards.

Mr. Cliff Mottl, lighting expert for the High School, provided an overview of the illumination study. He indicated that the High School would have the ability to dim the lights and turn them off easily. He stated that the proposed lights were to be LED lights that would reduce glare and light spillage.

Plan Commissioner began with questions. The commissioners were asking about the need for extended hours. It was explained that the youth affiliates needed to use fields during the day ending no later than 7PM, while needing to shift the park district's adult programming later in the day and into the 8PM to 10PM time slot. The High School Superintendent stated that there would be no high school programming for the 8PM-10PM time slot. It was asked if there could be a compromise with extending the Park District fields time to 11PM at Ridgeland Common and shorting the High School south field to 9PM. It was confirmed that 11PM on the Park District fields would be too late for the participants. It was asked if the HS lights could be turned off when not in use. It was affirmed by the High School representatives. It was also asked if the late-night lights could be on for a certain number of months. It was indicated that four months out of the year would be needed for light from 8PM to 10PM. It was indicated that the lights themselves were not of issue, but the extended hours were.

Cross-examination began with Mr. Stephen Allsteadt, 136 Frank Lloyd Wright Lane, asking questions regarding the following; the Concordia University field contract with the high school, the Imagine Committee findings, current lighting on the field vs. proposed lighting on the field at brightness in certain areas – mainly the northwest corner, spring and fall usage, shared use with the park district, the adult softball league numbers, youth sport numbers, and current use of the baseball fields and best location for the new field.

Public Testimony began with Ms. Leisa Marthaler, 137 Francisco Terrace, stating her concerns with the proposed light and stating that the area will become even more congested if approved.

Village Planner Failor read into the record approximately 30 minutes worth of written public testimony submitted to the Plan Commission both in favor and in opposition to the application.

Plan Commissioners continued with additional questions and statements. The Plan Commission discussed the proposed light glare and spillage compared to existing lighting. It was asked again if there could be a compromise in the late-night light timing. The Commission continued to discuss possible compromises such as shutting off the lights when not in use and limiting usage after 8PM to four months of the year. The Plan Commission discussed the use of the fields. Superintendent Johnson agreed to shutting off the lights when there was no activity as well as limiting the extended light hours to only four months out of the year during March, April, May and June. The Commission inquired as to who would be using the fields during the 8PM – 10PM time slot during that four-month period. Supt. Johnson indicated it would be for adult softball. Ms. McCarthy with the Park District of Oak Park stated adult softball, but mentioned some other users. However earlier both Ms. McCarthy and Supt. Johnson mentioned earlier that all youth programming would end by 7PM, so after that would be adult programming, but the plan commission wanted to understand exactly which adult programs would be scheduled.

Chair Sims asked for a straw poll on supporting the application at this time. Their vote was as follows:

Clark – No
Foster – Yes with conditions
Sullivan – Yes with conditions
Gallagher – Yes with conditions
Hale – Yes with conditions
Chair Sims - No

The Plan Commission requested that the applicant return to their next meeting with a detailed list of groups who will be programmed to use the south field during the 8PM – 10PM time slot in March, April, May and June of each year.

The public testimony portion of the hearing was closed.

The Plan Commission voted to continue the hearing until August 4, 2022 at 7PM as follows:

Gallagher – Yes

Clark – Yes

Foster – Yes

Sullivan – Yes

Hale – No

Chair Sims - Yes

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10: 27 p.m. Motion by Commissioner Gallagher, Seconded by Commissioner Clark. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Gallagher- yes, Clark-yes, Foster – yes, Sullivan-yes, Hale-yes, and Chair Sims - yes.

Prepared by: Craig Failor, Village Planner / Staff Liaison