

August 4, 2022

President and Board of Trustees
Village of Oak Park
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

**Re: Application of Oak Park and River Forest
High School District 200 for Consideration of
a Special Use Permit to Permit Light
Standards Taller than Otherwise Allowed at
501 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois – PC 22-02**

Dear President and Board of Trustees:

In June of 2022, Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200, 201 South Scoville Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302 (“Applicant”), submitted an application for consideration of a special use permit with the Plan Commission (“Commission”). The Applicant is the owner of 501 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois (“South Campus Tract”). The Applicant requested that the Commission consider approval of a special use permit to allow light standards taller than otherwise allowed at the South Campus Tract, which is located in the OS Open Space Zoning District.

Notice and Hearing.

On July 6, 2022, legal notice of the public hearing was published in *The Wednesday Journal*, a newspaper of general circulation within the Village of Oak Park.

Pursuant to legal notice, the Commission conducted a public hearing on the application on July 21, 2022 and August 4, 2022, at which time and place a quorum of the members of the Commission was present. A notice of the public hearing was posted at the South Campus Tract and certified letters were also mailed by the Applicant to

taxpayers of record for property within three hundred feet (300') of the South Campus Tract, advising them of the proposal and the public hearing to be held.

Having heard and considered the testimony and evidence at the public hearing, the Commission makes the following findings of fact:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The South Campus Tract.

1. The South Campus Tract is located on the south side of Lake Street, east of East Avenue and west of Scoville Avenue. The South Campus Tract is located in the OS Open Space Zoning District and is improved as an athletics field.

2. To the north of the South Campus Tract is the Oak Park River Forest High School campus, zoned in the I Institutional Zoning District, to the south of the South Campus Tract are railroad tracks, to the east of the South Campus Tract is Ridgeland Commons Park and to the west of the South Campus Tract are residential apartments in the R-7 Multi-Family Zoning District.

The Applicant.

3. The Applicant owns the South Campus Tract.

Requested Approval – Special Use Permit.

4. The Applicant has four (4) light standards on the South Campus Tract that are each ninety-eight feet (98') tall ("Existing Light Standards"), as approved by the Village on September 17, 2002, in a special use permit granted with conditions in Ordinance 2002-O-52 ("Prior Special Use Permit").

5. Subsection 9.2(E)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance provides as follows:

In the OS and I Districts, lighting for outdoor recreation fields is permitted to the maximum building height of the district. A taller height may be allowed

through special use approval. However, any existing lighting for outdoor recreation fields, in any district, as of the effective date of this Ordinance, is deemed conforming at its current height and may be repaired and replaced. Any conditions imposed as part of the special use approval for such lighting remain in effect and any changes to such conditions must be approved as a special use.

6. Per this Subsection, because the Existing Light Standards were in place as of the effective date of the new Zoning Ordinance adoption in 2017, the Existing Light Standards have been deemed conforming at their current height, and the conditions in the Prior Special Use Permit continue in effect.

7. In its application, the Applicant asked for a special use permit for six (6) new light standards ranging from eighty feet (80') to ninety feet (90') ("New Light Standards"), which are taller than otherwise allowed at the South Campus Tract under the Zoning Ordinance, to replace the four (4) Existing Light Standards.

8. The Zoning Ordinance restricts light standards on the South Campus Tract to a maximum height of thirty-five feet (35'), unless a special use permit is granted to allow for taller light standards, per Subsection 9.2(E)(3) of the Zoning Ordinance.

9. The Applicant proposes that the New Light Standards would comply with all the conditions in the Prior Special Use Permit on the Existing Light Standards, except that the new lights be allowed to be operated not later than 10:00 p.m., instead of 8:00 p.m.

10. Village staff recommends that if the New Light Standards are approved, certain other non-substantive modifications to the conditions in the Prior Special Use Permit should be made to reflect the New Light Standards, as set forth below under "Conditions of Approval."

11. The Commission heard testimony regarding the New Light Standards proposed to be constructed and operated by the Applicant at the South Campus Tract, to replace

the Existing Light Standards, along with the Applicant's proposed plan of operation for the lights.

12. The purpose of the OS Harrison Street Zoning District is, per Subsection 6.1(A) of the Zoning Ordinance:

The OS Open Space Zoning District is intended for the designation and protection of parks and public recreational facilities, both outdoor and indoor and include both active and passive recreation areas, and certain ancillary uses, such as field houses, cultural facilities, and performance areas. Such parks and recreational facilities may also be affiliated with schools.

Comprehensive Plan.

13. The South Campus Tract is governed by the Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan ("Comprehensive Plan").

14. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Village President and Board of Trustees in September of 2014 after an extensive public input process.

15. The application primarily affects one (1) chapter within the Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 4, "Land Use & Built Environment."

16. The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and objectives which set the standards for development, and it discusses the idea of strengthening commercial districts in the Village as well as the symbiotic relationship between economic development and the overall quality of the community.

17. Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan sets out the Village's goals regarding land use and the built environment. The Village's goals in these areas are to strengthen and protect the character, integrity and cohesion of the Village and its neighborhoods (goal 4.1), enhance the architectural integrity of the Village through both preservation and innovation (goal 4.2), diversify the economy and strengthen the tax base through land

use and development (goal 4.3) and seek innovative and creative solutions to provide redevelopment opportunities and to recapture open space at a variety of scales (goal 4.4).

18. The proposed New Light Standards meet the above-described goals in the Comprehensive Plan, so long as the Conditions are met, as lowering the light standards and reducing light spillage from the South Campus Tract would enhance the quality of life in the surrounding neighborhood.

Standards.

19. The following are standards for approval of a special use permit, in Subsection 14.2(E) of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. The establishment, maintenance, and operation of the proposed special use will not have a substantial or unduly adverse impact on the neighborhood or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare.
2. The proposed special use is compatible with the general land use of adjacent properties and other property within the immediate vicinity.
3. The special use in the specific location proposed is consistent with the spirit and intent of this Ordinance, adopted land use policies and the Comprehensive Plan.
4. The special use meets the requirements for such classification in this Ordinance.

20. The Commission finds that that allowing the New Light Standards at the South Campus Tract as a special use satisfies the standards in Subsection 14.2(E), so long as the Conditions are met.

21. Specifically, the Commission finds that replacing the four (4) Existing Light Standards with the six (6) proposed New Light Standards pursuant to a special use permit would benefit the surrounding neighborhood by reducing the height of the light standards

and by reducing the amount of light spillage, would be compatible with surrounding land uses and would aid in enhancing the OS Open Space Zoning District, so long as the Conditions are met.

22. The Commission finds that allowing the New Light Standards at the South Campus Tract is appropriate and is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and the Comprehensive Plan, so long as the Conditions are met.

Conditions of Approval.

1. That the landscaping around the South Campus Tract be maintained in substantial conformity with the plan by Wight and Company dated August 8, 2002 which was submitted into evidence as part of Ordinance 2002-O-52.
2. That the light standards not exceed 100 feet in height and have a silver, galvanized steel finish.
3. That the lights atop the light standards be turned off not later than 8:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, except:
 - a. That the lights may be used from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. during the months of March, April, May, and June, only if specific programming during those months requires it; and
 - b. That the lights shall be kept off when the South Campus Tract is not in use.
4. That between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. during the months of March, April, May, and June, the South Campus Tract shall be scheduled for use only by the Park District and their affiliates for their spring sports programs.
5. That the lights atop the light standards not be used on Sundays.

6. That the gates to the South Campus Tract be locked at 10:00 p.m., Sunday through Saturday, and reopened at 6:00 a.m. each morning.
7. That light spillage from the light standards measured at the property line surrounding the South Campus Tract shall not exceed the foot candles set forth in the attached plan drawn by Amsco Engineering, dated June 29, 2022.
8. That no commercial concessions be provided on the South Campus Tract.
9. That adequate trash receptacles and trash clean-up services be provided at the South Campus Tract.
10. That signage be provided at each gated entrance to the South Campus Tract, directing users to observe the “permit parking only” status of on-street parking in the neighborhood and other applicable conditions imposed herein.
11. That the Applicant not rent the South Campus Tract for commercial purposes to a for-profit entity.
12. A public address system shall be prohibited on the South Campus Tract.
13. That in the event that any of the forgoing conditions and restrictions shall not be fulfilled at any time in the future, said events shall be deemed a violation(s) of the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Administrator shall take appropriate action

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to the authority vested in it by the statutes of the State of Illinois and the ordinances of the Village of Oak Park, and based on the above findings, the testimony and the evidence presented at the public hearing, this Commission, sitting as a Zoning

Commission, hereby recommends to the Village President and Board of Trustees that the application be APPROVED, subject to the Conditions set forth above.

This report adopted by a 5 to 2 vote of the Plan Commission, sitting as a Zoning Commission, this 4th day of August, 2022.