



Village of Oak Park

STAFF REPORT

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals

REVIEW DATE: December 4, 2024

FROM: Project Review Team

PREPARED BY: Mike Bruce, Zoning Administrator

PROJECT TITLE

CALENDAR NUMBER: 20-24-Z

The Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) will conduct a public hearing on a special use permit application filed by the Applicant, Emiyuki Ortiz, to operate a reception/banquet facility pursuant to Section 8.3 (“Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance at the property located at 6537 North Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois, Property Index Number 16-06-204-0011-0000, in the NA North Avenue Zoning District

APPLICANT INFORMATION

APPLICANT/OWNER: Emiyuki Ortiz and Juan Ortiz
438 Lenox Street
Oak Park, IL 60302

PROPERTY INFORMATION

EXISTING ZONING: NA North Avenue
EXISTING LAND USE: Mixed Use Building
PROPERTY SIZE: 25' x 125' (3,125 SF)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Corridor Commercial/Mixed Use

SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH: North Avenue followed by the City of Chicago (Parking lot and Strip Mall)
SOUTH: Public Alley followed by R-2 Single-Family Zoning District (Single-Family Residence)
EAST: NA North Avenue Zoning District (Single-Story Commercial Building)
WEST: NA North Avenue Zoning District (Single-Story Commercial Building)

A n a l y s i s

Submittals

This report is based on the following documents which were filed with the Development Customer Services Department:

1. Application for Special use Permit;
2. Project Summary;
3. Responses to the Standards for receiving a special use permit pursuant to Section 14.2 (E) of the Zoning Ordinance;
4. Map of Surrounding Properties;
5. Photos of Surrounding Properties;
6. Site Plan; and
7. Plat of Survey.

Description

The Subject Property is situated along the south side of North Avenue between East Avenue and Fair Oaks Avenue. The Applicant is applying to permit the establishment of a reception/banquet facility at the property commonly known as 6537 North Avenue. The Applicant estimates that there will be approximately 10-12 cars dropping off/picking-up per event, which does not include the cars parking in vacant spaces in the area. The Applicant does not anticipate needing to request a designated drop-off and pick-up area for the proposed business, which, if it was, could negatively impact parking for adjacent businesses.

The Applicants indicate that “We are looking for a special use permit to utilize our space to host parties for children with age ranges 3-12. The space could also be used for small bridal showers, first communions or other small family gatherings. Depending on the community's interest, this venue may also be used for pop-up shops. All events will be held during the daytime and/or early evening. Loud music, smoking/vaping will be strictly prohibited. This business can be a positive addition to our community, creating not only a vibrant atmosphere and potential job opportunities for local residents. Most importantly we also hope this can be instrumental in the revitalization of North Avenue.”

C o m p l i a n c e w i t h t h e Z o n i n g O r d i n a n c e

The owners seek to operate a reception/banquet facility pursuant to Section 8.3 ("Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance in the NA North Avenue Zoning District at the Subject Property. A reception/banquet facility is defined as follows:

“A facility that provides hosting and rental services of a banquet hall or similar for private events including, but not limited to, wedding receptions, holiday parties, and fundraisers, with food and beverages that are prepared and served on-site or by a caterer to invited guests during intermittent dates and hours of operation. Live entertainment may be provided as an ancillary use as part of an event. A reception facility is not operated as a restaurant with regular hours of operation.”

The proposed facility is small for the proposed use. An “Occupancy Plan” for the space would be reviewed by the Permit Department to determine the number of persons allowed in the facility at one time. Depending on the event, the occupancy of the space would likely be reduced by the use of tables and chairs.

The Applicant has responded to the approval standards within the application.

C o m p a t i b i l i t y w i t h S u r r o u n d i n g L a n d U s e s

The Subject Property is located within the NA North Avenue Zoning District. This district is intended to accommodate the North Avenue corridor. The NA District addresses commercial uses of various scales, including larger auto-oriented retail, individual storefronts, and retail centers, while improving the pedestrian environment along the corridor. Higher density residential and mixed-use development is also encouraged.

As stated above, the proposed facility requires a special use permit. The exterior of the building will not be modified. The Applicant has stated that the proposed hours of operation are daytime and early evening. The frequency of times that a reception facility would operate is less than bars and restaurants. For the foregoing reasons, the proposed reception/banquet facility could be compatible with the neighborhood.

In contrast, the facility would be directly adjacent to a residential district with on on-site parking. The possible impact from a reception facility depends on the frequency of use, number of patrons and parking availability. Consistently having gatherings with inadequate parking spaces in the area could generate levels of activity and noise that would be incompatible with the adjacent residential district.

G e n e r a l I n f o r m a t i o n

Project Review Team

The Project Review Team reviewed the applicant's request for a special use permit. The Team consists of representatives from various departments and divisions within the Village government. The Team has significant parking concerns with the proposed facility at this location. The Subject Property does not have any onsite parking. Parking for the proposed facility would be in front of other businesses on the street. The proposed facility is located in close proximity to the Cigar Lounge, which, in the past, has created significant parking challenges for the neighborhood.

When I informed the Applicant about the Team's concerns, the Applicant replied with the following response.

"We absolutely appreciate your concerns as we lived on the 1200 block of East Avenue and have many of our close friends on that block. Parking and the neighborhood are of major importance to us. In terms of the concern with parking we would like to point out the following items:"

- The Cigar Bar is a late-night crowd; this request is not that type of target audience and should not conflict with the overflow of vehicles that the Cigar Bar creates; their clients all drive and stay for extended periods in the later hours.
- The proposed location is primarily for kids' parties; we have two daughters that have gone through D97; these parties are mainly drop-off; the primary attendees are kids being picked up and dropped off.
- In addition, the parties are generally in 2-3-hour increments which keeps spaces rotating if there are cars parked.
- We have also spoken to Sean Keane in the Parking Division regarding the 10 open spots on Fair Oaks; there was a proposal this Monday which included options to making those spots metered

throughout the day and potential permitting overnight; today they have 2-hour time restrictions.

- Spaces on North Avenue are ideal for the drop-off/pickup, but if the proposal for the 10 spaces moves forward, it will increase use of these spaces on a rotating basis.
- Fair Oaks also has a cul-de-sac (unlike East Avenue) which would prevent parking into the neighborhood.

The Zoning Board of Appeals may recommend conditions and restrictions upon the facility as may be deemed necessary for the protection of the public health, safety and welfare. If approved, Staff would like the Zoning Board of Appeals to consider placing restrictions on the hours of operation of the facility. The Applicants are considering operating between 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. or 10 p.m. at the latest.

End of Report.

- c. Applicant
 Zoning Board of Appeals members
 Rasheda Jackson, Zoning Board of Appeals Attorney
 Craig Failor, Village Planner