

May 1, 2025

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

Re: Application of Village of Oak Park for Consideration of Amendments to the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance to allow a “Place of Worship – Dual Use” as a special use in all zoning districts, except the OS - Open Space District and the H - Hospital District, and to set forth special use standards and regulations for “Places of Worship – Dual Use”– PC 25-02

Dear President and Board of Trustees:

In April of 2025, the Village of Oak Park, 123 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60303 (“**Applicant**”), submitted an application for consideration of amendments to the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance (“**Zoning Ordinance**”) with the Plan Commission (“**Commission**”). The Applicant requested that the Commission consider whether to amend the Zoning Ordinance by allowing “Place of Worship- Dual Use” as a special use in all zoning districts, except the OS – Open Space District, and H – Hospital District, and setting forth special use standards and regulations for “Places of Worship – Dual Use” as set forth in **EXHIBIT A** attached hereto and made a part hereof (together, the “**Amendments**”).

Notice and Hearing.

On April 16, 2025, 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 May 1, 2025, at which time and place a quorum of the members of the Commission was present.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Applicant's proposed amendments allow a "Place of Worship- Dual Use" in any zoning district in the Village, except the OS - Open Space District, and H – Hospital District, and set forth special use standards and regulations for "Places of Worship – Dual Use."

2. Specifically, the Applicant's proposed Amendments seek amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to amend Article 8 ("Uses") – Table 8-1 ("Use Matrix") by adding "Place of Worship – Dual Use" as a special use in all zoning districts, except the OS – Open Space District and H – Hospital District; and amend Article 8 ("Uses"), Section 8.4 ("Principal Use Standards"), subsection M. ("Place of Worship") by adding, "...and Place of Worship – Dual Use" to the heading and adding subsection 2., as follows: "Places of worship – dual use shall allow, through special use approval, an existing Place of Worship the ability to allocate unused areas within said Place of Worship for R-7 multiple family residential use or for general office use, as defined within this Ordinance. a. The sanctuary or the area of worship must continue to be used by the congregation. b. No additions shall be allowed to expand any proposed residential or office use. c. Provided the remaining sanctuary or area of worship is abandoned, the property shall become subject to the Adaptive Reuse provisions of this Ordinance."

3. The Zoning Ordinance was adopted in its current form in September of 2017 and it has been amended several times since then.

4. The Commission heard testimony regarding the proposed Amendments.

5. The Zoning Ordinance currently does not allow a Place of Worship – Dual Use as a special use in the Village and does not provide standards or regulations for said use.

6. Testimony established that there is a need to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a Place of Worship-Dual Use in the Village as a special use and to set forth relevant special use standards and regulations for Places of Worship-Dual Use.

Standards.

7. The following are standards for approval of text amendments in Subsection 14.1(E)(2) of the Zoning Ordinance:

a. The extent to which the proposed amendment promotes the public health, safety, and welfare of the Village.

b. The relative gain to the public, as compared to the hardship imposed upon the applicant.

c. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan and any adopted land use policies.

d. The consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Ordinance.

e. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, or reflects a change in policy.

f. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.

g. The extent to which the proposed amendment is consistent with the overall structure and organization of this Ordinance.

8. The Commission finds that the Amendments satisfy the standards in Subsection 14.1(E)(2), and that approval of the requested Amendments is appropriate.

9. The Commission finds that the Amendments would permit places of worship the ability to allocate unused areas within their existing facilities by either renting space to outside businesses for office use, or by converting underutilized space within the existing church building into residential use for R-7 multiple family residential use, which may help congregations financially fund their missions and outreach, and pay for building maintenance.

10. The Commission further finds that the Amendments allow for creative and flexible changes to uses of church structures, encouraging preservation in the Village in a reasonable manner, and are consistent with formerly adopted adaptive reuse amendments to support preservation of church structures in the Village.

11. Specifically, the Commission finds that making the Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will promote the public health, safety, and welfare, will make the regulations in the Zoning Ordinance more closely aligned with the intent of the Zoning Ordinance and Comprehensive Plan of the Village, and will further the future development goals of the Village.

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 GRANTED, and that the Amendments be made to the Zoning Ordinance be approved.

This report adopted by a 6 to 0 vote of the Plan Commission, sitting as a Zoning Commission, this 1st day of May, 2025.