

August 3, 2023

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

**Re: Application of Oak Park River Forest
High School for a Planned
Development for a Four-Story
Addition at 201 North Scoville Avenue
– PC 23-03**

Dear Trustees:

History of Project.

On or about July 20, 2023, Oak Park River Forest High School, of 201 North Scoville Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois 60302 (“**Applicant**”) filed an application for approval of a planned development at 201 North Scoville Avenue, on property depicted in the application (“**Property**”), in the I Institutional Zoning District. Applicant desires to construct a four story, 170,935 square foot building addition with new athletic and theater related uses, replacing an existing 104,025 square foot building.

In conjunction with its application, the Applicant requests the following three allowances from the strict requirements of the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance (“**Zoning Ordinance**”):

1. Article 6 (Special Purpose Districts) Section 6.2 (I Institutional Zoning District) Subsection 6.2.C. (Dimensional Standards) Table 6-2 (I District Dimensional Standards): Relief is requested from the maximum building height of 45’, to allow for a building height of 62’ for the proposed building on the Property, requiring an allowance of 17’.

2. Article 6 (Special Purpose Districts) Section 6.2 (I Institutional Zoning

District) Subsection 6.2.C. (Dimensional Standards) Table 6-2 (I District Dimensional Standards): Relief is requested from the minimum front yard setback of 15', to allow for a front yard setback of eight feet and three inches on the Property along the Scoville Avenue side of the proposed building, requiring an allowance of six feet and nine inches.

3. Article 9 (Site Development Standards) Section 9.2 (Exterior Lighting) Subsection 9.2.B.1 (Maximum Lighting Regulations): Relief is requested from the maximum allowable footcandle at any lot line of one footcandle, to allow 4.9 footcandles along the Property lot line on Scoville Avenue.

The Application and Notice.

On July 19, 2023, legal notice of the public hearing was published in *The Wednesday Journal*, a newspaper of general circulation in the Village of Oak Park. Notice of the public hearing was posted at the Property and letters were also mailed by the Applicant to property owners for property within 300' of the Property, advising them of the proposal and the public hearing to be held.

Pursuant to legal notice, the Plan Commission ("**Commission**") conducted a public hearing on the application on August 3, 2023, at which times 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

The Property.

1. The Property is an approximately 877,893 square foot lot located south of Erie Street between East Avenue to the west and Scoville Avenue to the east, and is

commonly known as 201 North Scoville Avenue. The Property is located in the I Institutional Zoning District. The Property is currently improved with a public high school.

2. The Property is surrounded by the following uses: to the north, single-family residential dwellings, which are zoned within the R2 Single-Family Zoning District; to the south, an athletic field, which is zoned within the Open Space Zoning District; to the east, single-family residential dwellings, which are zoned within the R2 Single-Family Zoning District; to the west, athletic fields owned by Applicant, which are zoned within the I Institutional Zoning District, and single-family residential dwellings, which are zoned within the R2 Single-Family Zoning District.

3. The Applicant is the owner of the Property.

The Applicant.

4. The Applicant operates a public high school on the Property.

5. The Applicant submitted the documentation required pursuant to Section 14.5.I. of the Zoning Ordinance.

The Project.

6. The Applicant proposes to build a four-story building, approximately 170,935 square feet in total, to serve the public high school on the Property, which would replace an approximately 104,025 square feet portion of the building.

The Requested Site Development Allowances.

7. As part of its planned development, the Applicant seeks three site development allowances, as set forth above in the “History of Project.”

Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan.

8. The Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan (“**Comprehensive Plan**”) was

adopted by the Village's corporate authorities in September of 2014 after an extensive public input process.

9. The proposed development primarily affects three Chapters within the Comprehensive Plan: Chapter 4, "Land Use & Built Environment," Chapter 8, "Education," and Chapter 13, "Environmental Sustainability."

10. The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals and objectives which set the standards for development in the Village of Oak Park, and it discusses the idea of strengthening the overall quality of the community. Village staff finds that the proposed building fits the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

11. In Chapter 4, the Comprehensive Plan discusses opportunities to strengthen the urban fabric by constructing context-sensitive development. The proposed development will be replacing the existing outdated building with new athletic and theater related spaces. Village staff finds that the proposed development meets this objective.

12. In Chapter 8, the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance related to maintaining a strong education system as the foundation of a strong community. Oak Park schools are a hub for social interaction, serve as an anchor for the community values, and play an important role in economic development. Village staff finds that the proposed development meets this objective.

13. In Chapter 13, the Comprehensive Plan sets out a list of goals and objectives for environmental sustainability opportunities. The proposed development will be at a minimum LEED Silver Certified. The Applicant is also looking to focus on a green roof, PV array installation, and a geothermal field. Village staff finds that the proposed development meets this objective.

14. Village staff finds that the proposed development follows the Comprehensive Plan.

Ability of Applicant to Complete Project.

15. The Applicant provided evidence that it has the financial and technical expertise to complete the project.

Compensating Benefits.

16. In return for the Village providing allowances from Village regulations, per Section 14.5.E.2.a. of the Zoning Ordinance, the Applicant must provide compensating benefits which advance the Village's physical, cultural and social objectives, in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and other approved plans, by having the Applicant provide specific amenities in the planned development. Some of the compensating benefits of the proposed project are:

- a. The creation of physical education athletic facilities that meet the needs of current educational and athletic program standards.
- b. Meeting accessibility requirements and the addition of a non-binary toilet, locker room, and dressing rooms for the populations that are currently not able to be equitably served by the existing facilities.
- c. Upgraded facilities that will benefit several different community organizations that use the existing facilities and allow the Applicant to expand its ability to offer the use of the facilities to more organizations.

Public Art As Part Of The Development.

17. Section 14.5.E.2.c. of the Zoning Ordinance requires that an Applicant provide at least one (1) piece of public art as part of the development. A contribution to the Oak Park Art Fund is also an option. In either case, the scope of the public art or contribution should be in proportion to the square footage of the development upon review and advice by the Village's partner agency the Oak Park Area Arts Council.

18. The Applicant intends for the exterior branding signage to be artwork designed by in-house artists, potentially with the help of art students from the high school. It will be designed to be in keeping with the historical aesthetic of the rest of the building façade on Scoville Avenue. Additionally, in collaboration with the Oak Park River Forest High School Huskie Boosters Club and the Oak Park Area Arts Council, the Applicant is currently working on a major art installation on the west façade of the Property in honor of its sesquicentennial.

The Planned Development Standards.

19. Section 14.5(A) of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth the following objectives for planned developments:

Through the use of allowances in the planned development process, the Village seeks to achieve some or all of the following specific objectives:

1. Create a more desirable environment than may be possible through strict application of other Village land use regulations with the use of creative design, landscape, and/or architectural features.
2. Enhance the existing character and property values of the Village and promotion of the general welfare by ingenious and imaginative designs resulting in a better and more creative use of land.
3. Coordinate the character, the form, and the relationship of structures to one another.
4. Preserve and enhance of desirable site characteristics such as natural topography, vegetation, and geologic features.
5. Maximize the beneficial use of open space.
6. Promote long-term planning pursuant to a site plan that will allow harmonious and compatible land uses or combination of uses with surrounding areas.
7. Promote economic development within the Village.
8. Eliminate blighted structures or incompatible uses through redevelopment, restoration, adaptive reuse, or rehabilitation.

9. Preserve and/or enhance historical and natural resources.

24. Section 14.5(H) of the Zoning Ordinance sets forth the following standards

for planned developments:

1. The proposed development and the use or combination of uses is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and has been considered in relation to any other plans adopted by the Village Board.

2. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use or combination of uses will not be materially detrimental to or endanger the public health, safety and welfare of the Village.

3. Adequate utilities, road access, parking, drainage, police and fire service, and other necessary facilities already exist or will be provided to serve the proposed development, including access for fire, sanitation, and maintenance equipment.

4. Adequate ingress and egress to the planned development site already exists or will be provided in a manner that adequately addresses additional traffic congestion in the public streets and promotes a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

5. The proposed use or combination of uses will not substantially diminish the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity for those uses or combination of uses that are permitted by the Zoning Ordinance of the Village.

6. The proposed design and use or combination of uses will complement the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

7. The applicant has the financial and technical capacity to complete the proposed use or combination of uses.

8. The proposed development is economically feasible and does not pose a current or potential burden upon the services, tax base, or other economic factors that affect the financial operations of the Village, except to the extent that such burden is balanced by the benefit derived by the Village from the proposed use.

25. During the public hearing, the Commission heard testimony and considered evidence regarding the proposed development.

26. The Commission finds that the height of the proposed building is

appropriate under the Zoning Ordinance because the existing building portion to be redeveloped currently sits at a height of 52'. The new addition will be just 10' taller than the existing building. The height of the proposed building fits within the height of the surrounding area and is consistent with the overall public high school campus.

27. The Commission finds that the reduction in the front yard setback for the proposed building is appropriate under the Zoning Ordinance based on the fact that the proposed building will be located at the same setback as the existing building portion to be demolished. The proposed addition will expand further north than the portion of building to be demolished, thereby requiring a setback allowance of approximately 34' and six inches.

28. The Commission finds that the proposed illumination greater than the one footcandle maximum set out by Section 9.2.B of the Zoning Ordinance will provide better lighting for safety and security of the students and building. The lighting system will be dark-sky compliant and will not project any glare onto the residential properties across Scoville Avenue.

29. Further, the Commission concurs with, and incorporates, the findings of Village staff regarding the proposed development.

30. In summary, the Commission finds that by allowing the proposed development at the Property as a planned development, including the four story, 170,935 square foot building, satisfies the objectives and standards in Sections 14.5.A. and 14.5.H. of the Zoning Ordinance, and that approval of the requested planned development, and associated allowances, is appropriate.

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 President and Board of Trustees that the planned development be APPROVED, subject to the following conditions:

1. The Applicant must develop the project comprised of a four story, 170,935 square foot building in substantial conformity with the Plans and Specifications submitted with its application or subsequently modified in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. The final architectural plans must be sealed by the architect of record. The Landscape Plan must provide for the preservation, care and maintenance of the landscape materials.

2. That the final logistics plan will be reviewed and approved by the Village Engineer prior to any construction activity.

3. That upon review and advice of the Oak Park Area Arts Council and approval of the Village Board, the Applicant must install public art at the planned development site or provide a monetary donation to the Oak Park Art Fund. The location of the art on the site and its accessibility to the general public will be mutually determined by the Applicant and the Village.

4. That the Applicant finalize the Public Art prior to obtaining a Village-issued certificate of Zoning Compliance / Occupancy.

5. That any resident or school related parking modifications, due to pending construction, must be approved by the Parking and Mobility Manager prior to any construction activity.

6. That during construction of the development, the Applicant must post a conspicuous sign providing a local phone number for the construction manager which interested parties may call to obtain answers to questions about the development and its construction. Such telephone number must be staffed during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, except legal holidays, by a person with authority to address and remedy problems, including, but not limited to, traffic, noise, maintenance and landscaping.

7. That the Applicant implement a construction related Communications Plan to be submitted to the Village Planner and residents within 300 feet prior to construction.

8. That the Applicant insure that all construction debris remains on the Property and is removed on a regular basis. The Applicant must also use best efforts to mitigate any offsite dust and debris.

9. That the Applicant provides a list of final exterior building, landscaping and design materials to be approved by the Village prior to building permit submittal, as detailed in the presentation to the Plan Commission and approved by the Village Board

of Trustees.

10. That during construction of the proposed development, the Village designates a staff liaison, with whom the Applicant must reasonably and timely communicate and cooperate.

11. That any tree removal mitigation plans on Applicant-owned property of significant trees, as defined by the Village's Zoning Ordinance, will be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to removal of such trees.

12. That a pre-construction and post-construction structural condition survey be prepared by using either photographs or videos, in addition to a vibration monitoring system, for buildings located on the east side of Scoville Avenue, in particular; the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Oak Park and those residential buildings within the 100 block of North Scoville Avenue.

13. The Applicant must record with the Cook County Clerk Recording Division the Planned Development Ordinance, Findings of Fact, and Plans and Specifications within 30 days after Village Board approval.

14. That in the event the Applicant or its successors or assigns fails to comply with one or more of the foregoing conditions and restrictions after 30 days written notice by the Village or its agents, the President and Board of Trustees may thereafter revoke or limit the planned development provided, however, that the Applicant or its successors will be deemed to have complied if they promptly commence a cure and diligently pursue that cure to completion where such cure is not reasonably susceptible to completion within such 30 day period.

This report adopted by a ___ to ___ vote of the Plan Commission, sitting as a Zoning Commission, this ___ day of August, 2023.