

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST  
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

December 14, 2023

A meeting of the River Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held at 7:30 pm on Thursday, December 14, 2023, in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Martin called the meeting to order. Meeting started by calling roll. Upon roll call the following persons were:

Present: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Plywacz, Shoemaker, Davis, Lucchesi, Price

Absent: None

Also present at the meeting: Jessica Spencer, Assistant Village Administrator; Matt Walsh, Village Administrator; Anne Skrodzki, Village Attorney; and Clifford Radatz, Secretary.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ON NOVEMBER 9, 2023**

A **MOTION** was made by Member Plywacz and seconded by Member Lucchesi to approve the minutes from the November 9, 2023 meeting. Chairman Martin requested to amend the minutes to state the meeting ended at 8:07pm.

Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Shoemaker, Plywacz, Price, Lucchesi, Davis

Nays: None

Motion passed.

**III. APPROVAL OF FINDINGS OF FACT FOR THE ZONING VARIATION REQUESTED FOR 214 GALE AVENUE – BUILDING HEIGHT OF AN ACCESSORY STRUCTURE.**

Chairman Martin stated that while this was a topic for discussion at the last committee meeting, there was some confusion regarding the standards and the final recommendation that was presented to the Village Board. To attempt to provide clarity, those members of the committee who did not vote to recommend approval of the variation to the Board were asked to discuss the standards again.

Member Price asked if this situation had occurred in the past. Attorney Skrodzki clarified that findings of fact can be clarified after the fact.

Chairman Martin read each finding individually to discuss among those who had previously not recommended approval of the variation and vote on each point:

1. The physical surroundings, shape or topographical conditions of the specific property involved with bring a specific hardship upon the owner as distinguished from an inconvenience if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard has not been met.
2. The aforesaid unique physical condition did not result from an action of any person having an interest in the property but was created by natural forces or was the result or was the result of governmental action, other than the adoption of this Zoning Ordinance, for which no compensation was paid.
  - a. Attorney Skrodzki noted that if #1 is not met, then #2 is also not been met.
3. The conditions upon which the petition for variation is based may not be applicable generally to other property within the same zoning classification.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard had not been met.
4. The purpose of the variation is not based predominantly upon a desire for economic gain.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard was met.
5. The granting of the variation shall not be detrimental to the public welfare or unduly injurious to the enjoyment, use, or development value of other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard has not been met.
6. The proposed variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the danger of fire, or otherwise endanger the public safety or substantially diminish or impair property values within the neighborhood.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard has not been met.
7. That the granting or the variation would not unduly tax public utilities and facilities in the area.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard was met.
8. That there is no means other than the requested variation by which the alleged hardship or difficulty can be avoided or remedied to a degree sufficient to permit a reasonable use of the subject property.
  - a. The consensus of the four members was that this standard has not been met.

Attorney Skrodzki summarized the motion to approve the findings with the following amendments: to find that the standards listed in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 were not met. The standards listed in paragraphs 4 and 7 were met.

Chairman Martin asked the recommendation to include: “including a bathroom on the second floor.”

A **MOTION** was made by Member Lucchesi, seconded by Member Plywacz, to approve findings of facts as amended, circulate them amongst this Board, and if no further comments are made in the next 7 days, Chairman Martin can provide the recommendation to the Village Board.

Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Shoemaker, Plywacz, Price, Lucchesi, Davis

Nays: None

Motion passed.

#### **IV. TEXT AMENDMENT REQUEST – PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING LAND USE CHART – CHILD DAYCARE CENTERS – SPECIAL USE IN THE C3 ZONING DISTRICT.**

Secretary Radatz swore in those who wished to testify.

Chairman Martin invited the applicant to the podium to present the application.

Village Administrator Walsh provided some history on the topic to the committee, specifically clarifying that the issue before the Committee was to amend the Land Use Chart in section 10-21 of the Village code to designate child daycare centers as a special use in the C-3 Central Commercial district., as it currently is a “prohibited” use.

Ranier Ramos, the owner of the Montessori school, gave background on the topic for their intended purpose for a new facility in the C-3 District, at 7777 Lake Street. An application for the Special Use has not been created yet as currently the use is not permitted. Chairman Martin said that the submission of an application does not guarantee that the special use will be granted, and Mr. Ramos stated that he understood.

Member Dombrowski asked if Mosaic Montessori would be moving from their current location.

Mr. Ramos stated no, the current purpose was to expand services.

Member Shoemaker asked if the intention was to provide additional recreational facilities in this space too.

Mr. Ramos stated yes, as the age group is under DCFS requirements and must have outdoor and indoor play facilities in addition to what is currently provided at the existing location.

Laura Maychruk, the real estate agent representing the school, added that currently they are limited within the Village due to the nature of the type of business that hopes to operate.

Village Administrator Walsh added that at the December 11, 2023, Village Board meeting, Village President Adduci asked for the Economic Development Committee to provide input on this topic as well and intends to discuss this at the next meeting.

Chairman Martin stated his understanding that the Village is looking to amend the zoning code for the Madison Street and North Avenue corridors to encourage development and increase revenue. Chairman Martin asked whether allowing a special use for child daycare centers in a commercial district would have the same benefit, and whether the amendment should apply to C1 and C2 districts.

Walsh confirmed the EDC has been discussing revisiting the restrictions currently in place for C1, C2, and C3 districts, which will be introduced to the Zoning Board at a future meeting. At this time, the Village Board has asked for consideration and recommendation from the ZBA for this specific use and district.

Member Lucchesi asked if the school can just come forward with a special use variance at this time.

Mr. Walsh clarified that a special use is currently prohibited. Attorney Skrodzki noted that the chart would at least have to be amended to allow for the possibility.

Chairman Martin asked for additional audience participation. Ariel Pang spoke on behalf of the property owner at 7777 Lake Street, supporting the proposed use of the building.

Chairman Martin called for discussion amongst the committee members.

Member Davis spoke in support of the space but expressed concerns about the parking in the area.

Member Plywacz agreed with Member Davis and stated the community needs more childcare.

Member Dombrowski stated that he agrees, as this is a small amendment to consider.

Chairman Martin asked for additional comments, there were none.

**A MOTION** was made by Member Davis and seconded by Member Plywacz to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the text amendments be approved to designate child daycare centers as a special use in the C-3 Central Commercial district.

Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Shoemaker, Price, Davis, Lucchesi, Plywacz

Nays:

Motion passed.

**V. NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting is scheduled for January 11, 2024.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

A Motion was made by Member Plywacz to dismiss the meeting, seconded by Chairman Martin to Adjourn.

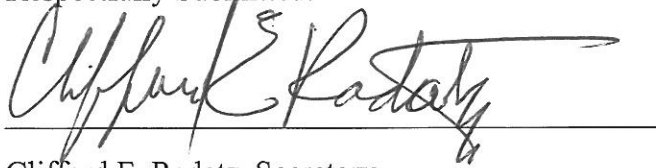
Ayes: Chairman Martin, Members Dombrowski, Plywacz, Shoemaker, Davis, Lucchesi, Price

Nays:

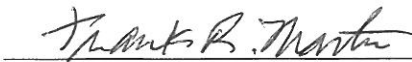
Motion Passed.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Clifford E. Radatz, Secretary



Date: 1/11/2024

Frank Martin, Chairman  
Zoning Board of Appeals