

Village of Lombard

*Village Hall
255 East Wilson Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148
villageoflombard.org*



Minutes

Monday, February 19, 2024

7:00 PM

Village Hall - Boardroom

Plan Commission

Leigh Giuliano, Chairperson

Commissioners:

Ruth Sweetser, Bill Johnston, Kevin Walker,

Tony Invergo, Alissa Verson and

Robert Spreenberg

Staff Liaison: Anna Papke

Call to Order

Chairperson Giuliano called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Giuliano led the Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call of Members

Present 4 - Ruth Sweetser, Leigh Giuliano, Bill Johnston, and Alissa Verson

Absent 3 - Kevin Walker, Tony Invergo, and Robert Spreenberg

Also present: William Heniff, AICP, Director Community Development, Anna Papke, AICP, Planning & Zoning Manager Community Development, and Anne Skrodzki, Legal Counsel to the Plan Commission.

Chairperson Giuliano called the order of the agenda.

Ms. Papke read the Rules and Procedures as written by the Plan Commission.

Public Hearings

[240058](#)

PC 24-05: 810 E. Roosevelt Road - Modifications to KFC drive-through restaurant (Request

The petitioner requests that the Village take the following action on the subject property located within the B4APD Roosevelt Road Corridor District Planned Development (800-810 E. Roosevelt Planned Development): Pursuant to Section 155.504 (A) (major changes in a planned development) of the Lombard Zoning Ordinance, amend the 800-810 E. Roosevelt Road Planned Development, as established by Ordinance No. 5171, and amended by Ordinance Nos. 5172 and 5294, to approve a modification to the drive-through restaurant established by Ordinance No. 5172. (DISTRICT# 6)

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Sweetser, that PC 24-05 be continued to the March 18, 2024 Plan Commission Meeting.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 4 - Ruth Sweetser, Leigh Giuliano, Bill Johnston, and Alissa Verson

Absent: 3 - Kevin Walker, Tony Invergo, and Robert Spreenber

[240059](#)

PC 24-04: 1920 S. Highland Avenue - Conversion of office building to private K-8 school

The petitioner requests that the Village approve a conditional use pursuant to Section 155.412(C)(18) of the Lombard Village Code to allow for a school, private, full-time: elementary, middle and high, to operate on the subject property located within the O Office District. (DISTRICT# 3)

Sworn in to present the petition was Anna Papke, Planning and Zoning Manager, William Heniff, Community Development Director, and Omar Ashrafi, school board member of Carriers of Light, representing the petitioner.

Chairperson Giuliano read the Plan Commission procedures and asked if anyone other than the petitioner intended to cross examine and, hearing none, she proceeded with the petition.

Mr. Ashrafi presented the petition. He said Carriers of Light is a private K-6 school, with plans to expand to include seventh and eighth grades. He said the school is currently operating at a location on Taft Avenue in Wheaton but has outgrown the building and is seeking a larger building. They propose to locate at 1920 S. Highland Avenue, a 53,000 square foot office building. Mr. Ashrafi said the school will convert the entire building to school space. The parking lot will be reconfigured to add outdoor recreation space. There will be no change to the building footprint and a net gain in open space.

Mr. Ashrafi said current enrollment is 130 students. The maximum student population projected for the subject property is 414 students, with 44 faculty.

Mr. Ashrafi reviewed the operations of the current site in Wheaton. He noted there is a lack of space for one-on-one instruction, administrative facilities, outdoor space. He described pick-up and drop-off operations at the Wheaton location and noted some of the solutions they have implemented to address traffic and circulation concerns. He explained that occasionally there has been queuing of vehicles off-site at the current location, but that this would not occur at 1920 S. Highland. The petitioner has designed the parking lot stacking and queuing plan to ensure traffic does not spill over onto adjacent roadways or properties. Mr. Ashrafi noted currently the school dismisses all students at the same time. As enrollment grows in the future, the school would have the opportunity to stagger dismissals to address queuing. He also noted that the parking arrangement at the Wheaton site is not ideal.

Mr. Ashrafi presented the proposed plans for 1920 S. Highland. He noted that the school places a high priority on being respectful to neighbors and the proposed site plan reflects this priority. Mr. Ashrafi said the plan is designed to accommodate enough parking for the school at full enrollment. He showed the pickup demand forecast which is part of the petitioner's submittal to the Plan Commission. The peak pick-up queue observed on the current site with 130 students enrolled is 30 vehicles. At a future enrollment of 260 students, the peak queue is estimated at 60 vehicles. At peak enrollment of 414 students, they would expect to see 96 vehicles at peak queue in a single-dismissal scenario, and 58 vehicles at peak queue in a dual-dismissal scenario.

Mr. Ashrafi described the local roadway network and the intersection at Highland and 20th Street. He described the proposed arrival and departure patterns and said the school administration would try to limit the amount of traffic impacting key intersections and would try to direct traffic to use arterial roads as opposed to neighborhood streets. Mr. Ashrafi said the petitioner is amenable to working with neighbors and the police department on traffic pattern alterations as needed.

Mr. Ashrafi said outdoor recreation areas and pick-up/drop-off areas are located on the south side of the building, away from the adjacent building at 1910 S. Highland. He described the on-site queuing pattern and said there is room for more than 60 vehicles to queue in the parking lot. He said the plan intentionally directs traffic away from the building at 1910 S. Highland. He described the operational procedures for managing the queue and carpools.

Mr. Ashrafi said the petitioner will heavily screen the west property line and install landscaping along the south side of the parking lot. He described how various parking spaces will likely be used, though he said they do not intend to formally reserve parking spaces for particular uses. He said that off-hours activities involving the full school and parents will likely occur during evenings or weekends to avoid parking conflicts with neighbors.

Mr. Ashrafi showed some example images of office-to-school conversions. He showed proposed floor plans and described how the space inside the building will be used. He noted that the school would be a less intense use than the office building at full occupancy.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if any person would like to cross examine or speak in favor or against this petition, or for public comment.

Marla Fronczak, the CEO of AgeGuide, addressed the Plan

Commission. Ms. Fronczak said AgeGuide is the primary tenant of the 1910 S. Highland office building. She was concerned the school will cause traffic congestion. She said the two buildings share a driveway from Highland. She was concerned about safety on Highland Avenue, and noted that the Highland and 20th Street intersection can be busy. She said the two building share a parking lot and there could be congestion with the number of people coming to 1920 S. Highland to pick up or drop off students plus the teachers and staff that would be coming to the site.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if the petitioner had any response to Ms. Fronczak's comments. Mr. Ashrafi said he appreciated Ms. Fronczak's comments and concerns. He said that after receiving a copy of Ms. Fronczak's comments earlier, he had made sure to spend time during his presentation describing the traffic patterns on site. He emphasized that the bulk of the traffic associated with the school will be on the southwest side of the 1920 building, away from the 1910 building. He agreed with Ms. Fronczak that the Highland and 20th Street intersection is challenging because it does not have a dedicated left turn lane. He said that if IDOT wanted to look at the possibility of adding a left turn lane in the future, the school would be supportive of that initiative. He said he believed the traffic pattern the school has proposed will ameliorate many of the concerns regarding impacts to 1910 S. Highland.

Chairperson Guiliano asked if there were any additional public comments. Mir Ali, president of Carriers of Light, addressed the Plan Commission. He said that the school has developed a vision over the last 10 years that is community minded. He said a DuPage County organization that is located near the school's location in Wheaton had submitted a letter in support of the petition. He said the school has worked with neighbors near the Wheaton location to minimize impacts. He said the school will continue to work with neighbors in the proposed location on Highland, and noted the school is concerned with safety for students, parents, and the neighborhood generally.

Chairperson Guiliano asked if there were any questions for Mr. Ali or additional public comments. Mike Pontarelli with Bradford Allen addressed the Plan Commission. Mr. Pontarelli said he manages the building at 1920 S. Highland on behalf of the property owner. He said the Carriers of Light representatives had been very thorough and transparent with the current owners during the process. Mr. Pontarelli said that he manages a portfolio of office buildings in the Chicago area. In his experience, office buildings have a much less predictable traffic and parking pattern than a school. He said this is because schools manage traffic to ensure student safety. He believed that the school would be a good neighbor to surrounding properties. He said

this is a good use for the property, particularly given the challenging market for office buildings. He believed that over time, the tenants at 1910 will find the school to be a good neighbor.

Chairperson Guiliano asked if there were any questions for Pontarelli or additional public comments. Commissioner Verson asked if Mr. Pontarelli foresaw any issues arising if the parking lot at 1920 S. Highland is occupied with school traffic. Mr. Pontarelli said no. He said that post-pandemic, the office buildings he sees are generally at 50-60% utilization rate, so there is not a lot of concern with availability of parking. He said he had managed both buildings since 2015, and had only had one issue, which was the result of a specific tenant that had since left the building.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if there were any additional public comments. Ms. Fronczak addressed the Plan Commission. She said that the building owners had built a training room that sometimes is used for outside groups, and that could bring additional traffic to the property at 1910 S. Highland. She was also concerned about the possibility of the school enrollment increasing over time. She said there are other businesses on Highland Avenue that could be impacted, particularly if there is any queuing on Highland Avenue. She commended the alternate use of an office building but she did not think the subject property was a suitable location for a school.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if there were any questions for Ms. Fronczak or if the petitioner wanted to respond. Mr. Ashrafi said the plan had been designed so there would be no queuing or stacking on Highland Avenue. He described how cars from Highland Avenue would turn into the school's parking lot immediately after turning into the shared driveway. He noted that the queue plan would accommodate twice the maximum queue size that has been observed at current enrollment. He said the proposed plan for the school intentionally routes traffic away from the 1910 building in order to minimize impacts to the neighboring property.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if any person would like to cross examine or speak in favor or against this petition, or for public comment. Hearing none, she asked for the staff report.

Ms. Papke presented the staff report, which was submitted to the public record in its entirety. The subject property is improved with a three-story office building. The petitioner proposes convert the office building into a K-8 private school. Planned exterior improvements include reconfiguring the parking lot to add outdoor recreational space for students and adding stacking and queuing lanes for student drop-off and pick-up. The property is in the O Office District, where

schools are conditional uses. The petitioner requests approval of a conditional use for a school on the subject property. No additional zoning entitlements are requested.

Staff has reviewed the submitted plans and finds the petition is consistent with the standards for conditional uses. The Highland Avenue corridor is developed with a mixture of office buildings, religious institutions, and governmental uses. Single-family residential uses are located west of the site. Schools within the Village are located in a variety of zoning districts and are commonly adjacent to residential or commercial land uses. The proposed school is generally compatible with other land uses adjacent to the subject property.

The petitioner has proposed modifications to the parking lot to address student recreational needs and to provide an area for student drop-off and pick-up. The parking lot area immediately south of the office building will be developed with an outdoor recreation area including playground equipment and a playfield. The parking lot south of the recreation area will be restriped to four queuing lanes to accommodate vehicles bringing students to and from school. Vehicles will queue on the south side of the building with student loading on the west side of the building. The modified parking lot will provide 100 parking spaces; Village Code requires 52 spaces.

KLOA, the Village's traffic consultant, reviewed the proposed parking lot changes and queuing plan and compared existing operations to current and projected student enrollment. KLOA found that the current student enrollment of 130 students generates a maximum queue of 31 vehicles. The proposed stacking area at the subject property could accommodate between 66 and 72 vehicles. Based on these observations, KLOA concludes the parking lot can accommodate up to twice the number of students currently enrolled, or 260 students. The petitioner's maximum student design capacity is 414 students. Based on existing information, KLOA expects 414 students could result in vehicle queues that exceed on-site capacity for stacking. They recommend a follow-up study and evaluation be conducted once student enrollment reaches 260. The study will allow for additional data gathering and for recommendations to be made to stagger dismissal times and otherwise manage the vehicle queue. Should the Plan Commission recommend approval of the petition, staff recommends a condition of approval requiring the follow-up study to occur once enrollment reaches 260 students.

KLOA also looked at parking demand and projects the on-site parking will meet the needs of a school with a student population of up to 260 students. KLOA also recommends the follow-up study address parking requirements once enrollment reaches 260 students.

With respect to traffic on the local roadway network, KLOA finds that a school with 130 students will generate a similar level of traffic as the office building at full capacity. At double the current enrollment, the school will generate more traffic in the morning and afternoon peak hours, but less traffic in the evening peak hour than the office building. KLOA finds that the roadway network is sufficient to carry traffic generated by the school. Ms. Papke noted that Javier Millan, of KLOA, was present at the meeting to answer more detailed questions on the traffic study if needed.

Ms. Papke noted that while the public notice reflects the Zoning Ordinance in that it consolidates elementary, middle, and high schools under one use, the petitioner's materials reflect a K-8 school, not a high school. Therefore, the petition was evaluated by staff as a K-8 school. Should the petition be approved, it would be tied to the submitted plans. If at a future date the petitioner wanted to add a high school component, staff would consider that to be a change to the terms of the conditional use, and the petitioner would need to seek an amendment of the conditional use through the Plan Commission public hearing process.

Staff found the petition met the standards for conditional uses and recommended approval of the petition subject to the conditions noted in the staff report.

Ms. Papke said that staff received two letters with public comment after Plan Commission packets were distributed. These letters had been placed at the Plan Commissioner's places on the dais. One was from Ms. Fronczak at AgeGuide. Ms. Fronczak had spoken and offered her comments at the meeting. Ms. Papke read the second letter, from H.O.M.E. DuPage, into the public record.

Chairperson Giuliano asked if there were any questions or comments on the staff report. Hearing none, she opened the meeting to comments from the commissioners.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if there could be conflicts between traffic turning into the site from Highland and immediately turning south into the school parking lot and traffic trying to leave the site onto Highland Avenue. Were there any traffic controls that would be used in this case?

Javier Millan of KLOA said that normally you want inbound traffic to flow freely. He said one solution would be to stop outbound traffic to make sure it does not block incoming traffic. Mr. Millan did not think this would be necessary at current enrollment of 130 students or

double enrollment of 260 students. He said there could be an issue at higher enrollment levels, which is why KLOA is recommending a follow-up study after enrollment reaches 260 students. Mr. Millan said that he had observed the petitioner's traffic queuing operations on several occasions, and they did a very good job. One thing that could be done if there is an issue with inbound and outbound traffic would be to have an attendant managing that portion of the queuing operation.

Commissioner Johnston asked how long drop-off and pick-up periods last. Mr. Ashrafi said the morning drop-off period is about 20 minutes. The afternoon pick-up period is also about 20 minutes under the one-dismissal scenario. This would change if the school introduces additional dismissal times. Mr. Ashrafi noted there would be parking available for parents to park and walk in to pick up children.

Commissioner Johnston asked if there would be attendants in the parking lot during the drop-off and pick-up periods. Mr. Ashrafi said the school has attendants at the current location. They anticipate needing to increase the number of attendants at the subject property given the larger parking lot.

Mr. Johnston asked if there was striping or cones that would separate queue lanes. Mr. Ashrafi described the proposed striping for the parking lot.

Mr. Johnston asked if the petitioner was concerned they would not be able to modify the queuing when the school reaches maximum enrollment in a way that minimizes impacts to the neighborhood. Mr. Ashrafi said he believes the school will be able to operate at full enrollment without impacting the neighborhood. The school will do the study recommended by KLOA when the student population reaches 260. He said the proposed queuing plan is based on observations of similar schools and experience at the existing Carriers of Light location.

Chairperson Giuliano asked how quickly the petitioner expects the student population to double. Mr. Ashrafi projected it will take three to five years to reach maximum enrollment. If the school occupies the building in 2025, he would expect to reach 260 students and conduct the follow-up study in 2027 or 2028. Maximum enrollment is projected in 2029.

On a motion by Commissioner Verson, and a second by Commissioner Johnston, the Plan Commission voted 4-0 to recommend that the Village Board approve the petition associated with PC 24-04 subject to the six (6) conditions in the staff report:

1. That the petitioner shall satisfactorily address all comments noted within the Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report;
2. That the petitioner shall develop the site in accordance with the plans submitted as part of this petition and referenced in the Inter-Departmental Review Committee Report, except as they may be changed to conform to Village Code;
3. That upon reaching a student enrollment of greater than 260 students, a follow-up study and evaluation of the drop-off/pick-up operations and parking needs on the subject property shall be conducted. Such study shall be conducted per the recommendations of the KLOA evaluation dated February 9, 2024, and made a part of this report. The petitioner or the petitioner's successor shall reimburse the Village for costs associated with the follow-up study;
4. That no vehicle stopping, standing, stacking, or queuing shall be permitted on Highland Avenue, 20th Street, or adjacent properties;
5. That the petitioner shall apply for and receive building permits for the proposed improvements; and
6. This approval shall be subject to the commencement time provisions as set forth within Section 155.103(F)(11).

Aye: 4 - Ruth Sweetser, Leigh Giuliano, Bill Johnston, and Alissa Verson

Absent: 3 - Kevin Walker, Tony Invergo, and Robert Spreenberg

Business Meeting

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Commissioner Sweetser, seconded by Commissioner Verson, that the minutes of the January 18, 2023, meeting be approved.

The motion carried by the following vote

Aye: 4 - Ruth Sweetser, Leigh Giuliano, Bill Johnston, and Alissa Verson

Absent: 3 - Kevin Walker, Tony Invergo, and Robert Spreenberg

Public Participation

There was no Public Participation.

DuPage County Hearings

There were no DuPage County Hearings.

Chairperson's Report

There was no Chairperson's Report.

Planner's Report

There was no Planner's Report.

Unfinished Business

There was no Unfinished Business.

New Business

There was no New Business.

Subdivision Reports

There were no Subdivision Reports.

Site Plan Approvals

There were no Site Plan Approvals.

Workshops

There were no Workshops.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Verson, to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. The motion passed by an unanimous vote.