

APPROVED 1/7/13

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
PLAN COMMISSION MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING

DECEMBER 3, 2012, 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Hose called the December 3, 2012 meeting of the Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked for a roll call:

PRESENT: Chairman Hose, Mr. Beggs, Mr. Cozzo, Mr. Matejczyk, Mr. Quirk, Mrs. Rabatah, Ms. Urban, Mr. Waechtler, Mr. Webster

STAFF PRESENT: Community Development Planning Manager Jeff O'Brien; Planner Damir Latinovic

VISITORS: Mr. Steve Bonanno, 1952 Wisconsin, Downers Grove; Ms. Laura Neibozy and James Silvestri with Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, 3815 Highland Ave., Downers Grove; Ms. Robyn Menna Strausser with the Downers Grove Community Church, 6600 Fairview Avenue, Downers Grove; Ms. Marge Earl, 4720 Florence Ave., Downers Grove; Dr. Steve Rembos for the 3800 Condo Association; and resident Ms. Laura West

Chairman Hose led the Plan Commissioners and the public in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. A review of the meeting's protocol followed.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 1, 2012 MINUTES

A change was noted by the chairman on page 13, second full paragraph. He did not recall referring to the "Illinois Burlington Central" and asked staff if the audio could be reviewed again for clarification. No further changes followed. **THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 1, 2012 MEETING WERE APPROVED, WITH NOTED REVISION, ON MOTION BY MR. MATEJCZYK, SECONDED BY MR. COZZO. ROLL CALL:**

AYE: MR. MATEJCZYK, MR. COZZO, MR. BEGGS, MR. QUIRK, MRS. RABATAH, MR. WAECHTLER, MR. WEBSTER, CHAIRMAN HOSE

NAY: NONE

ABSTAIN: MS. URBAN

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 8-0-1

PC-38-12 A petition seeking approval of an amendment to Planned Development #19 permit to increase the time period allowable for placement of a temporary banner. The property is located at the northeast corner of Highland Avenue and 39th Street, commonly known as Good Samaritan Hospital, 3815 Highland Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PINs 06-32-107-002; 06-32-306-003, -008, -

APPROVED 1/7/13

009, -014, -020, -022, -025, -030, -031 and -035). Advocate Health & Hospitals Corp d/b/a Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, Petitioner/Owner.

Chairman Hose swore in those individuals who would be speaking on the above petition.

Planning Manager, Jeff O'Brien spoke before the commissioners, noting that the discussion would be about a planned unit development for Good Samaritan Hospital located at the northeast corner of Highland Avenue and 39th Street. Specifically, the petitioner is requesting to increase the display time for the banner on Tower 1 to 365 days from 180 days that were approved in 2009. The banner was approved at that time to display awards and accomplishments. He indicated that no other changes were planned for the site or the planned development regulations at this time.

Mr. O'Brien, pointed out that extending the banner request did not further the Comprehensive Plan's goals and staff believed that hospital already benefitted from 26 weeks to display the banner, which is significantly more time than is afforded to other businesses and institutions. He explained that the display of temporary banners can lead to property maintenance issues because vinyl banners fray and fade over time. As to the impact to the Village's zoning ordinance, Mr. O'Brien stated there was no impact to the site. He indicated the banner was previously permitted with a 180-day restriction. He indicated the extension would allow the banner to remain in place year-round, which is effectively permanent.

Proper public notification was confirmed by Mr. O'Brien and a few phone calls were received on the petition, but no concerns. A letter from the Forest Preserve District was referenced indicating no concerns for the petition. Good Samaritan sent letters to its neighbors on October 29, 2012 with one response expressing concern, which was included in the Commissioners' packets.

Mr. O'Brien noted the petition was reviewed in accordance with the Planned Development Standards, and, while staff felt the hospital property is unique, he stated that staff did not feel the standards were met as outlined in the staff report and there were concerns. While he agreed the hospital property was unique, he felt the Village acknowledged that uniqueness by previously allowing the banner in 2009 and increasing the display time did not further the goal of the Village's Comprehensive Plan. The current display time was more than adequate to promote the hospital's awards and accomplishments. Staff was recommending a denial of the petition. However, if the Commissioners chose to approve the petition, Mr. O'Brien directed their attention to a list of recommended conditions in staff's report and suggested that alternative findings be made.

Commissioner comments were as followed: Per Mr. Matejczyk's question, Mr. O'Brien stated that the banner could be illuminated but not after 10:00 p.m. and no restrictions existed on the types of material for the banner itself. It was confirmed by Mr. O'Brien that the hospital could install a permanent sign on Tower 1 if they desired. Had the banner be considered a permanent sign, Mr. O'Brien stated that the Village's maximum size for the sign would be 300 square feet. He surmised that the hospital was very close to that maximum, if not already at it. However, he stated the hospital was meeting the sign requirements for their planned development. Per Ms. Urban's question regarding the frequency of the banners being changed out, Mr. O'Brien stated they were changed, at most, twice a year. Mr. O'Brien reiterated that staff's concern was that it did not want to have non-durable materials becoming permanent signage.

Mr. Cozzo asked if staff could provide some examples of how the petition was not compatible with the surrounding zoning and land use classifications and the properties it could affect, Mr. O'Brien explained that it allowed the hospital to have a much larger sign and up three times longer than any other business in the community, as he cited the medical college up the road, as an example of a large development that could benefit from a similar sign. He noted other examples of properties where there might be a desire for a large temporary sign.

Ms. Urban asked if the hospital's directional signage counted against the total square footage of the signage allowed, Mr. O'Brien confirmed it did not and stated the hospital was not over their limit for total allowable sign area.

Mr. Waechtler asked if other large institutions such as Downers Grove North High School could display a banner similar to Good Samaritan's. Mr. O'Brien stated they would only be allowed to do so if they applied for and received a variation.

Chairman Hose invited the petitioner to speak.

Mr. Jim Silvestri, Director of Public Affairs and Marketing, Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital, reminded the commissioners that there was a 36-year history serving Downers Grove and the hospital had been nationally recognized for a number of medical care services. Details followed on how the hospital shared its successes with the community -- through local media and using the large outdoor banner. Because the hospital was nationally recognized, Mr. Silvestri explained that it placed the hospital in a different category. Other accolades were summarized by Mr. Silvestri.

Mr. Silvestri reported the plan moving forward then was to notify the Village of the hospital's banner plans and, currently, there were no plans to use the banner for advertisements; contrarily, it was about announcing the hospital's accomplishments and awards the Village could be proud about. Mr. Silvestri reiterated that securing the banner was a top concern and installing/removing it was costly, which was why the hospital intended to follow steps to maintain it and "get all it can out of its investment". If allowed to display the banner for 365 days per year, Mr. Silvestri stated the hospital would probably rotate more than one banner message during the year because there was the potential for so many messages to be displayed. He agreed that the appearance of the banners was highly critical for the hospital and would be of high quality due to the other improvements made around the hospital campus. Should the banner look worn or frayed, it would be removed.

Mr. Matejczyk expressed concerns that the banner was meant as a tool for additional advertisement despite Mr. Silvestri's comments. He stated he doubted the hospital would be displaying banners "out of the kindness of [their] heart."

Mr. Silvestri stated the hospital was actually sharing with the community some of the high level awards it receives versus the different marketing efforts used by the hospital.

Mr. Matejczyk asked how this type of banner information affects the quality of care, Mr. Silvestri stated that it reinforces that the hospital does have a high level of care and the external organizations are acknowledging the hospital for that, which resonates to the residents and the Village feeling pride. Mr. Silvestri clarified that he was seeking to have the "flexibility" to have the banner up for 365 days.

In reviewing the petition more closely, Mr. Beggs stated he was trying to relate the connection between the banner and where he travels to receive medical services, wherein Mr. Silvestri noted that the banners would probably not influence a decision to go to Good Samaritan nor would the banners be used to bring in new patients. Further dialog followed by Mr. Silvestri regarding the use of local media and how the hospital can control what it wants to put out to the public versus the local media controlling how it wants to put out information to the public. The dialog then moved toward what criteria would the Plan Commission use to differentiate who receives such signage and who does not, i.e., should it be based upon how important the unit is to the community?

Mr. Silvestri explained that the hospital was different in what it provides to the community, such as its services or its means of communication, and should be considered versus, say, a high school, which may have different types of communication.

In reviewing Ordinance #5064 of the Village's ordinance, Mrs. Rabatah, noted that the title calls it "an amendment for a temporary sign variation" and throughout the body of the ordinance the word "temporary" appears many times. She asked the petitioner how 365 days was temporary, wherein Mr. Silvestri explained it was temporary given the fact that it would not go beyond 365 days. He stated it was a question of how one defines the word "permanent". Furthermore, he saw "temporary" as having a banner up 365 days and then changing it to another banner after 365 days, thereby having had two banners "that were just up a year a piece" which, in his mind, would still be temporary. Again, he stated it went back to the meaning of "permanent" and emphasized the banner would not be up for years on end but have a defined shelf-life. Should the banner be up for 366 days, or, in violation of the modified ordinance, Mr. Silvestri said it would be removed based on how the wording was written, the timeframe it was up, and when the hospital received the award.

Based on that information, Mr. Cozzo clarified it was his understanding that the petitioner was asking the commission to change the definition of the word "temporary" from 180 days to 365 days, wherein Mr. Silvestri confirmed it was because the banner would be a temporary sign and would not be up beyond the 365 days. However, Chairman Hose called attention to the fact that if one banner goes up for 365 days, followed by another banner the following 365 days, then there is no time in which a banner is not up on the building. Mr. Silvestri stated it depended upon when the banner was removed, the calendar year, and the fact that a banner swap is not always at the same time and can vary by months.

Per Mr. Quirk's question, Mr. Silvestri stated that other local hospitals also used banners for promoting their awards, specifically, the banners used at Edwards Hospital and Hinsdale Hospital. To the chairman's question regarding the length of time the awards have been displayed since 2009 and whether the 180 days have been maximized out during that year and each year afterward, Mr. Silvestri stated since he has been with the hospital it had. However, prior to that, he was not sure. Asked if there were situations where the hospital would have used more than 180 days in what was being communicated through the banners, Mr. Silvestri stated that "potentially" yes with what the hospital has won within the past year or two. Mr. Silvestri estimated that the banners would probably be changed out twice per year at the most.

Asked what oversight would occur should the hospital start advertising for medical services to the public, Mr. Silvestri explained that the hospital has a good partnership with the Village already and would not be providing those types of banners because it was never the intent of the hospital. For Mr. Waechtler's clarification, Village Planning Manager Mr. O'Brien indicated that there was

nothing spelled out in the ordinance specifically as to what could be displayed on the banner, but he explained that the hospital's messages were consistent with the intent of the Village's ordinance and no conflict existed. Staff would be enforcing the requirements. Mr. O'Brien stated the current practice is for the hospital to notify village staff about 10 days prior to when a new banner would be installed.

Agreeing with Mr. Waechtler's comment, Mr. Silvestri commented that sometimes if a banner is up too long it becomes unnoticed, or, "white noise." Therefore, he wanted to create a situation where the banner was timely and relevant. Asked if Mr. Silvestri would be limited to one sign during the 180 day-period, he indicated he would not, but that it would become cost prohibitive to remove the banner and reinstall it again.

Chairman Hose opened the meeting up to public comment.

Ms. Marge Earl, 4720 Florence Avenue, was sworn in by the Chairman. Ms. Earl confirmed whether staff could not regulate the content of the signs, wherein Mr. O'Brien responded that the Village cannot regulate the content language in the Village-wide sign ordinance nor in this particular Planned Development.

Dr. Steve Rembos, represents the 3800 Condo Association across the street from the hospital. Dr. Rembos stated on behalf of his group, there were signage concerns, specifically that the signage could do "everything" and it was an intrusive sign. He commented about a previous time when the village notified the association about an unsightly area on their property and asked that it be made aesthetically pleasing. It was done at a cost of about \$10,000.00. Details followed. As a board, Dr. Rembos said his group is noticing that it appears the Village is diminishing the signs along Ogden Avenue because of the blight of signs.

He stated the sign in front of his building had to be changed three times. His association agreed with the diminishing of the signs. Having a banner this size, he did not understand the word "temporary" as compared to "permanent." He believed this was in direct conflict of what his association was told by the Village. To him it was advertising. While he supported the hospital, he believed it was a disservice to the hospital to feel it was the avenue the hospital had to take by saying they must have a mammoth size banner to view for 365 days because there could not be a better way to get their message across. His association disagreed with the proposal and he asked that the Plan Commission not support it. It was a precedent in that businesses could also install a banner stating their accomplishments. He asked that the hospital be respectful of the community.

Hearing no further comments, the Chairman closed Public Comment. The petitioner was invited to ask questions of the public. No questions to the public followed by the petitioner.

Mr. Silvestri closed by stating the hospital was respectful of the community and it was serving the community. Many positive messages were available to share with the community. He agreed the hospital had other avenues to advertise other messages that were truly marketing/ advertising, but this was not one of them. He stated the hospital worked with the Village to ensure the content was "on point" and was committed to upholding that tradition. He asked that the commissioners support the proposal.

Commissioners proceeded to discuss the proposal with comments that the proposal appeared to be advertising and was setting a precedent. The 180 days appeared to adequately promote the hospital's awards and the banner was a significant size, which other businesses would envy to use 365 days per year. It was a continuous use and the current ordinance did allow for flexibility within the current 180 days.

Ms. Urban noted the hospital already has a significant amount of signage. She indicated the flexibility of allowing 1200 square feet was very unique already for the property.

Mr. Quirk felt extending the banner beyond 180 days was not necessary especially when it was for informational purposes. He agreed it may benefit the community by impacting the Village's property values just the same as the schools do, or the railroads, etc. in the community.

However, Mr. Cozzo explained the difference with advertising and the proposal was that the hospital could advertise services, which it could provide to someone, but touting awards were communicating accomplishments already given or served to other people. He clarified the hospital was not seeking new patients but it could result as a by-product of the banner. As to the precedent comments, he saw making an exception as different than setting a precedent and that the proposal before the commissioners was probably one of three "crown jewels" in the community that draws attention to the community and, because of that, he was comfortable granting an "exception" because it was not setting a precedent. Saying other businesses could ask for the same, he felt were two different comparisons entirely. He agreed there was a difference between permanent and temporary and it was a matter of revising the definition of "temporary". Additionally, regarding staff's three conditions to not support the proposal, Mr. Cozzo called attention to the fact that the statement addressing the fraying of the banner's material was really not an issue because the hospital would never give the Village any reason to believe they would let a banner fray. Asked if all the standards were met, Mr. Cozzo believed they were not, but the proposal was unique and a highly exceptional situation.

Mr. Beggs summarized that the issue came down to whether the banner should be displayed for an extended period of time; however, he explained he had to look at the criteria being considered for the proposal, one of which was mentioned as the size of the organization. He questioned, then, whether that was a statutory criteria for the Village to allow a sign. He did not believe it was a good criteria. Additionally, extending the time period another six months did not appear to be a distinguishing enough difference in the means of communication. Mr. Beggs voiced concern about setting a precedent and suggested that if the hospital needed a continuous sign to remind the community of the benefits that Good Samaritan provides, then the hospital should install a monument sign. Lastly, he voiced concern about adding to more signs in general and did not support the proposal.

Mr. Waechtler voiced his comments: 1) the hospital can advertise its accomplishments without a 365-day a year banner; 2) the approval would open the door for other businesses and institutions; 3) a 180-day sign, as presently allowed, provides opportunity to update the community on the hospital's accolades and awards; 4) the sign ordinance was designed to reduce the proliferation of signs in the entire Village; and 5) the initial 180 day-approval was generous and should not be changed.

APPROVED 1/7/13

Chairman Hose summarized his beliefs in that the proposal was a significant deviation from current regulations, as cited by Ms. Urban. He agreed it was also difficult to differentiate between the proposal and other advertisers who may seek standard changes in the Sign Ordinance, one of them being future requests for planned unit developments, which he felt would not be the direction the Village wanted at this time. The term “temporary” would have to be more than the construction of the sign itself, and, while the banner itself may be temporary, at day 366, another sign could be installed. He did not support the proposal.

Mr. Webster concurred with the statements made by Ms. Urban and with the Chairman’s comments that the scale and scope was much more than what other businesses are “afforded” and whether they were planned developments. He recalled when this proposal was initially approved, and stated that while the hospital had a very large wall, it did not necessarily have to spend large amounts of money to fill it up, especially when the message could be done in half the size. Mr. Webster agreed the petition was already a generous approval to the uniqueness and high value of the operation; possibly beyond generous. He reminded the commissioners that for those businesses whom wanted to tout their awards temporarily, they were limited to a 4-foot x 8-foot banner.

Lastly, Mr. Cozzo asked staff if any other businesses have requested the same request of 180 days, wherein Mr. O’Brien responded, to his knowledge, that there had not been any specific requests for banners similar to Good Samaritan’s. He explained that the Village only permits temporary banners up to eight (8) weeks per year. He noted staff gets many requests for more time – many coming from shopping centers with multiple tenants. Mr. O’Brien also pointed out that the average business probably did not know that Good Samaritan received 180 days. However the Village receives complaints from other businesses when it does not enforce the temporary sign ordinance regulations.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE PC-38-12, MR. BEGGS MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION FORWARD A NEGATIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL.

SECONDED BY MRS. RABATAH.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: MR. BEGGS, MRS. RABATAH, MR. MATEJCZYK, MR. QUIRK, MS. URBAN, MR. WAECHTLER, MR. WEBSTER, CHAIRMAN HOSE

NAY: MR. COZZO

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 8-1

PC-39-12 A petition seeking Special Use approval for a private preschool as part of Downers Grove Community Church. The property is located on the southwest corner of Fairview Avenue and 66th Street, commonly known as Downers Grove Community Church, 6600 Fairview Avenue, Downers Grove, IL (PINs 09-20-211-019, -034, -052). Howard Hoekstra, Petitioner; Downers Grove Community Church, Owner.

APPROVED 1/7/13

Chairman Hose swore in those individuals that would be speaking on the above petition.

Village Planner, Mr. Damir Latinovic, reviewed the location of the R-1 zoned site for the commissioners, noting the property did have a one-story church building with surrounding parking lot and a single-family home structure that is currently used for office use on the site. Photos of the church followed, with Mr. Latinovic explaining that on Sundays the church is used for religious services. During the week the church is used by different groups for various functions and may include anywhere from five to 25 participants for about one or two hours.

The petitioner was seeking special use approval in order to operate a private preschool as part of the church and would occupy the space located in the south wing of the building that is currently being used for Sunday school. No changes were being made to the site or the building and the current classrooms would be utilized. Initially, 12 to 15 students are planned to start the school, with those numbers expanding to 28 students and two teachers. The school plans to operate Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Per fire code requirements, the building will require an updated fire alarm system. Staff has recognized that there will be minor parking and traffic impacts to the area but, in general, will not have a negative impact to the existing parking conditions or traffic configuration in the neighborhood, being that the school traffic does not interfere with the rush hour traffic in the area. There are 79 existing parking spaces and the church is required to provide 64 parking spaces, per code, while the school is required to provide 10 spaces, for a total of 74 required parking spaces. Details of the expected trip generation were explained by Mr. Latinovic.

In summary, Mr. Latinovic reported the proposal was consistent with the Village's Comprehensive Plan and the proposed preschool on the property would ensure that the institutional use remained on the property for the future. Staff believed the preschool would not have any negative effects on the area. Staff supported the proposal and confirmed the standards for the Special Use were met. All zoning requirements were currently being met and would continue to do so. Staff supported the proposal and recommended that the Plan Commission support the proposal with the two conditions listed in staff's report.

Per Mr. Matejczyk's question, the petitioner will be required to install a visual fire alarm system. A concern raised by Ms. Urban was the fact that there was no clear designation for a drop-off area. She asked whether the parents would be walking their children to the school area, wherein Mr. Latinovic explained that the school would have its own entrance and, at drop off time, the parents would have to park and walk their children to the entrance. At pick up time, the parents would probably park again their vehicles and school staff would escort the children to their vehicle.

Clarification was made regarding the zoning classification on the property and the church, i.e., and why the special use approval is required for the preschool.

Petitioner, Director Robyn Menna Strausser, for the Downers Grove Community Church, addressed the commissioners about the drop-off plan for the children: the parents will line up and the teachers will walk up and assist the children out of their cars and walk them into the school with another teacher walking the children to their classrooms.

APPROVED 1/7/13

Asked if the preschool was required to have any state licenses, Ms. Menna Strausser stated that because the school fell under a church, the school will teach Christian values and will be exempt. While it does not have to run under DCFS, DCFS has asked that the school, prior to operation, comply with the fire/safety requirements, have a health inspection, and prove that they are a church.

Per Mr. Waechtler's questions, a sprinkler system currently exists. A letter was sent out regarding the school, but under DCFS requirements, Ms. Menna Strausser explained that the preschool cannot communicate that there will be a preschool until compliance has been met and that it has received approval by this commission. Mr. Waechtler also commented about his visit to the site.

Mr. O'Brien interrupted and confirmed that staff did send out a required notice letter to the neighbors within 250 feet of the school. No phone calls were received.

Chairman Hose opened up the meeting to public comment. No comments. Public comment was closed. The petitioner waived her right to a closing comment.

Positive comments followed regarding the overall petition.

WITH RESPECT TO FILE PC 39-12, MR. WAECHTLER MADE A MOTION THAT THE PLAN COMMISSION FORWARD A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL APPROVING THE ABOVE PETITION, INCLUDING STAFF'S FOLLOWING TWO CONDITIONS:

- 1. THE SPECIAL USE SHALL SUBSTANTIALLY CONFORM TO THE STAFF REPORT, PLANS AND DOCUMENTS ATTACHED TO THIS REPORT EXCEPT AS SUCH PLANS MAY BE MODIFIED TO CONFORM TO THE VILLAGE CODES AND ORDINANCES; AND**
- 2. THE APPLICANT SHALL UPDATE EMERGENCY LIGHTING AND VISUAL FIRE ALARM SYSTEM AND OBTAIN A COMMERCIAL OCCUPANCY PERMIT PRIOR TO OPENING THE SCHOOL.**

SECONDED BY MR. QUIRK.

ROLL CALL:

AYE: MR. WAECHTLER, MR. QUIRK, MR. BEGGS, MR. COZZO, MR. MATEJCZYK, MRS. RABATAH, MS. URBAN, MR. WEBSTER, CHAIRMAN HOSE

NAY: NONE

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 9-0

Staff stated the next Plan Commission meeting will tentatively be held on January 7, 2013 with one or two items possibly on the agenda. Mr. O'Brien said the lot consolidation ordinance recently was approved and so commissioners would not be receiving lot consolidation applications unless specific issues existed. Also, the supportive living facility located at Gilbert and Forest was withdrawn.

APPROVED 1/7/13

Updates followed on the BP Amoco and Dunkin Donuts proposals at 75th and Lemont Roads with Mr. O'Brien stating the commissioners may see the drive-through proposal for Dunkin Donuts return again next year. Details followed. Mr. Waechtler mentioned an article he read in the November 18, 2012 *Chicago Tribune* regarding homes being rented out. He asked staff whether the Village would be considering a residential rental program such as the Village of Woodridge as a preventative maintenance measure. Mr. O'Brien responded that the Village of Downers Grove was not looking at that specifically. However he stated the Village Council did ask staff to look at a vacant properties registry for this year and, while there were some issues with a handful of vacant properties, overall, the housing was stable in the Village.

THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:15 P.M. ON MOTION BY MRS. RABATAH, SECONDED BY MR. WEBSTER. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE OF 9-0.

/s/ Celeste K. Weilandt

Celeste K. Weilandt

(As transcribed by MP-3 audio)