

MEETING MINUTES



Village of Homewood
Planning and Zoning Commission
Thursday, August 13, 2020
7:30 p.m.

Village Hall Board Room
and audio conferencing
2020 Chestnut Road
Homewood, IL 60430

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Sierzega, Member Planera called the meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Members attended remotely via zoom: Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Johnson, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega; Present from the Village was Village Manager Jim Marino, Economic and Community Development Director Angela Mesaros and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard linked remotely. There were two people in the audience.

NOTE: Due to the Governor's emergency order because of the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing recommendations, and the Chairman finding that, pursuant to Public Act 101-0640, an in-person meeting was not prudent, conducted the meeting via video/audio. This meeting was open to the public. All Commissioners and the public were able to hear one another as well as all discussion.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Sierzega asked if there were any corrections or changes to the minutes of July 23, 2020. Member Alfonso stated she was not in attendance for the meeting. Member Bransky stated "would" should be inserted at the bottom of page 2. Member Planera stated on page 2 the distance is 1.9'. Chairman Sierzega stated he was present for the entire meeting. A motion was made by Member O'Brien to approve the minutes of July 23, 2020 as corrected; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, O'Brien, Planera, Johnson, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: None

Case No. 20-12 – Special User Permit to operate a salon/spa establishment at 18668 S. Dixie Highway:

Chairman Sierzega asked staff if any comments had been received. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated she had received a call from another salon owner who is not in support of it, but nothing was received in writing. The salon that called was not located in the same plaza, but was located in the Southgate area across Dixie Highway from the subject location.

Chairman Sierzega introduced the petitioner and swore in Antonio Muse, applicant, who presented the application.

Chairman Sierzega asked why Mr. Muse wished to open at this location. Mr. Muse stated that he has over 20 years in his trade and wants to save his trade by downsizing and to be able to control the client

MEETING MINUTES

size. This location is perfect. Mr. Muse stated that the location has three individual office spaces and that the current layout and sizing fits his needs. Mr. Muse stated that the location he is at currently has nine stations and that it is hard to control the flow. He wants to protect his clients and himself.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Muse if he currently has a location in the area. Mr. Muse stated that his current location is in Calumet City.

Chairman Sierzega asked if Mr. Muse wanted to move from there and open a place on Dixie Highway. Mr. Muse stated, that is correct.

Member Bransky asked Mr. Muse to elaborate on “save your trade.” Mr. Muse stated that with the Covid-19 regulations set on people and crowds, it is hard to forecast the trade. With the current business model that has many stations on each side of him, it is hard to control the crowd.

Member Bransky asked if the current location was more like a *Sports Clip* instead of a neighborhood barber. Mr. Muse stated that that is correct and with the proposed space, he would be able to close the door and use an air purifier.

Member Bransky asked if Mr. Muse would be able to space the new location to meet the COVID considerations. Mr. Muse stated, definitely.

Member Bransky asked Staff about the revision that was sent out in the email. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that it was a statistical revision. Initially it was stated that there were five salons in the Southgate area, but in actuality there are six. This location would increase that number to seven. A chart with all the data was also sent in a separate email to the Commissioners.

Member Bransky stated that we do not know which businesses will survive and which will not in the current economic climate. He said to go for it and see what happens. Member Bransky stated that he is not comfortable with shutting anyone out.

Member Johnson stated that given the economic times and the building this is a way that is safe and a way to control the environment. He was not sure what was meant by “saving the trade”.

Member Johnson stated he had two questions. In Homewood there are already 44 barber shop/salons. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that is correct. Member Johnson asked if Mr. Muse was aware of this and if he was aware there was already one in the same strip mall and if that was considered. Mr. Muse stated that he was aware and that considering the climate with quarantine he had to come up with a plan, on the fly. But he was not aware there were 44 in the Village, just the one salon in the plaza. Mr. Muse stated that he is well established and has worked on movie stars and politicians and has clients and families that he has worked with for 20 years now. Mr. Muse stated that his clientele is different than the other existing locations in the area. During the quarantine he did his research and that he thinks this location is the best option.

Member Johnson asked if Mr. Muse looked at other locations. Member Johnson stated that one objection was received, but that it wasn't in the same location. The number of locations is pretty high, but if you cross into Hazel Crest or Harvey or Flossmoor or go east there are none. Member Johnson asked if it was good for him competitively and if it might hurt other businesses in Homewood. Member Johnson stated that he has concerns about too many hair salons and barber shops in Homewood. Member Johnson stated that up to 15.9% of businesses in the Southgate area are barber shops/hair salons.

Mr. Muse stated that he is licensed as a traditional barber and is licensed by the State to use a straight razor. Mr. Muse stated that he is unaware as to how other places do business and how they are set up. Mr. Muse stated that he doesn't think the other locations have anyone that does what he does. "Spa" is such a broad category.

Member Johnson stated that he had no further questions.

Member O'Brien stated that Mr. Muse cut out during part of his transmission and that for clarification, does he own his own shop in Calumet City. Mr. Muse stated that he is an independent contractor and that he rents a chair.

Member O'Brien asked the size of the proposed space. Mr. Muse stated that the location is 660 square feet.

Member O'Brien asked how many offices that entails. Mr. Muse stated that there are 3 offices, one of which is small.

Member O'Brien stated he called staff previously about a previous application, Case 19-43 Ginex Laser & Anti-Aging, regarding the statistics. At that time there were five salons in the B-2 and Southgate and now it is 20% in Southgate. Member O'Brien stated that while Ginex was not a barbershop or salon, it was categorized as one by ordinance. At that time the concern was the proliferation of that group. Member O'Brien stated that the special use requirement was added to prevent a proliferation of any one type of business. Member O'Brien stated that there is a proliferation in approximately two blocks there are seven with a barbershop kiddie corner from the proposed location. By allowing another salon/service we are defeating or ignoring the intent and the purpose of the special use ordinance. Member O'Brien stated that the number of locations is a problem for him.

Member O'Brien stated that a lot of discussion has been about parking with 16-22 salons in the downtown area. Member O'Brien stated that the parking issues are a problem anywhere in the Village and are commonly discussed. Member O'Brien stated that he is not inclined to lean favorably on this.

Member Bransky asked Member O'Brien if he meant "salon" and not "personal service" as it is a different class of business. Member O'Brien stated that yes that is correct.

Member O'Brien stated that it is 15.9% under the new classification, otherwise it would be 28%. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that was correct.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Muse how many chairs he would have in the new location. Mr. Muse stated that he would have one and maybe down the line in 1-2 years add to that. Mr. Muse stated that he wanted a place to protect himself and his clients.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Muse if there were three offices at the location. Mr. Muse stated that yes, there are three – two in the front and one in back behind a closed door.

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Muse if there would be two chairs and one employee besides Mr. Muse. Mr. Muse stated yes, but he is not looking to add an employee right now, but maybe in the future 1-2 years.

MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Sierzega stated to Mr. Muse that it would be just him to begin with. Mr. Muse stated yes, that is correct.

Member Planera asked Mr. Muse if this location would be downsizing for him. Mr. Muse stated that yes it would be.

Member Planera stated that the salon/barber business likely is not driven by walk-ins. Mr. Muse likely has an existing client list and clients follow him. He would have referrals also, and if he is looking for his clientele to follow him. Mr. Muse stated yes.

Member Planera asked if Mr. Muse looked into areas where salons are permitted in the Village. Mr. Muse stated that he did look at another location, but the square footage was too much for him to sustain by himself. It would require additional chairs and employees and that would not be downsizing. The proposed location is around the corner from his home (in Flossmoor). Mr. Muse stated he scouted the place and the size is perfect. Mr. Muse stated that he did not know the history of salons in the area. Mr. Muse stated that the location is centralized and that he looked for his demographic, but did not see any one. Mr. Muse stated that the barbershop across the street has a different demographic than his and that he felt they would not compete.

Member Planera asked Mr. Muse if the new location would result in a reduction in business and if that would work out for him, instead of continuing to lease a chair in Calumet City. Mr. Muse stated that no it would not. Because of the lack of precautions at his current facility, he has clients who will not step into the location, which has resulted in house calls for elderly and clients with preexisting conditions.

Member Planera stated that he understands the uniqueness to barbershops. Member Planera stated that it is not a reflection on Mr. Muse, but Homewood and Southgate have an oversaturation of salon uses. Member Planera stated that member Bransky's comments were on point and that he agreed with the other Commissioners.

Member O'Brien asked Mr. Muse if he currently rents a chair in a shop. Mr. Muse stated that is correct.

Member O'Brien asked Mr. Muse what the square footage of the area around the current chair is and if Mr. Muse is willing to take on the 660 square feet location as it much more space than he currently has. It appears the proposed location has one entire room Mr. Muse would not use. For the amount of square footage this is actually upsizing. Mr. Muse stated that right now he is paying more than he would for the entire space on Dixie Highway.

Member O'Brien stated that it sounds like Mr. Muse is not just renting a chair and that the arrangement is for more than just a chair. Mr. Muse stated that he would be saving money by going into this location.

Member O'Brien stated that he is not comfortable adding another barbershop/salon into the Southgate area.

Member Cap stated that a concern arose in 2012 and at that time, about 6% of businesses in town were salons/barbers and it has since doubled in this area. Member Cap stated that he is having a hard time justifying approval at this time.

MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Sierzega asked Mr. Muse if he would be selling retail products at the location. Mr. Muse stated that he would not.

Chairman Sierzega stated that that was the only question he had.

Member Bransky asked Mr. Muse what the male/female breakdown of the clientele that would follow him from Calumet City. Mr. Muse stated that he had clients from all over. Member Bransky stated that Mr. Muse is trying to downsize to a “neighborhood barber”. Mr. Muse stated that his clients are not all men and that yes, he is trying to downsize.

Member Bransky stated that he had two points: 1.) Common sense says there is an oversaturation, but he feels that by bringing in established clients, Mr. Muse would not be stealing clients from other operations. 2.) Mr. Muse has a different model from most that is based on a neighborhood barbershop. Member Bransky stated he is inclined to say you and to let the market decide and that a year to a year-and-a-half from not the stats would be different.

Member Alfonso stated that looking at the location, across the street and in this building are a lot of empty storefronts. Member Alfonso stated that it may be better to have an established company come into a small space instead of vacancies. This is uniquely good space for his business. Member Alfonso stated that she is inclined to say yes.

Member Johnson stated that he appreciates what has been said and that it is a difficult time, but he agrees with Member O'Brien that the zoning rules are for a purpose. Member Johnson stated that the exception is the time we are living in and Mr. Muse is trying to protect himself and his clients. Member Johnson stated that any other time he would vote no for another salon/barber, but given where we are or may be in a few months, he is inclined to accept the use.

Member Planera stated that the State of Illinois experienced a shutdown that included salons/spas and that it is likely to happen again if Covid continues. Member Planera stated that he does not see the urgency or the uniqueness at this point because of the current conditions, and that it is no reflection on Mr. Muse.

Motion was made by Member Bransky for approval of Case 20-12 to grant a Special Use Permit to operate a salon/spa establishment at 18668 S. Dixie Highway; seconded by Member Alfonso.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Johnson.

NAYS: Members Cap, O'Brien, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega.

ABSTENTIONS: None

Motion was denied.

NEW BUSINESS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

ADJOURNMENT: Member Cap moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m., seconded by Member Planera. Motion passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Mesaros
Staff Liaison