

MEETING MINUTES



Village of Homewood
Planning and Zoning Commission
Thursday, February 25, 2021
7:30 p.m.

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

CALL TO ORDER: Due to technical difficulties for Chairman Sierzega, Member Planera called the meeting to order as Acting Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission at 7:42 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Members attended remotely via zoom: Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Johnson, Planera, and Chairman Sierzega; Present from the Village was Economic and Community Development Director Angela Mesaros and Building Department Secretary Darlene Leonard. Member O'Brien was absent. There were 2 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:

There were no minutes to approve.

Case No. 21-04 – Special Use Permit and Parking Variance to operate Crab Bagz LLC at 18681 Dixie Highway in the B-2 Community Business District:

Acting Chairman Planera introduced and swore in the petitioner, Paris Walker, who presented the application.

Ms. Walker stated that she and her sister started the business in 2015 after being told by family and friends they should open a restaurant. Ms. Walker stated that she eventually plans to employ 2-3 hosts, 3-5 servers, and 3-5 bartenders, and 8 cooks. Ms. Walker expects the hours of operation to be Sunday – Thursday 11am to 9pm, and Friday and Saturday 11 am to midnight because she wants to have lunch options.

Member Alfonso stated that is a lot of hours and thanked the applicant for clarifying. Member Alfonso stated that seating can be 50 and with the cooks, crew, & hosts and she is concerned there is not enough parking.

Member Alfonso asked Staff Liaison Mesaros if looking at the square footage, 18 spaces are needed, but is there a consideration of hours of operation. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the number of required spaces is based on the square footage of the space not the hours of operation, and it would be 1/100 square feet.

Member Alfonso stated she is concerned about parking in the neighborhood.

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Member Johnson asked about the parking needs and who the owner of the property is. Ms. Walker stated the property is owned by Vivek Pinto.

Member Johnson stated that typically the property owner shows up for the meeting to show support to the tenant and help show how to solve parking issues.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that she does not see the property owner in the meeting.

Member Johnson stated that Ms. Walker should have had a discussion with the property owner about the parking issues.

Ms. Walker stated that parking should not be a problem because of the number of spaces available in the lot daily.

Member Johnson stated that the plaza across the street is always busy, but that he is unsure about the plaza where the business will be located. Member Johnson stated that he is not hearing anything to find a way to deal with the additional spaces that are needed and other tenants should be considered.

Member Johnson asked Ms. Walker if she could state why she thinks it would work. Ms. Walker stated that she would work with the other business owners to see if they would allow her to use some of their spaces after they close for the day, after 6 pm.

Member Johnson stated that was something that probably should have been done prior to the meeting. Member Johnson asked if the spaces in the lot are designated to specific businesses. Ms. Walker stated no they are not.

Member Cap stated that the location used to be an Al's Deli in the 1980s and 1990s, and it was popular for breakfast and lunch. Member Cap stated that it might be an explanation why the end of the building seems to not aggravate the parking situation.

Member Cap stated that the Homewood Diner mural is on the south end of the building.

Member Cap asked if there was a hidden parking lot east of the location beyond the alley and that it could be suitable for the employees.

Member Bransky stated that he likes the plan and is excited that it is a restaurant and not a salon.

Member Bransky stated that with the other businesses in the plaza that issues with parking would depend on the hours because of the capacity in the evening hours and later.

Member Bransky stated that the evening businesses might be competitors for parking, but not all the time. Hopefully, it will not turn away customers. Member Bransky stated that eleven spaces more is a lot.

Member Bransky stated that having the restaurant there may bring more business to the others in the area, but at the moment he is in favor of it.

Acting Chairman Planera asked Ms. Walker what brought her to pick this location and if other locations were considered. Ms. Walker stated that she is a Homewood resident and that she did look

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at other locations, but the rent was too much. Ms. Walker stated that she did want a location that was in downtown, but this one is not too far from downtown and she was happy with the space.

Acting Chairman Planera stated that the idea for the business is rather interesting and it does bring something new. Acting Chairman Planera stated that he did have initial concerns regarding the parking deficiency and that the seven days a week of operation can be intense.

Ms. Walker stated that her goal is to be open seven days a week, but will work up to that and the hours maybe 5-12.

Chairman Sierzega stated that the property across the street by the auto repair has an additional parking lot behind it and maybe customers can park there.

Acting Chairman Planera stated that lot might be private, not public. Chairman Sierzega stated it is possible that an agreement could be made between Suburban Electric (the owner of the lot) and the applicant.

Member Cap stated there is a parking lot one block south of the proposed location behind Cilantro and the Mini Mart and asked if that is a public lot. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the lot behind Cilantro is a public parking lot. Member Cap stated that it could be a bit of a walk, but the lot can be used by guests and for employee parking.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that the Village is in the process of obtaining a second parking lot on Dixie a block south of the subject property. Member Cap asked if that would be the old medical center. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated yes.

Member Cap stated that if the employees are asked to park in the two public parking lots one block south, it could alleviate any parking issues. Member Cap stated that it is possible that eventually, a valet service could be instituted.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated there are some attendees in the audience on zoom.

An unnamed female resident asked if the Commission would grill Diversified Partners like they grilled this applicant. The unnamed resident further stated to the applicant that she should not let the Commission grill her like that. Commission members stated that they hoped they had not “grilled” the applicant.

Motion was made by Member Alfonso to approve Case No. 21-04 to recommend a special use permit and parking variation to operate Crab Bagz LLC at 18681 Dixie Highway; seconded by Member Cap.

AYES: Members Alfonso, Bransky, Cap, Johnson, and Chairman Sierzega.

NAYS: Acting Chairman Planera

ABSTENTIONS: None

ABSENT: Member O'Brien

NEW BUSINESS: Acting Chairman Planera asked if there was any new business, other than the zoning for the Calumet Country Club.

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Member Alfonso asked if there would be a time limit at the next hearing.

Chairman Sierzega stated that he and Attorney Chris Cummings spoke about that and Attorney Cummings is looking into limiting the public to 10-15 minutes.

Member Alfonso asked if the next meeting regarding Calumet Country Club is at 10:30 am on Wednesday and following that Thursday at 6:30 pm. Staff Liaison Mesaros stated the days and times are correct.

Member Johnson stated that he cannot make meetings during the day.

Member Bransky stated that he can make some, but not all of the meeting.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that they are starting early to give the public additional time to speak.

Member Bransky asked about access being made available to the recordings of the meetings.

Staff Liaison Mesaros stated that an email with details about the hearing will be sent to the members.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Acting Chairman Planera asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m., the motion passed by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Mesaros
Staff Liaison