

**VILLAGE OF RIVER FOREST
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 21, 2019**

A meeting of the Village of River Forest Development Review Board was held at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2019 in the Community Room of the River Forest Village Hall, 400 Park Avenue, River Forest, Illinois.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. Upon roll call, the following persons were:

Present: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel, Chairman Martin

Absent: Members Crosby, Dombrowski, Kilbride

Also Present: Assistant Village Administrator Lisa Scheiner, Assistant Village Administrator, Building Official Clifford Radatz

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD MEETING

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member O'Brien to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2018 Development Review Board Meeting.

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

III. PRE-FILING MEETING AND CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR APPLICATION REQUIREMENT WAIVERS: Proposed Planned Development – 344 Lathrop Avenue

Chairman Martin explained the purpose of the pre-filing conference for the property at 344 Lathrop. He noted that there is no application on file so there is no recommendation to make. He said if the applicant requests waivers for certain application requirements the Development Review Board will discuss them and vote on the request.

Secretary Radatz administered the admonition and swore in all parties wishing to speak.

John Schiess, JCS Architects (7706 Central, River Forest) stated he is a consultant appearing on behalf of the property owner (Carmela Properties, LLC), and Dr. Gina Piccioni who owns Carmela Properties, LLC and River Forest Dental Studio, which is located at 344 Lathrop Avenue. Dr. Piccioni introduced herself to the Development Review Board.

Mr. Schiess presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Development Review Board. He said the dental practice takes up a large portion of the property, which used to be home to a toy

designer. Dr. Piccioni bought the property with the intent to operate her dental practice there. Mr. Schiess said the hours of operation are Monday through Saturday with varying start and stop hours. He said there are a total of seven part time employees on staff but they do not all work at the same time and that there is a maximum of four employees at any time with the exception of shift change.

Mr. Schiess said the site is a little over 8,000 square feet and the building is 5,583 square feet. He displayed the floor plan for the building and noted that, of the four on-site parking spaces, which includes one ADA space, two would be used for the proposed apartment. Mr. Schiess explained that they are proposing to modify the floor plan of the building for the purpose of converting five offices and one large conference room inside the building to a 1,797 square foot two-bedroom apartment. He said the footprint of the building will not change, and he displayed and discussed the modified floor plan with the apartment that includes a two-car indoor parking garage. He said that, at this point, the apartment will be used exclusively by Dr. Piccioni as a place to stay after practice hours and would not be used as her primary residence. Mr. Schiess said the building is located at the southwest corner of Lathrop Avenue and Hawthorne Avenue. He described the surrounding properties and displayed photos of the building elevations. He displayed and reviewed the existing site plan and floor plan. He noted the location of the adjacent buildings relative to the property lines.

Mr. Schiess said they will attempt to show that this proposal is a less intense use of the building than what was there before with no entitlement action, meaning that in its current configuration with no permitting required all five office spaces could be used.

Mr. Schiess said the reclassification of the property from commercial to mixed-use would significantly reduce the property tax bill because the property would be assessed at 10% of its assessed value instead of at 25%. He said there is an economic component that is driving this request. Mr. Schiess recalled the planned development application at 400 Ashland Avenue that was approved and stated that the tax bill for that property was approximately \$50,000 before it was reclassified as a mixed-use property. He said Dr. Piccioni has a tax bill of \$51,088 and that an almost identical building where he has an office with similar building square footage and lot size down the street, has a tax bill of \$19,948. He said the smaller tax bill leads to a lower operating cost that makes it easier to find tenants, and that 344 Lathrop is at a disadvantage because of its tax bill. Mr. Schiess said that they are asking for the Development Review Board's help in leveling the playing field between the properties.

Mr. Schiess reviewed their request for a waiver of application requirements. He stated they are requesting a waiver of the drainage plan because they are not changing the footprint of the building and only adding two bathrooms. He said they are requesting a waiver of the requirement for a professional economic analysis because the impact of the development is negligible. Mr. Schiess said they are requesting a waiver of the requirement for a traffic study because the traffic impact is less intense than what was there previously and the parking demands for the apartment are typically outside the hours of the demand for the dental practice. He said they are also requesting a waiver of the landscape plan requirement since there are no changes to the entrances and landscaping that is there now.

Mr. Schiess said the compensating benefits of the plan to the community is that it levels the economic playing field for and allows the property owner to invest in the building. He said the mixed-use building in a walkable, urban environment adds to community vibrancy.

Member Fishman asked if this had to be a rentable property to call it mixed-use and whether there was any zoning implication for that. Chairman Martin stated he was not sure and would ask the application to address this in their application. Member Fishman asked whether the residential unit at 400 Ashland was rented to someone outside the business and Mr. Schiess replied that, initially, it was not and was leased to his son for two years. He discussed what the County requests for reassessment purposes.

Chairman Martin said the Development Review Board is concerned about how the building is zoned and if the application meets the standards and that they may be concerned about is the economic impact of this proposal with the drastic reduction in taxes. Mr. Schiess said he will present a zoning analysis with the application.

Dr. Piccioni said the property is currently located in the C3 zoning district which allows residential for two or more apartments. This would only be one apartment. Chairman Martin stated that they will ask Mr. Radatz whether or not the property would need to be rezoned for this request.

Member O'Brien asked if parking is a zoning issue and where clients will park if employees are parked behind the building. Mr. Schiess replied that there is on-street parking and that the length of the typical patient visit is between 20 and 45 minutes with one hour being the maximum. He noted that there could be the possibility of making arrangements for addition parking at nearby locations such as the River Forest Kitchen at Ashland and Hawthorne. Chairman Martin asked that the application address parking requirements for the residential and commercial use. Mr. Schiess stated that will be addressed in the application.

Chairman Martin asked the Development Review Board if there is anything else that the applicant should address in the application. Hearing none, Chairman Martin asked the applicant if there was anything else they wanted to tell the Development Review Board. Mr. Schiess said they planned to get their application packet in in a few weeks and thanked them for their feedback.

Chairman Martin stated that the Development Review Board should now address the request to permit the application to be filed without complying with certain requirements set out in the Zoning Ordinance. Chairman Martin suggested they respond to each request separately.

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member O'Brien to waive application requirement 10-19-6(B)(8) (landscape plan).

Chairman Martin noted that the applicant must comply with the landscape ordinance and that the Zoning Ordinance requirements for landscaping are not waived, just the application requirement.

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member O'Brien to waive application requirement 10-19-6(B)(12) (traffic study).

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

Chairman Martin stated the next requirement was for the economic analysis. He noted that it is a three-part requirement regarding the project's economic viability, economic impact on the Village, and the capability of the applicant to complete the proposed development. He stated that in the past the Development Review Board has considered a partial waiver and that he thinks the applicant should demonstrate the ability to complete the project. Member Fishman agreed and Mr. Schiess said the applicant will comply with that requirement.

A MOTION was made by Member Martin and SECONDED by Member Fishman to waive application requirement 10-19-6(B)(13)(b), and (c).

Member O'Brien stated that she wants to see how the proposed project would affect the Village since they are seeking to reduce the property taxes.

Chairman Martin and Member Fishman amended the motion to waive application requirement 10-19-6(B)(13)(b).

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

In response to a question from Chairman Martin regarding the Village's position on the request for a waiver of the site drainage plan, Mr. Radatz stated that given that there are no changes to the exterior of the building he doesn't see any impact on the Village and that the addition of the bathrooms would be minimal.

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member O'Brien to waive application requirement 10-19-6(B)(17).

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Member Fishman and SECONDED by Member Schubkegel to adjourn the meeting of the Development Review Board at 8:08 p.m.

Ayes: Members Fishman, O'Brien, Schubkegel and Chairman Martin

Nays: None

Motion Passed.

Respectfully Submitted:



Lisa Scheiner Secretary



Frank R. Martin
Chairman, Development Review Board



Date