

Village of Riverwoods
Plan Commission Meeting
Meeting Minutes October 5, 2023

A meeting of the Village of Riverwoods Plan Commission was held on Thursday, October 5, 2023 at Village Hall. Chairperson Laurie Breitkopf called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Present:

Laurie Breitkopf, Chairperson
Karl Blalock
Sherry Graditor
Carey Rothbardt

Absent:

Jay Datt
Stephen Levin

Also Present:

Vivian Hofeld, Deputy Village Clerk
Steve Witt, Director of Community Services
Bruce Huvad, Village Attorney

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Blalock moved to approve the minutes from the September 7, 2023 Plan Commission meeting. Ms. Graditor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

2. Visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission

There were no visitors wishing to address the Plan Commission on non-agenda items.

3. New Business

Hearing to amend special use for Colonial Court Shopping Center to authorize a restaurant to serve as a licensed establishment that operates video gaming terminals, provided the restaurant is licensed for video gaming by the Village of Riverwoods

Mr. Huvad noted Colonial Court Shopping Center is governed by a Special Use Ordinance since 1979 that has been amended several times. There are about 50 uses listed in the Ordinance. The proposed Special Use for video gaming is not a currently listed use. The proposed video gaming would be located inside The Brunch Factory restaurant. The Village approved video gaming in Shoppes of Riverwoods and, at that

time, chose to wait for an application before approving other video game establishments. The video gaming establishment at the Shoppes of Riverwoods has taken longer to open than expected and the applicant in Colonial Court would like to begin the process. Mr. Huvad noted the intent of the proposed Text Amendment is to allow video gaming within a stand-alone restaurant in Colonial Court. If an additional video gaming establishment in Colonial Court is sought, another Text Amendment would be required. This is a zoning matter only. It is up to the Board of Trustees whether to authorize a video gaming terminal license and issue the required liquor license.

Staff concerns include the impact of the widening of Deerfield Road on the business, including the loss of 25 parking spaces, and the impact of parking requirements for video gaming on The Brunch Factory. The Village is waiting for a response from the owner of Colonial Court regarding how it wants to address the parking issues.

Nick Patikas, attorney with the law offices of Sam Binks, explained the applicant wants to add video gaming at The Brunch Factory. The Brunch Factory currently operates as a full-service restaurant with approximately 6300 square feet, of which about 1000 square feet would house six video game terminals. The restaurant would operate seven days a week between 7 am and 2:30 pm. If approved, the video gaming establishment would operate from Sunday through Thursday from 11 am – 10:30 pm and Friday and Saturday from 11 am – 1 am. The Brunch Factory has a seating capacity of 265 and the shared parking lot with Colonial Court has 125 parking spaces. During peak times, The Brunch Factory patrons occupy approximately 40 parking spaces and any additional spaces needed for the proposed six video gaming terminals can be absorbed due to the offsetting hours between the restaurant and video gaming area.

Mr. Blalock asked how the gaming area would be separated from the restaurant. Mr. Patikas explained his client is reworking the restaurant's interior space to separate the gaming area. Currently, the restaurant has a liquor license. If the Special Use is approved, a terminal operator liquor license will be required to comply with Illinois law. His client also desires to add a limited food menu.

Mr. Blalock asked about separation of the restrooms, available for use by all restaurant patrons, from the video gaming area. Demetri Mehotos, restaurant owner, explained the restaurant's entrance accesses two additional doors leading to either the restaurant or the gaming area. The gaming machines will be along the north wall. Ms. Graditor expressed concern about the location of the gaming area in relation to the restaurant area, because the restaurant caters to families and there is no barrier to stop children from entering the gaming area. Sam Pecori with Gaming Productions explained there are many options to separate the gaming area, including adding half-wall partitions or stanchions. Mr. Patikas explained barriers could be added as a condition to the Special Use. Ms. Graditor would like to see the barrier design. Mr. Witt explained that partitions are acceptable if they are stable. He expressed concern that the gaming area is 1000 square feet including the restaurant's bar area. The true video gaming area is along the

north wall of the bar. Mr. Patikas said the gaming area would be approximately 200 square feet.

Mr. Huvad confirmed restaurant patrons would be able to sit at the bar during restaurant hours. Mr. Witt asked for clarity regarding the amount of space for a clear exit path. Mr. Patikas explained there would be no seating along the walkway from the video gaming area to the door. Mr. Patikas explained the furniture is movable.

Mr. Huvad noted The Brunch Factory's busiest times are on weekends, and there has not been a parking space challenge. The Deerfield Road expansion will require some adjustments. Mr. Patikas believes there are enough parking spaces to accommodate the restaurant and video gaming establishment, even after the loss of 25 spaces due to the expansion. Mr. Patikas believes the gaming would peak after the restaurant closes.

Commissioners discussed the proposed weekend hours. Ms. Graditor is concerned about noise, traffic and neighbors at 1:00 am. Mr. Huvad suggested the hours should be the same as the other video gaming establishment in the Village. Mr. Rothbardt asked where the gaming clientele would come from. Mr. Pecori believes this will become an entertainment destination. He believes this is an opportunity to create an ancillary use for an existing business. Mr. Pecori noted his business would be running the gaming business. They operate ten other gaming establishments in the northwest suburbs.

Mr. Pecori showed a photograph of an example of a half wall. He noted it is very sturdy and does not tip over. Ms. Graditor would prefer a higher wall than what was shown. Mr. Rothbardt noted neighboring suburbs have a separate room with a door. He asked if there would be another way to separate the area. Mr. Patikas is open to providing options to better screen the gaming area. Ms. Graditor asked if Commissioners are comfortable with the parking situation. Mr. Huvad believes the parking issue will be for the entire shopping center. Mr. Witt commented that he would be more comfortable if the shopping center management were present to inform the Commission of its plans for the center after the Deerfield Road expansion has been completed.

Mr. Huvad suggested adding as conditions to approval the screening of the video gaming area and that the applicant provide an updated parking plan so that the Board of Trustees may consider the parking situation. Ms. Graditor believes if the video gaming machines are visible, children will access them. Mr. Blalock would like to see the screening design to determine how the gaming patrons will access the restrooms. Mr. Pecori believes that as long as there is an attendant in the gaming area, there will be people stopping minors from touching the terminals.

Mr. Huvad noted the Commission's responsibility is to determine whether, from a zoning aspect, the proposed use meets the standards for a Special Use as well as set any operating conditions needed to assure compliance with such standards

Mr. Rothbardt moved to close the Public Hearing. Mr. Blalock seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

Ms. Graditor moved to recommend approval for a video gaming Special Use at The Brunch Factory with the conditions that (1) the video gaming area will be suitably screened with a sturdy structure of sufficient height and opacity that is aesthetically pleasing, and (2) that the applicant will provide an updated parking plan so the Board may consider the parking factor during its deliberation. Mr. Rothbardt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Blalock, Graditor, Rothbardt (3)

NAYS: Breitkopf (1)

4. Old Business

Continued discussion of sub-area plan amendment to the Comprehensive Plan for the Wolters Kluwer site, to consider possible land uses other than office and research

Michael Blue from Teska Associates asked what aspects from the Commissioners' tours of local residential developments they would consider as excellence in design for potential Riverwoods developments. Mr. Blue asked the Commissioners also to define standards that may be included in a planned use development.

Some of the positive features included:

- Buildings that are scaled appropriately with the landscaping
- Structures sited with mature landscaping that incorporates water features
- Winding streets with contours so structures are nestled into the environment
- Variations in elevations with varied front entry doors
- Adequate space between buildings
- Welcoming streets
- Development entry drives that do not show buildings
- Organic building layouts that curve with the street; no defined lot lines
- Open spaces creating a sense of community rather than a rectangular grid
- A sense of surprise
- Private balconies overlooking bridges with water features
- Differentiation in building materials and colors
- Small areas of visitor parking that are blended into the landscape
- Hidden mailboxes
- Ranch homes for seniors
- Inviting outdoor spaces associated with units (patios, courtyards)
- Low-rise; no higher than two stories
- Use of stone rather than stark red brick

- Brick pavers
- Clean, homey feel
- Comprehensive, related appearance with a pleasing overall design
- Design excellence is not necessarily the same as a low density of units per acre
- Integrated stormwater management system

Some negative features included:

- Dense, urban feeling
- Uninviting architecture
- Confusing street navigation
- Bad surprises
- Blatant masses of architecture
- Too much asphalt
- Inadequate space between buildings
- Lack of greenspace/landscaping/open space
- Alleys between structures
- Use of colored rock instead of landscaping
- Boxy feeling; no articulation in building
- Lack of color or lack of color differentiation
- Visitor parking far away from entrances
- Buildings that are too tall
- Garages/driveways dominate street view or are too close to street
- Buildings that do not fit in
- Lack of adequate building setback from street
- Noise
- Developments not comfortable for people to live
- No walking paths or open space
- Too regimented
- Development appears to be built for density

Characteristics to consider for standards in Riverwoods:

- Strong and attractive sense of place
 - A place that welcomes people
 - Amenities outside the dwelling structure
 - Feeling of belonging to a neighborhood
 - Promoting interaction among residents
 - Sense of community
 - Safety
 - Comfort
- Resident and visitor friendliness/Convenience of living
 - Short/moderate distance between parking and front door
 - Welcoming neighborhood
 - Superior maintenance (could be HOA)
 - Gathering areas for residents of all ages

- Walking and bike paths
- Amenities (fitness center)
 - Location of amenities
 - Number of repetitive amenities (benches, gazebo, etc.)
- Visitor parking
- Nighttime illumination
- Wildlife friendliness
- Sustainable balance with natural environment and neighborhood
- Sustainability
 - Encourage use of recycled materials
 - Solar
 - Geo-thermal
 - Passive home/net-zero development
 - Built-in EV chargers
- Well organized public spaces and protected private spaces
 - Cannot tell where public spaces end
 - Adequate private spaces that fit with environment
 - Place for storage
 - Space between buildings
- Village policies that need to be considered
 - Woodlands
 - Landscaping with local, natural and native materials
 - Rain gardens
 - Stormwater runoff/standing water/ephemeral water
 - Need standards in an Ordinance
 - Design standards for detention
 - Footprint Ordinances
 - Demolition recycling
 - Potential/future policies
 - Appearance Review Committee
 - Sustainability
 - Anti-monotony Code
- Density that does not feel like overcrowding
 - What exemplifies adequate density
 - Houses nestled in the landscaping
 - Garages that do not predominate street view
 - Excellent design disguises density
 - Building height that is not too intense for the site
- Housing types that may be acceptable or unacceptable, depending on design
 - Four units with aligned garages - unacceptable
 - Duplex housing sharing garage walls - acceptable
 - Single-family homes - acceptable

6. Adjournment

There being no further business or discussion, Ms. Graditor moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Rothbardt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Plan Commission is November 2, 2023 at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeri Cotton