

MINUTES
Glen Ellyn Plan Commission
Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Glen Ellyn Civic Center
Galligan Board Room
535 Duane Street

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Loftus called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Chairperson Loftus explained the Plan Commission's function and operating procedure as an advisory body. He described the public hearing protocol, including public comment, and announced that the meeting would be recorded.

Roll was called.

PRESENT: Chairperson Tim Loftus; Commissioners Laura Brown, Ian Dawson, Adam Kreuzer, and Parag Thakkar; Student Commissioner Emma Smith.

ABSENT: Commissioners Connie Arango, Peter Cooper, Sumita Mukherjee, and Robert Wyant.

Also in attendance: Daniel Harper, Planning Manager; Audrey Savikas, Recording Secretary; Steve Thompson, Village Trustee; and Scott Viger, Planning Consultant.

B. Public Comment (non-agenda items)

Heidi Anderson, of 501 Turner Avenue, spoke on behalf of Hen Ellyn, a community group gathering support for backyard chickens in Glen Ellyn. Ms. Anderson noted that the group looks forward to appearing on an upcoming Plan Commission agenda.

Emily Henkels, of 779 Harding Avenue, also spoke on behalf of Hen Ellyn, noting that she looks forward to working with the new Community Development staff and furthering discussion about allowing hen-keeping in Glen Ellyn in 2024.

Grace Chan, of 188 N. Lambert, also spoke on behalf of Hen Ellyn, noting that it was her second time attending a Plan Commission meeting. She shared that it is spring, surrounding towns are buying chicks, and she looks forward to an opportunity for Glen Ellyn residents to do so next year.

C. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Dawson made a motion to approve the November 9, 2023 minutes.
Commissioner Thakkar seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

D. New Business

1.) Public Hearing: 473 N. Main Street - Special Use Permit for a tutoring center to be located on the subject property in the C5A Zoning District

Commissioner Thakkar moved to open the Public Hearing. Commissioner Kreuzer seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote.

Staff Introduction

Sworn in, Daniel Harper, Planning Manager for the Village of Glen Ellyn, introduced the request: The petitioner is requesting approval of a Special Use Permit in accordance with Sections 10-4-17-1(B) of the Glen Ellyn Zoning Code to allow a tutoring center to be located on the property known as 473 N. Main Street in the C5A Zoning District.

Mr. Harper presented information as detailed in the Staff Report dated February 16, 2024, included in the agenda packet. He provided a project summary and reviewed the location and surrounding zoning (C5A Central Retail Core Subdistrict), noting that the proposal was interpreted as an office use that required a Special Use Permit. Mr. Harper's presentation also included: relevant excerpts from the Glen Ellyn 2023 Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Strategic Plan; description of the current building site and the proposed floor plan; and the specific request before the Plan Commission.

Mr. Harper responded to Commissioner questions, including a question related to a nearby business, School of Rock. Mr. Harper agreed to gather information about the status of that business, including whether it provides retail and whether a Special Use Permit was granted.

Petitioner Testimony:

Sworn in, the Petitioner Katherine McDevitt, of 235 Forest Avenue, Glen Ellyn, presented. Ms. McDevitt described her history as a resident of Glen Ellyn, and of managing and owning a local tutoring business. She discussed the community need for educational resources for children. Ms. McDevitt described the proposed business model for The Learning Studio's proposed location, which would include retail at the front of the site, and tutoring services at the back of the site. She described her intent to drive additional business to surrounding retail stores and restaurants, noting that her customers include parents who will be inclined to shop, eat, and drink in the area while they wait for their children to complete tutoring sessions.

Ms. McDevitt responded to Commissioner questions. She confirmed that the property site was suitable for her business model and would not require construction. She discussed the floor plan,

with regard to the retail component of the business; and she commented on projections for retail versus service components of the business. Ms. McDevitt confirmed the hours planned for retail (9:00-12:00) and tutoring services (3:00-9:00). She answered questions about the history of the tutoring business, including its prior location; her reasoning for pursuing the proposed location; and the range of towns her customers reside in. Ms. McDevitt responded to additional questions about customer demographics, customer counts, and tutoring service delivery. She provided anecdotal evidence of parents frequenting Glen Ellyn retail establishments while their children attended tutoring sessions.

Sworn in, Megan DeRoo, of 511 E. Liberty Drive, Wheaton, presented. She distributed samples of the retail product, Brainy Day Boxes, which she described as sensory boxes with STEM and educational components. Ms. DeRoo described her history as an educator and creator of the Brainy Day Box. She discussed her partnership with Ms. McDevitt and her plans to oversee the retail component at The Learning Studio's proposed location.

Ms. DeRoo responded to Commissioner questions. She discussed the proposed retail hours (9:00-12:00). Ms. McDevitt added a willingness to increase retail hours and hire additional staff as needed. Ms. McDevitt and Ms. DeRoo responded to questions about marketing, emphasizing word of mouth and parent networks.

Sworn in Patty Cavanagh, of 745 Crescent Blvd, presented. She discussed marketing and social media opportunities for the proposed location. Ms. DeRoo added to the discussion, sharing potential event opportunities and window display options.

Petitioners responded to additional questions from Commissioners, including: opportunities for retail items in addition to Brainy Day products; differentiation from other local retail and tutoring businesses; signage; after-hours special events; and the scope of tutoring services. Ms. McDevitt and Ms. DeRoo emphasized the community's interest in supporting local women entrepreneurs and custom products and services.

Mr. Harper informed Commissioners that he confirmed that the neighboring business School of Rock had been approved for Special Use.

Public Comment:

Chairperson Loftus invited public participation.

The following individuals, sworn in, made respective comments:

- Julie Spiller, of 925 Newton Avenue, expressed support for the proposal. Ms. Spiller shared that she is a Glen Ellyn resident and business owner, and that her business has benefited from sales to the Petitioner's tutoring clients, several of whom became repeat customers. She noted

that Glen Ellyn's retail businesses are the recipients of customers from its service-oriented businesses.

- Sara Huels, of 576 Turner Avenue, expressed support for the proposal. She discussed her history searching for resources for her own children, including traveling to other communities for educational products and services. She described parents' willingness to travel for educational resources, as well as their interest in supporting local business.
- Renee DiSanto, of 353 Oak Street, expressed support for the proposal. She shared her history as a Glen Ellyn resident and business owner, as well as her experience with the Petitioner's tutoring business. She noted that the Petitioner has a solid customer following.

Chairperson Loftus invited written public comments to be read into the record.

Mr. Harper read a letter from Barb Lemme, President of the Alliance of Downtown Glen Ellyn, included in the agenda packet, which expressed opposition to the granting of Special Use Permits in the C5A Zoning District.

Chairperson Loftus invited a motion to close the public hearing.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Kreuzer to close the Public Hearing;
Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, which passed by voice vote.**

Commissioner Deliberation & Recommendation

Commissioners deliberated. They expressed mixed support for the proposal.

Areas of support included: unique, niche business concept combining retail and services; compelling opportunity to meet a community need and reduce stigma by locating tutoring in a prominent location; success of nearby service-oriented business that received a Special Use Permit; existing clientele; ability to make use of property with significant space limitations; support from local business owners; local business making use of unique specialty space.

Areas of concern included: need for accountability and measures to ensure that retail sales continue; limited retail proposed in a prime retail location; conflicts with Comprehensive Plan; concern about setting precedent.

Commissioner Kreuzer made the motion:

After conducting a public hearing and deliberating on the request of the petitioner, Katherine McDevitt, for approval of a Special Use to allow a tutoring center to locate and operate at 473 N. Main Street in the C5A Central Retail Core Subdistrict, the Plan Commission hereby recommends approval based on the findings of fact, as

discussed or amended at the Plan Commission public hearing on February 22, 2024, which are hereby incorporated into the Motion by reference as though fully set forth herein, and a copy of which will be attached to the minutes of this meeting and kept on file as part of the permanent records of the Village. The Plan Commission makes this recommendation of approval with the following conditions:

- 1. That the business be operated in substantial conformance with the plans and testimony presented at the Plan Commission public hearing and before the Village Board of Trustees.**
- 2. That the petitioner moves forward with the facts submitted with respect to retail from the Brainy Day Box, and additional retail that is an appropriate fit for the business.**

Commissioner Thakkar seconded the motion. Chairperson Loftus asked for a roll call vote. The motion passed on a roll call vote. Four Commissioners present voted “Yes”: Chairperson Loftus and Commissioners Brown, Kreuzer, and Thakkar. One Commissioner present voted “No”: Commissioner Dawson.

E. Trustee Liaison’s Report

Trustee Thompson provided an update on the Roosevelt & Taft Hotel Properties, including the Village Board’s consideration of a Purchase and Sale Agreement at its upcoming meeting. The Plan Commission should anticipate future hearings on the projects.

Trustee Thompson responded to Commissioner questions, including providing information about: offers, negotiations, purchase price and carrying costs, and the community input process for the Roosevelt & Taft Hotel Properties; the status of vacant retail space at the Apex building, as well as garage safety reports; the issue of Construction Necessitated Variations presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals; Community Development projects, including securing new Planning software and conducting a Zoning Code review; and the status of projects previously heard by the Plan Commission.

F. Chair Report

Chairperson Loftus welcomed Mr. Harper as the new Village Planning Manager and invited his Staff Report.

G. Staff Report

Mr. Harper shared some information about his background and welcomed feedback from Commissioners about the information that is most useful to them for their proceedings. Mr. Harper also discussed potential agenda items for upcoming meetings, including a special meeting scheduled for April 11.

H. Other Business

No additional items were discussed.

I. Adjournment

Chairperson Loftus requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Kreuzer made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Brown seconded the motion, and the motion passed by voice vote at 9:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Audrey Savikas
Recording Secretary