

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
APRIL 4, 2023**

ROLL CALL

The Planning Commission of the City of Prairie Village met in regular session on Tuesday, April 4, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 7700 Mission Road. Chair Greg Wolf called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present: Jonathan Birkel, James Breneman, Melissa Brown, Nancy Wallerstein, and Jeffrey Valentino.

The following individuals were present in their advisory capacity to the Planning Commission: Chris Brewster, Multistudio; Nickie Lee, Deputy City Administrator; Greg Shelton, Council Liaison; Mitch Dringman, Building Official; Adam Geffert, City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were not enough members that attended the March 7 meeting present to approve the minutes. The minutes will be approved at the May 2 meeting if enough members are in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

PC2023-105 Amendment of special use permit for the operation of a private school
Highlawn Montessori School
3401 Somerset Drive
Zoning: R-1A
Applicant: Friends of Montessori Association

Mr. Brewster stated that the applicant was requesting an amendment to an existing special use permit to include an additional property to the east, located at 3401 Somerset Drive, for playground expansion. The lot currently contains a single-family house which will be removed. The application includes a conceptual plan of the playground expansion, landscaping, and a future drop off drive lane along Somerset Drive. The drive lane would utilize existing driveways on the playground lot and on 3401 Somerset Drive for entrance and exit. This portion of the concept plan is subject to further review by Public Works and may require more specific plans prior to permitting and construction.

Mr. Brewster noted that the City Council approved the first phase of the Highlawn Montessori School as a special use permit on March 7, 1977; the second phase was approved in April 1984, and a third phase was approved in October 1993. In June 2009, the expansion to the east lot for a playground and open space was approved, and in

March 2012 and December 2014, the additions for new second floor classrooms were approved. Currently, the school has a capacity of approximately 216 students and nine classrooms.

The conditions for approval of the 2014 special use permit amendment are as follows:

1. That any outdoor lighting installed shall be in accordance with the lighting ordinance.
2. That the following requirements be implemented to address traffic:
 - a. The Montessori School shall coordinate the parent and staff traffic education program with the Prairie Village Police Department Traffic Unit.
 - b. If traffic is an issue for either the preschool or elementary classes, as determined by the Police Department, the applicant's traffic engineer will work with the Police Department to resolve the issue. This may result in staggering start times. This will be observed on a semester basis and adjustments will be made accordingly.
3. That the applicant use the driveway on the east lot to accommodate at least two parking spaces for staff.
4. That the materials be the same as the existing structure, with the exception of adding stone, and that the applicant construct the addition in accordance with the plans dated 10/3/2014.
5. That the special use permit be approved for a maximum of nine classrooms (5 primary and 4 elementary) and one multi-purpose room with a maximum enrollment of 24 students per classroom for a total that does not exceed 120 primary and 96 elementary students.
6. That the applicant protect existing major trees during the demolition and installation of new improvements.
7. That the special use permit be approved for an indefinite period provided that the applicant obtains a building permit and starts construction within two years after the date of approval by the Governing Body.
8. If the applicant is found to be in non-compliance with the conditions of the special use permit, the permit will become null and void within 90 days of notification of non-compliance, unless the non-compliance is corrected.

The current application is for expansion of the playground and open space only and does not include any additional capacity or classroom expansions.

Mr. Brewster said that the property is zoned R-1A, Single-family Residential District, and both private schools and day care centers are allowed by special use permit. 3531 Somerset Drive is the location of the school authorized by the original special use permit and amendments. 3409 Somerset is the location of the existing playground and is authorized by the special use permit amendment in 2009. 3401 Somerset Drive includes a single-family house and is the subject of this proposed amendment. All lots meet the R-1A zoning standards, as well as the conditions and criteria of the existing special use permit.

Mr. Brewster stated that staff recommended that the Planning Commission should recommend that the City Council approve the renewal of the special use permit subject to the following:

1. The use continues to comply with all conditions of the original special use permit and renewals from the 2014 amendment noted above, and all other applicable standards of the zoning ordinance.
2. The proposed drive lane along the front is approved in concept but is subject to further review and permitting by Public Works according to the City's driveway standards and specifications.
3. The plant specifications (species, size, quantity) for the landscape along the front fence and any associated shade trees is subject to the City's landscape standards and shall be approved by the City's landscape architect at the time of permitting.
4. Replacement of street trees is subject to the City's tree preservation requirements, and subject to review and approval by Public Works.
5. The proposed monument sign is conceptual; the specific location and design shall be subject to City standards and reviewed at the time of a specific sign permit.
6. This special use permit is associated with the current owner and accessory to the operation at 3531 Somerset Drive, and if the property is sold to a different owner the special use permit and authorizations of this application applied to 3401 Somerset Drive shall be void.

Mrs. Wallerstein asked if parking spaces would be included in the proposed drive lane. Mr. Brewster stated that he believed there would be parallel parking spaces along the curb. Mrs. Wallerstein said that she was concerned for the safety of children walking between parked vehicles and those pulling into the driveway.

Kathy Morrison, Director of Highlawn Montessori School, 3531 Somerset Drive, was present to discuss the application. She stated that safety was the primary priority of the school, and that the new driveway would only be used for the drop-off and pick-up of students participating in after-school programs. She added that expanding the playground would allow for more recess periods for students. Lastly, she noted that she would be

working with the City Arborist to discuss the replacement of the existing sweet gum trees on the property.

Mr. Wolf asked for additional information about the proposed synthetic turf area. Ms. Morrison said that adding turf to the playground area would be easier to maintain than grass and would include appropriate drainage based on requirements set forth by Public Works. She added that installation would happen in the future when funding became available.

Mr. Wolf opened the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

- The following residents shared concerns about the addition of the new driveway, stating that it would result in increased traffic in the surrounding neighborhood as well as remove existing green space:
 - Adam Gasper, 8031 Canterbury Street
 - Jacob Gears, 3225 W. 81st Street

Both residents indicated that they had no objections to the playground expansion.

- Douglas Lenhart, 3317 W. 81st Street, shared his support for the proposed changes.

With no one else present to speak, Mr. Wolf closed the hearing at 7:46 p.m.

Mr. Valentino stated that he didn't believe the commission had enough information about the planned driveway to consider approval. He suggested that the application should either be considered with the driveway excluded, or that the entire application should be continued to the next meeting to give Public Works time to evaluate the proposal.

After further discussion, Ms. Morrison agreed to have the Planning Commission consider the proposal without the driveway.

Mr. Valentino made a motion to recommend approval of PC2023-105 to the City Council with the exception of the proposed driveway. Mr. Brenneman seconded the motion, which passed 4-2, with Mr. Birkel and Mrs. Wallerstein in opposition.

NON-PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Continued housing discussion on R-2, R-3, R-4, mixed use, and commercial zoning areas

Ms. Lee said that the Planning Commission had decided to focus on R-2, R-3, R-4, mixed use and commercial zoning areas at its February 7, 2023, meeting. She noted that public forums would be the next step in the process, with a proposed date for the first session on May 23 at the Meadowbrook Clubhouse. The forums would be “open house” events at which attendees could discuss proposed plans with staff and provide feedback through discussion, feedback sheets, and online forms.

Mr. Brewster said the intent of the forums would be to do the following:

- Increase awareness and understanding of what housing options could mean in different contexts in Prairie Village:
 - Concepts and diagrams of housing options
 - General applicability (R-2, R-3, R-4, and C- districts)
- Contribute public perspective on housing options to future Planning Commission and City Council discussions and zoning strategies

He added that consideration would be given to diversifying housing options, maintaining the integrity of neighborhoods, and analyzing current zoning and opportunities for change, such as:

- Are compact lots and building types appropriate, and where?
- Are taller building formats appropriate, and where?
- Should there be greater distinction between R-2, R-3, and R-4 districts?
- Should housing be integrated into commercial areas, and if so, how?

Lastly, Mr. Brewster said that consideration should be given to how changes could occur:

- What design attributes are important for different housing options?
- What elements are essential to maintain the integrity of PV neighborhoods?

Several commission members supported holding two public forum sessions of approximately two hours each. Mr. Brewster said that after the forums, there would be multiple Planning Commission work sessions to consider results, followed by another public forum and lastly a public hearing.

Commission members noted that they would favor additional guidance from the City Council before making any recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Wolf adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Adam Geffert
City Clerk/Planning Commission Secretary