

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting  
Minutes of January 9, 2012  
City Council Chambers – 7:15 p.m.  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center**

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Fiske, D. Holmes, D. Wilson, M. Wynne

MEMBERS ABSENT: A. Rainey

STAFF PRESENT: W. Bobkiewicz, G. Chen, G. Farrar, S. Griffin, D. Marino,  
B. Newman, N. Radzevich

PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Ald. Holmes

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**I. DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

A quorum being present, Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 28, 2011 MEETING MINUTES**

**Ald. Fiske moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

**The minutes of the November 28, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously 4-0.**

**III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**(P1) Ordinance 6-O-12, Granting a Special Use for a Child Daycare Center at 1629 Orrington Avenue**

Zoning Board of Appeals and City staff recommend the adoption of Ordinance 6-O-12 granting a special use permit for the operation of a Child Daycare Center by Bright Horizons Family Solutions (Bright Horizons) at 1629 Orrington Avenue.

**For Introduction**

**Ald. Wilson moved to introduce Ordinance 6-O-12, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

Ms. Debbie Brown of Bright Horizons gave a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed for-profit child daycare center:

- Propose to serve approximately 308 children, ages infant to 5 years
- Hours: Monday through Friday, 7a.m. to 6:30p.m.; closed federal holidays
- On-site kitchen
- 38 jobs to be created including childcare and administrative staff, with full benefits
- Renovating 26,000 sq. ft. with a \$5 million upgrade
- The City's green initiative is to be considered in the upgrade

- Replacing mechanicals and elevator and double entry door
- Extending elevator to rooftop
- Preserving space on Orrington for retail
- Have applied for signage which conforms to regulations
- Main floor proposed for infants with ground floor outdoor play area for infants and toddlers
- Rooftop play area for ages 4 and 5 to be built around existing HVAC system and have a child's restroom on roof
- Propose to begin construction in April and open by September, 2012
- Maintaining dock for delivery service and retail tenants
- Maintaining existing landscaping
- Accessibility through alley to surface parking lot
- Parking: 14 dedicated spots in surface lot and 26 underground spaces
- WageWorks program to be implemented to encourage employees to take public transportation
- Ages of children will be distributed in the 23 classrooms, according to demand, with 98 ground floor spaces for infants, 78 spaces for 2-3 year olds on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor for 4 to 5 year olds
- The first 60 spaces will be dedicated to the University and the rest will be first come, first served

Ms. Brown said Bright Horizons has been in touch with the hospital and the YMCA.

In response to Committee members' inquiries, Ms. Brown said the Bright Horizons center on Central Street in Evanston serves 86 children and that 15-20% are subsidized. They intend to offer subsidized services at the Orrington location, though she said the non-profits may want to keep the subsidized customers.

Chair Holmes thanked Ms. Brown and called the public who wished to speak to the podium:

Junad Rizki, Evanston resident, said he supports the special use since the building has been vacant for approximately 10 years and surrounding businesses have suffered, but noted that a child could fall through the rail on the ramp to the underground parking lot. He suggested that the Committee consider as a condition of the special use, that Bright Horizons be required to fix the railings. Regarding the issue of non-profits keeping the subsidized customers, Mr. Rizki added that residents want good service and they should be competing to improve service.

Sheryl Katz, Executive Director of the Evanston Day Nursery at 1835 Grant Street, Evanston, said there is a need for infant care. She asked the Committee to consider the scale of the project and whether a child would feel overwhelmed in a large space, adding that some elementary schools are smaller than this project. She said the National Association for the Education of Young Children advocates that the proper ratio of space per child is an important factor and noted that the City has a law limiting how many unrelated people may rent an apartment.

Sonia Coster, Vice President and Branch Executive Director of the YMCA said she has not heard from Bright Horizons, as stated by Ms. Brown. She said she is happy when someone wants to enter the field of child care as the YMCA has had a waiting list for the last 6 years. She said there is an extensive demand for infant to 2 year old childcare. She asked the Committee to consider that there is an over-supply of care for children 4-5 years of age. She said she is concerned that people who have been serving the community for over 125 years will go out of business because of this very large organization. She urged the City to look at the real needs of Evanston.

Ms. Brown “sincerely apologized” for her misunderstanding that the YMCA had been contacted. She said the information came to her through the University and she assumed it had been so.

Ald. Wynne asked Mr. Griffin which standards the Committee can apply in evaluating a special use, which she said she does not believe include limiting a program because of competition with existing businesses. Mr. Griffin confirmed that competition is not one of the factors to be considered for a special use, and that the proposal meets all of the special use standards, which he stated:

- It is one of the listed special uses listed in its zoning district
- Complies with the Comprehensive General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance
- Does not cause a negative cumulative effect combined with existing special uses
- Does not interfere with or diminish property value
- Is adequately served by public facilities
- Does not cause undue traffic congestion
- Preserves historical and architectural resources
- Preserves natural and environmental resources
- Complies with all other applicable regulations

Mr. Griffin added that staff believes the business will round out the downtown and attract office workers to the downtown, and that staff recommends approval.

At Chair Holmes’ inquiry, Ms. Brown said that the Bright Horizons center on Central Street is NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited and that 80% of Bright Horizons centers are NAEYC accredited.

Martha Arnstein of 1023 Simpson said there is a need for high quality childcare and that all the non-profit centers in Evanston are NAEYC-accredited – an optional accreditation and the highest quality standard, though she said she does not believe the Bright Horizons on Central Street is NAEYC-accredited. She said there are 2 non-profit childcare centers close to downtown: the Total Child on Church and Hinman and the YMCA on Grove and Maple. She said Bright Horizons would be a wonderful asset to the community and she is not against it, but she is concerned about the competition for 3-5 year old spots as there are already 130 extra slots in the community. Regarding the subsidized families, she said the non-profits charge the families the difference between the required fee and the subsidy, but Bright Horizons charges over

the required fee. She asked that Bright Horizons consider scholarships for the difference for the subsidized families.

Ald. Fiske said she believes this is a good use and asked Grant Farrar, Corporate Counsel whether this special use could run with this operator. Mr. Farrar informed the Committee that it is an appropriate condition that may be imposed. Ald. Fiske, concerned that the property could become non-tax producing, moved that the following conditions be applied to the special use:

- That the retail on Orrington is retained
- That it remains for-profit
- That the special use run with the operator, not the land

Ms. Brown responded that Bright Horizons is entering a 15 year lease with renewal available and if something changed or if they wanted to add a level of service, they might want to partner with another group which may be a not-for-profit, which has occurred in other facilities.

Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager, said if the Committee is supportive of Ald. Fiske's suggestion, staff would work out the appropriate language with the applicant. Chair Holmes replied that the Committee is supportive of the special use applying to Bright Horizons. Mr. Griffin assured the Committee that the retail space would remain on Orrington per the proposed Ordinance.

**Ald. Wilson moved to introduce Ordinance 6-O-12 to City Council and discuss the amendment at the next City Council meeting after staff has re-worded the Ordinance, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

**The Committee voted unanimously 4-0 to recommend introduction of Ordinance 6-O-12.**

**(P2) Ordinance 7-O-12, Amending Ordinance 77-O-11 1100 Clark Street/1719 Ridge Avenue Planned Development**

Focus Development has requested an amendment to the Planned Development approved by Ordinance 77-O-11 to allow for an extension of completion time from October 1, 2013 to October 1, 2014. Suspension of Rules is requested for Introduction and Action on January 9, 2012.

**For Introduction and Action**

**Ald. Wilson moved to introduce Ordinance 7-O-12 and suspend the rules, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

Ald. Fiske asked for an explanation of why the extension is being requested, for the public.

Gregg Graines of DLA Piper, representing the developer, explained that the developer has applied for a building permit but will acquire the property later in the month.

Depending upon the weather, construction may not be finished until 2013, so they may need an extra 30-90 days to complete the project.

**The Committee voted unanimously 4-0 to recommend introduction and suspension of the rules for Ordinance 7-O-12.**

**IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

There were no items for discussion.

**V. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bobbie Newman