I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Chair Opdycke determined that a quorum was present and began the meeting.

II. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 2 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Draft minutes of the December 2 joint meeting with the ZBA were approved.

III. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 10 DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Draft minutes of the December 10 regular meeting, as amended, were approved.
An application by the Roycemore School, contract purchaser, for multiple forms of zoning relief, as identified below. The applicant proposes to relocate their current facilities from 640 Lincoln Street in Evanston, Illinois to 1200 Davis Street -- a property currently owned by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church -- and operate a private educational institution on the site, providing education from junior kindergarten through 12th grade. The applicant requests:

1. An amendment to the map of the Zoning Ordinance. The applicant requests that the city remove the property commonly referred to as 1200 Davis from the O1 Office zoning district and place it wholly within the R4 General Residential zoning district. Pursuant to Section 6-3-4 of the Zoning Ordinance, a map amendment must be granted by the City Council on recommendation of the Plan Commission;

2. A special use permit to operate a private educational institution in an R4 General Residential zoning district. Pursuant to Section 6-8-5-3 of the Zoning Ordinance, operation of a private educational institution in an R4 district requires a Special Use permit granted by the City Council on recommendation of the Zoning Board of Appeals;

3. A major variation from Section 6-8-5-7 (B)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance, permitting a street side yard of 13 feet from the north property line along Davis Street where a minimum of 15 feet is required, for the purpose of constructing the exit stairs required for the proposed educational use; and

4. A major variation from Section 6-8-5-9 of the Zoning Ordinance, permitting a building lot coverage of 63 percent of the site, where the R4 district allows a maximum lot coverage of 55 percent, for the purposes of constructing additions to the site including additional paved vehicular access ways and a gymnasium. Pursuant to Section 6-3-8 of the Zoning Ordinance, major variations of these types may be granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals on recommendation of the Site Plan and Appearance Review Committee.

Chairman Creamer stated that although the record had been closed following the presentation of evidence and public comment on December 2nd, the ZBA and Plan Commission had agreed that the record could be re-opened if additional information and related comment is brought forward this evening. Steve Friedland, attorney for the petitioner, requested permission to introduce additional information regarding traffic circulation to, from and within the subject parcel and with regard to the applicant’s request for R4 zoning. The ZBA and Plan Commission voted unanimously to reopen the public record.
Mr. Luay Aboona, traffic consultant, presented exhibits and additional testimony regarding student drop-off and pick-up at both the upper and lower levels of the school. Referring to graphic exhibits, Mr. Aboona described how student drop-off/pick-up for the upper level (upper grades) will be achieved via two entrances. From Davis, cars may enter the site and circle around to a canopied entrance on the north side of the building. A second Grove Street entrance will allow cars to enter the site, proceed northbound along a private driveway, and to eventually also merge onto the circular drive leading to the canopied entrance. All cars will exit the site via Davis Street. For the school’s lower level (lower grades), all drop-offs and pick-ups will enter and exit via Davis Street.

Mr. Aboona stated that this access design accommodates on-site vehicular stacking on the upper level for about 20 cars. This figure does not including additional storage available in and around the separate parking area. A visual survey of car queuing at the current school facility found between 8 to 14 cars waiting to pick-up upper grade students. It was further noted that, due to after-school, extracurricular activities, student departures are staggered and do not occur all at once. The proposed vehicular stacking for lower-level, lower grade student pick-up accommodates 26 cars. A visual survey of current conditions counted 13 to 19 vehicles waiting to pick these students up.

Commissioners and residents questioned possibility and functionality of limiting the Grove Avenue curb cut for ingress only (northbound). The school principal testified that it was preferable for delivery and garbage vehicles to both enter and exit via Grove Street than to drive through locations where there may be student and parent foot traffic or parking movements. Steven Yas added that Davis Street ramps could not handle service vehicles. Commissioner Summers proposed that the Grove Street driveway entrance remain two-way, to allow trucks to both enter and exit, but to also erect a “Do Not Enter” sign at the north end of that driveway, where it joins the circular drive off of Davis. This would prevent passenger cars from using it in a southbound direction and exiting via Grove.

Additional traffic-related questions and comments addressed the potential for neighboring residents to use school parking off-hours, traffic impacts upon Davis and Asbury, tree removal/preservation, plans for weekend use of the school, time of day for deliveries and garbage pick-up, and size of delivery vehicles.

Mr. Friedland reviewed an exhibit that showed zoning designations surrounding the parcel in question. He reviewed the site’s current use as an office building, proximity to downtown, and position between R6 zoning and R1 zoning to the west.

Commissioners and residents discussed the possibility of split-zoning the parcel, development potential under O1, the property’s historical zoning and sites designation by the Comprehensive General Plan.

Commission Member Woods motioned to recommend denial of a zoning map amendment from O1 to R4. The motion was seconded by Member Burrus and was approved by a vote of 6-1, with Member Freeman voting nay. Member Woods then motioned that the Council examine the potential of allowing a private educational institution as a special use in an O-1 District as an
alternative. The motion was seconded by Member Freeman and was approved by a vote of 5-2, with Members Burrus and Nyden voting nay.

The ZBA Members deliberated on the request for the Special Use, conditioned on the Council’s granting the requested rezoning to R4. Members found that all standards were met for granting the request for the Special Use, with specified conditions, and unanimously recommended its approval by Council. The ZBA also found that all standards for granting major variations for side yard and impervious surface requirements were met and unanimously recommended approval by the Council.

A verbatim transcript of the proceedings of this Plan Commission agenda item is available from the City of Evanston’s web site. The proposal and transcripts can be viewed at the Downtown Library’s 3rd floor reference desk or at the Civic Center in the Planning Division or Building & Zoning Division during business hours.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS
There were no Committee Reports.

V. ADJOURNMENT
The Plan Commission adjourned at 10:25 pm. The next regular Plan Commission meeting is scheduled for WEDNESDAY, February 11, 2009 at 7pm in the Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Guderley
Planning Division