



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

7:00 PM

Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present: Lisa Dziekan, Myrna Arevalo, Violetta Cullen, Jill Zordan

Members Absent: Kiril Mirintchev, Scott Gingold, Mary McAuley

Staff Present: Melissa Klotz

Presiding Member: Violetta Cullen

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**Declaration of Quorum**

With a quorum present, Chair Cullen called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**Minutes**

Ms. Arevalo motioned to approve the meeting minutes of August 27, 2019, which were seconded by Ms. Dziekan and unanimously approved.

**New Business**

**2503 Eastwood Ave./2510 Ashland Ave./1615 Lincoln St. 19ZMJV-0073**

Saint Athanasius Parish, lessee, submits for a special use for, Education Institution – Private, and a special use for, Religious Institution, for Saint Athanasius School and Parish to expand off-street parking and construct a play area, in the R1 Single-Family Residential District (Zoning Code Section 6-8-2-4). The Zoning Board of Appeals makes a recommendation to City Council, the determining body for this case.

Ms. Klotz read the case into the record, and noted an updated site plan was received by staff on October 10, 2019, that has led staff to now recommend approval of the special use.

The applicant explained the proposal:

- Plan will increase safety for children at the school.
- Held a neighborhood meeting and incorporated feedback and suggestions.
- Hired the Lakota Group to professionally plan the parking area.
- The south end of the north parking lot will no longer allow parking during school hours so children can use the area for outdoor play without conflicting with vehicles. Those vehicles will park at the new 2503 Eastwood lot.
- Will enforce a “no parking” guideline including towing in the south half of the north lot (not previously done).
- Play areas will be improved with basketball courts, hop scotch, and four square courts.
- Will cross hatch portions of the alley to further deter vehicles from staging in the alley where garages are blocked. Additionally, St. A’s staff will address the issue as many times as it takes until all vehicles comply.

- There are approximately 12 vehicles that park overnight that are likely from a nearby condo building. Those vehicles will be towed if they park at St. A's in the future.

Mike Kritzman, Lakota Group, explained further:

- Campus is surrounded by single family homes.
- The existing staff lot (south lot) has 14' drive aisles and is not well suited in its current form. Staff parks here largely because of the other unknown vehicles that are in the north lot.
- The plan allows the south half of the north lot to be car free during school hours so that it can safely function as an outdoor play area while allowing the cars (from staff) to fit in the south parking lot.

Ms. Dziekan asked if there will be a future proposal to add play equipment in the green area of the new south parking lot. The applicant responded it is not anticipated to return with that request.

Chair Cullen asked if vehicles will overflow and park on the grass and the applicant stated no, that area is intentionally landscaped and intended to remain green.

Ms. Dziekan asked if the additional parking spaces are intended to be used for stadium events at Northwestern. The applicant stated the lot could be used by anyone else when not during school and church hours - it could be used for a wedding, special event, or event hosted by Northwestern. The applicant clarified the play area on the south half of the north lot may also be used for parking during those events (just like it is used during school drop off).

Ms. Zordan asked if the management company that oversees renting out the parking lot also manages the parking on site, and the applicant responded yes, they manage sanitary issues, cleanup, and safety. However, they do not oversee ingress and egress of vehicles to the lot.

James Davies, 1627 Lincoln, stated the parking is a significant issue to the immediate neighbors, and noted he does not rent his parking out during Northwestern events. He stated it is difficult to believe anything St. A's does because of past issues. There was an instance that Mr. Davies' wife missed a doctor's appointment because a car was blocking their garage and refused to move. Any time neighbors approach St. A's they are rudely dismissed and nothing improves.

Kelsey Davies, 1627 Lincoln, agreed with her husband's comments, and noted the meeting St. A's had last week on site did not include any of the immediate neighbors who are most impacted. Ms. Davies stated she was given a letter from St. A's stating they would not buy any nearby homes to expand their lot because the church does not have any money. However, shortly after that letter, St. A's purchased an adjacent home and demolished it. This shows the distrust and lies that are told to the neighbors. Ms. Davies clarified she has tried to call and email the principal when she is blocked in her garage but has never received a response.

Betsy Baer, 2438 Eastwood, stated not all Standards are met - specifically that there is a significant reduction in values of adjacent properties by demolishing a house and adding a parking lot. This is a residential neighborhood that is turning into vacant lots and parking. The neighborhood meeting was almost a year and a half ago and was organized by the neighborhood, not by St. A's. The neighbors were not invited to the on-site October 7th meeting, and were not made aware of staff's change in recommendation. The proposal clearly impacts the neighborhood, and it does not improve the alley issues. Last year there was a bonfire and a drunken brawl during tailgating in the parking lot with no oversight.

Ann Wambach, 1623 Lincoln, stated she does not sell her lawn as parking on game days, and appreciates that staff needs parking, but it is so difficult with the alley that if she needs her car that day, she moves it out of the garage onto the street early in the morning. The larger concern is the sale of the lot on game days because there is significant alcohol and activities such as grilling, with no oversight.

A letter was submitted from a neighbor who could not attend the meeting. The letter was reviewed by ZBA Members and marked as Exhibit A.

The applicant stated there are signs stating no alcohol and no grilling, and there is a contract with Northwestern, but he is unaware of who should enforce those issues. Today's discussion is about 11 or 12 parking spaces, not about previous demolition. The house that was demolished needed to be taken down and improved the safety of the neighborhood. The alley will be wider since the parking spaces are 2' off of the property line.

Chair Cullen asked how often the parking is rented out, and the applicant responded it is rented out for all NU home games so 6-7 times a year. There are also 2-3 St. A's events throughout the year (but those are not the same type of events).

Ms. Klotz clarified the alley is not increasing in size but the applicant is proposing a required 2' parking setback so there will be 2' additional of pavement that vehicles can use to maneuver through the alley.

#### Deliberation:

Ms. Klotz clarified the October 7th meeting with staff and the applicant was intended to discuss possible modifications to the proposal that would improve alley circulation. Neighbors were not a part of that meeting.

Ms. Dziekan stated she is uncomfortable that neighbors were not included in the latest proposal or changes, there is no management oversight of tailgating on NU game days, and that there seems to be a lack of communication between the church and immediate neighbors. Chair Cullen agreed and notified the largest issue is due to renting out parking on NU game days.

Ms. Zordan noted a DAPR comment that suggested the entire St. A's campus undergo a planning study to incorporate all future plans and address issues.

With the record reopened, the applicant responded there is not a larger campus plan at this time because the issue at hand is the expansion of the south parking lot. The record was then closed.

Ms. Zordan stated piece-mealing a campus together is not a good approach. She also noted it is not acceptable to rent out the parking lot for NU game days and that oversight of safety, etc. is not their problem.

Ms. Arevalo stated it is understandable to increase parking for the school. The south parking lot should be prohibited from being rented out on NU game days, but the north lot should still be allowed because nothing is changing there.

Standards:

1. Yes
2. Yes; No – Ms. Arevalo, Chair Cullen
3. No
4. No – Chair Cullen, Ms. Arevalo, Ms. Zordan
5. Yes
6. Yes (if managed properly); No – Ms. Arevalo
7. NA
8. NA
9. Yes

Ms. Dziekan motioned to recommend denial of the proposal, which was seconded by Ms. Arevalo and unanimously recommended for denial, and noted that if City Council chooses to grant the proposal, the following conditions should be included:

1. The south parking lot shall not be rented out for non-St. A's events such as NU games.
2. A traffic study shall be conducted that addresses concerns raised by neighbors by means of signage, one-way traffic, no waiting, etc.
3. The applicant shall work with the Alderman and neighbors to have a productive conversation that addresses the problems.
4. The north parking lot can be rented out but a management plan for tailgating issues shall be enacted.

**1570 Oak Ave./1555 Ridge Ave.**

**19ZMJV-0081**

Oak Ridge Property Evanston LLC, property owner, applies for major zoning relief to lease 57 required off-street parking spaces in a lot more than 1,000 feet from the subject property, in the R6 General Residential District (Zoning Code Section 6-16-2-1. B.2). The Zoning Board of Appeals makes a recommendation to City Council, the determining body for this case.

Ms. Klotz read the case into the record.

Al Belmonte, applicant, explained the proposal:

- Parking lot was sold along with 1557 Ridge building from NU decades ago and has been held in common ownership ever since.
- 57 parking spaces will be leased in the Maple Ave. parking garage instead.
- 32 residents of 1570 Oak use the parking spaces and pay \$25-40 per month.

- 34 spaces are used by others in the neighborhood such as Margarita Inn, postal service, etc. but is not required parking for those users.
- The parking leases barely pay the taxes on the property.
- The applicant was approached by a developer, unsolicited, to purchase the property.

Chair Cullen noted a letter submitted from a resident of 1570 Oak states she is mobility impaired and the Maple parking garage is too far away and too costly compared to the parking at 1555 Ridge. The applicant stated he has not been approached by any tenants so he is unaware of that, but that if the variation is not granted, the cost of parking on the lot will significantly increase. For current residents that pay the \$25-40 for their parking space, that price will be honored by the property owner when parking shifts into the Maple garage. Parking leases are month to month because many choose to rent parking only during winter months.

Ms. Klotz noted a proposal for a new building at 1555 Ridge has been submitted to City staff that includes preliminary plans for a multifamily residential building with a zoning analysis review, but nothing further has been submitted.

ZBA Members stated their support of the proposal. Chair Cullen noted the makeup of tenants at 1570 Oak may change once parking is not available next door, and is unsure of how to address mobility impaired tenants.

Standards:

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes
7. Yes

Ms. Dziekan motioned to recommend approval of the proposal, seconded by Ms, Arevalo, and unanimously approved.

**1224 Oak Avenue**

**19ZMJV-0084**

Donna Lee Floeter, architect, applies for major zoning relief to construct an attached garage, deck, and attic addition, in the R3 Two-Family Residential District and Ridge Historic District. The applicant requests a 3' rear yard setback where 30' is required (Zoning Code Section 6-8-4-7), a 3.2' north interior side yard setback where 5' is required (Zoning Code Section 6-8-4-7 (A) 3.), a 1' south interior side yard setback for an accessory structure (deck) where 5' is required (Zoning Code Sections 6-8-4-7 (C) 3. and 6-4-6-3), and building lot coverage of 51% where 45% is required (Zoning Code Section 6-8-4-6). The Zoning Board of Appeals is the determining body for this case.

Ms. Klotz stated the case has not yet received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Preservation Commission or a DAPR recommendation, so the case should be continued.

Ms. Dziekan motioned to continue the case to the November 19, 2019 ZBA hearing, which was seconded by Ms. Zordan and unanimously continued.

**Discussion**

Ms. Klotz noted quorum is confirmed for an additional ZBA meeting on December 3, 2019, due to an influx of cases.

Adjourned 8:45pm