

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 17, 2022  
MEETING OF THE MORTON GROVE PLAN COMMISSION  
MORTON GROVE VILLAGE HALL, 6101 CAPULINA AVENUE, MORTON GROVE, IL 60053**

Pursuant to proper notice in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the regular meeting of the Plan Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Blonz. Secretary Kirchner called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Blonz, Dorgan, Kintner, Liston, Mohr, and Stein

Commissioners Absent: Gabriel (with notice)

Village Staff Present: Zoe Heidorn, Community Development Administrator; Anne Ryder Kirchner, Assistant Land Use Planner/Secretary; Jim English, Manager Building and Inspectional Services; Rick Dobrowski, Fire Prevention; and Ralph Czerwinski, Village Administrator

Trustees Present: Minx, Thill and Travis

Chairman Blonz asked for approval of the August 15, 2022, minutes.

Commissioner Kintner moved to approve the minutes of August 15, 2022 meeting. Commissioner Dorgan seconded the motion.

Chairman Blonz called for the vote.

Commissioner	Dorgan voting	aye
Commissioner	Kintner voting	aye
Commissioner	Liston voting	aye
Commissioner	Mohr voting	aye
Commissioner	Stein voting	aye
Chairman	Blonz voting	aye

Minutes approved.

Chairman Blonz described the procedures for the meeting. The Village and the applicant will present the case and the Plan Commission may ask questions of the applicant. Then, anyone from the audience will be allowed to provide comment to the Plan Commission on the case. Four votes are required for approval, and the Commission's decision is a recommendation to the Village Board.

Chairman Blonz called for the case.

**CASE:** PC 22-12

**APPLICANT:** Bogdan Natase  
1107 Arbor Lane  
Glenview, Illinois 60025

**LOCATION:** 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B  
Morton Grove, IL 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of a Special Use Permit for the operation of a massage establishment, full body, at the property commonly known as 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B (10-18-304-015-0000), with a variation from Section 12-7-2 for off-street parking requirements, all within a C-1 General Commercial District.

Zoe Heidorn, Community Development Administrator, provided a brief introduction to the application. The staff report dated October 11, 2022, was entered into the public record. She explained that Case PC 22-12 is a request for a Special Use Permit.

Mr. Natase is requesting a Special Use Permit to authorize the operation of a full-body massage business at 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B, a 644-square-foot commercial unit with two stacked parking spaces located to the rear of the building. Section 12-7-3:1 requires a minimum of two off-street parking spaces for the proposed use and the applicant is seeking a waiver to allow one parking space to be a stacked space, which will be used for his own personal vehicle, or the vehicle of a future masseuse. The applicant indicates that there will only be two individuals on the premises at any time, the masseuse and the client, and therefore a maximum of two vehicles.

Ms. Heidorn noted that the applicant was approved for a limited-service massage use, which does not require a Special Use Permit, in the interim. Per Section 12-7-2:C, properties with existing off-street parking that are not in conformity due only to insufficient off-street parking in the commercial or manufacturing zoning districts may be occupied by permitted uses provided the use does not require more than one parking space for each 250 square feet gross floor area.

Chairman Blonz asked if there were any questions for Ms. Heidorn.

Secretary Kirchner swore in the applicant, Bogdan Natase.

Mr. Natase noted he has been licensed for 5 years. The 650 square feet space has front and back doors, a reception area, two massage rooms and a laundry area. He will offer relaxation, deep tissue, sport massages, and cupping.

The business will operate 4 days per week, with two morning and two afternoon sessions, and every other Saturday. If he hires another masseuse, they will alternate shifts and only one client will be in the building. Upon the recommendation of the Traffic Safety Commission parking for Mr. Natase and one client will be provided behind the building. The business will be by appointment only, and signage will reflect this.

Chairman Blonz asked for questions from the audience.

Commissioner Kintner noted that the applicant's license, as submitted, is expired.

Mr. Natase said his license is fully active. An updated, printed license is not provided for each renewal.

Chairman Blonz asked how far apart the appointments would be scheduled.

Mr. Natase said he would be on-site for approximately six hours, there would be time in-between appointments to clean the massage rooms and allow for no overlap of client parking. There would be at least thirty minutes between appointments. Clients will park behind Mr. Natase's car and enter through the back door.

Ms. Markis, co-owner of the property, notes there is parking on Waukegan Road and Church Streets, and there are three parking spaces behind the building.

Chairman Blonz noted there will not be walk-ins.

Chairman Blonz asked for any further discussion. He noted that all comments and reports in the staff report have been included in the review.

Commissioner Kintner made a motion to recommend approval of Case PC 22-12, a request for a Special Use Permit for the operation of a massage establishment, full body, at the property commonly known as 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B, in Morton Grove, Illinois, with a variation from Section 12-7-2 for off-street parking requirements, subject to the following conditions:

1. The applicant shall take all action necessary and within reason to ensure that no more than one masseuse and one client are on the premises at any time. Appointments and masseuse service hours shall be scheduled accordingly.
2. Signage shall be posted along the Waukegan Road elevation that indicates services are provided by appointment only.
3. The on-duty masseuse shall park in the stacked on-site parking space immediately behind 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B. Clients shall be directed through email, written, or phone communication that they should park in the on-site parking space immediately behind 9136 Waukegan Road, Unit B, closest to the alley.
4. Signage shall be posted along the Waukegan Road elevation and to the rear of the principal structure to identify the location of on-site parking for clients.
5. The applicant shall comply with all comments issued by the Village Engineer through strict or alternative compliance, subject to the Village Engineer's approval.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dorgan.

Commissioner Dorgan voting	aye
Commissioner Kintner voting	aye
Commissioner Liston voting	aye
Commissioner Mohr voting	aye
Commissioner Stein voting	aye
Chairman Blonz voting	aye

Motion passed 6-0.

**CASE:** PC 22-13

**APPLICANT:** Varda and Company LLC  
1954 Fenton Lane  
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068

**LOCATION:** 9312 Shermer Road  
Morton Grove, IL 60053

**PETITION:** Request for approval of a Preliminary Plat of Subdivision with waivers to Section 12-8-4 and a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Special Use Permit for 8 detached single-family dwellings with waivers to accessway standards (12-9), lot depth (12-8-4:B.2), lot area, lot width, front yard, floor area ratio (12-4-2:D), driveway width (12-2-5:B.5), and dimensions and siting of accessory structures (12-2-6:G), all within an R-1 Single Family Residence District.

Zoe Heidorn, Community Development Administrator, provided a brief introduction to the application. The staff report dated October 11, 2022, was entered into the public record. She explained that Case PC 22-13 is a request for a Preliminary Plat of Subdivision and Planned Unit Development Special Use Permit.

Varda and Company is requesting approval of a Planned Unit Development and Preliminary Plat of Subdivision for an 8-unit single-family detached residential development with accessory parking, accessway, and landscape areas for the 1.6-acre subject property. The development will be served by one point of public access along Shermer Road, which will align with Ponto Drive to the east. The 8 single-family residences will feature two-car attached garages fronting on a 24-foot-wide private accessway, which will lead to an 8-space accessory parking area for guest use only and an emergency vehicle turnaround at the property's rear. On-street parking will be prohibited, but the proposed driveway dimensions can accommodate additional guest parking within the front yard driveway.

Under the proposed PUD, the applicant is requesting variations for lot area, lot width, lot depth, front yard, floor area ratio, driveway width, and various dimensional requirements for accessory structures. On October 3, the Appearance Commission issued an Appearance Certificate and recommended approval of the project with conditions by a vote of 4-3. On October 6, the Traffic Safety Commission recommended approval of the project with comments by a vote of 6-0. In response to comments issued by the Commissions, the applicant has revised the plans before the Plan Commission tonight to diversify the materials palettes, increase the sidewalk width to 5 feet, achieve compliance with screening requirements for paved ground surfaces, remove a problematic tree species, enhance the use of evergreen plant species, and eliminate discrepancies between the submitted landscape plan and tree preservation plan.

Ms. Kirchner swore in the applicant and his associates.

Attorney Paul Kolpak introduced the development team. He thanked Zoe for the Staff Report and presentation.

Chairman Blonz asked if questions should be held to after each consultant has presented. Mr. Kolpak said that would be most efficient.

Mr. Arzoumanian, A+C architects, provided the intent of the community proposed. The idea is to bring an affordable size of single-family home to Morton Grove, with well sized yards and easy access to local amenities. They have incorporated many green features and provide storm water detention that improves the surface water on the site and to the neighbors. The civil engineer and landscape architect have worked closely together to preserve existing trees and designing with native species to exceed the requirements of the Village.

The homes are designed inside and out to meet the current real estate market needs of the potential homeowners and the developer. The development follows the Village's Comprehensive Plan regarding green space, site planning, neighborhood feel and traffic flow.

The consultants will expand on their work and how it has changed to address the needs of the Village and the requests of the other Commissions.

The landscape architect consultant, Gary Topalian, was asked by Mr. Kolpak to describe the recent changes made to the plan and some of the challenges of the site.

Mr. Topalian noted he is happy to be part of the design team. Shermer Road is the “front yard” and he made sure it was welcoming to the surroundings. The homes have strong foundation plantings with evergreens and the soft look of deciduous accents. A tree was moved off of the Shermer parkway, per staff suggestion, and placed in the southeast corner berm area. The main road is designed to be the spine that unites the north and south homes. The alley of crab apple trees is part of the modern, farm look of the architecture.

The landscape defines the lots, providing individualism. The borders of the development have border structure plantings that take advantage of the topography. This is where most of the original trees were able to be preserved. The indigenous plantings will support the original trees and character.

Some changes made to the planting plan include; adding more evergreen foundation plantings, the addition of two shade trees to the west boarder of the parking area; and evergreens to the north, west and south borders for winter screening.

Sabin Olteanu, professional engineer, is the site engineer of the project. Mr. Kolpak asked Mr. Olteanu to address the retention and parking areas. Mr. Olteanu was the Village Engineer for Skokie and has been involved with Mr. Varda on several projects. He has also done work in Morton Grove. This project will improve the water retention and the green design includes pervious pavement, native plants and underground retention areas. They are addressing the overflow retention areas that spill on adjacent properties and providing protection for a 100-year flood. The storm water infrastructure will route water to Shermer Road.

Mr. Olteanu said he has spoken with some adjacent neighbors who said there is often 2 to 3 feet of standing water on the west side of the property after heavy rain. Today’s standards of design will improve the site, the volume of detention will be significantly reduced.

Mr. Kolpak asked where snow removal storage would be located. Mr. Olteanu said it would be in the open space area in the northwest corner of the property.

Bill Grieve, Senior Transportation Engineer with Kimley Horn, said they performed a complete traffic study. This involved visiting the site, counting cars, analyzing the added trips and found there would be almost no impact on the surrounding road system. He noted they also concur with all staff comments.

Patrick McEneely, @Properties/Christies International, is part of the marketing team. Mr. Kolpak asked what they considered for size, type of home, and selling prices. They are marketing homes to first-time home buyers and those whom want to downsize. The trend is not for a large home on a large lot. He compares this to the Floral Avenue development in Skokie. This is a development with efficient square footage and lot size that fills a void in the housing market. They are very confident and excited for this design.

Tony Varda, owner and applicant, thanked the commissioners. The vision for the Ponto collection is to create a new community on a decades old, vacant parcel which all can be proud of. He said they were fortunate to purchase a property full of mature trees and for the team to work to preserve as many as possible. Their arborist did find many trees that were invasive and diseased. After their required removal, they tailored the site plan around the remaining trees.

Mr. Varda noted the team created homes that are neighborly, welcoming, with luxury touches in a farmhouse esthetic. The development will have a private roadway and a home owners association. The buyers can customize the home-type, interiors and exterior finishes. Mr. Varda has completed many projects with A+C architects and Mr.

McEneely in the surrounding area, including several in Skokie. Varda and Company is family owned and has been in business since the 1980's, developing homes, apartment/condominium complexes and multi-use developments. The team is confident the Ponto Collection will be a beautiful and sustainable addition to the Morton Grove community.

Mr. Kolpak asked for questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Stein asked the architect for further explanation on the uniqueness of the look and site plan.

Mr. Arzoumanian said current trends are for little separation between pedestrian and vehicular paths, this allows for houses to be closer together. The guest parking allows for a narrow roadway and allows for added green space in the back yards. The minimum side yard requirements are met, but the other yards are not like a typical cul-de-sac development from 10 years ago. This is a safer design by keeping the street open.

Commissioner Stein said in denser developments there is often a shared common space. Mr. Arzoumanian said there is not room for a large common space, but the open feel is enhanced by not having fenced backyards. The parking area and underground retention areas leave as much open space as efficiently possible.

Commissioner Stein asked about the storm water plan, is there only a permeable roadway, or is there an underground system as well. Mr. Olteanu said there is another proprietary system underneath.

Commissioner Stein asked about the Floral Avenue example in Skokie. He noted those homes are distinctly varied. He does not see the diversity in the proposed development, the footprints are the same for each home. Mr. McEneely said this project does provide exterior options and appealing sizing for the home buyers. Mr. Arzoumanian said Floral Avenue is an urban setting on a public street surrounded by older Village development. The Ponto Collection has a level of consistency to keep the subdivision as a community on the shared road way.

Commissioner Kintner noted that the Floral Avenue homes have a walkability benefit with their location. He asked Mr. McEneely to explain the marketability of this style in a suburban setting. The Skokie project is an example of what is liked in size and what the market is demanding. The settings are not meant to be compared. The size, style, and finishings are what will survive in the market. Large homes, over 4,000 square feet, are not wanted.

Commissioner Kintner asked about the existing trees being damaged during construction of the parking area. Mr. Topalian said they will thrive with good maintenance after any stress they endure. Commissioner Kintner asked how the west side trees will be protected. Construction fences will be protected to the drip line. It seems that many on the south west line could be impacted during construction. The parking area will be screened with additional plantings for the neighbors to the west.

Commissioner Kintner asked if the landscape plan is set for the entire development. The plans do cover the entire development and will be maintained by the home-owners association.

Commissioner Dorgan asked if the plantings between the homes are shade plants. He asked how the tree line to the north will be maintained by the HOA? Mr. Kolpak said the HOA will be responsible. Commissioner Dorgan is concerned about proper watering.

Commissioner Dorgan asked about the a/c condenser placement, they are between the homes. It was noted that high efficiency units are quiet. Putting them in the back yard is feasible, but provides less room for back yard activities. Mr. English and Ms. Kirchner noted that condensers may be located in side yards, but not required side

yards. Mr. Arzoumanian said they will place the condensers where required by code. Commissioner Dorgan asked if fencing for dogs would be allowed. It was noted that invisible fencing is permitted.

Commissioner Mohr asked where the window wells are located? They will be egress windows and may not be in the side yards. The architect noted that this is not on the plans and will be addressed. Commissioner Mohr asked why the end unit entrances face Shermer and not the new community? The architect said the team felt there should be a front face for the entrance.

Chairman Blonz asked for the size and cost of the homes. At 3,200 square feet, they are larger than others in the neighborhood. He reminded audience members that they will have their turn for comments.

Chairman Blonz said he is troubled by the number of waivers being sought. He asked how the project will benefit Morton Grove. Mr. Arzoumanian said they are providing good size houses for young families instead of a possible large home on a large lot with limited public improvements. It is an efficient, sustainable use of the land.

Chairman Blonz asked what makes it sustainable. The architect said storm detention, providing one connection to the public utility for 8 homes in one place, guest parking, native landscape and high efficiency building materials all contribute to the sustainability. Chairman Blonz asked if they are using heat pumps or solar panels. It was noted that heat pumps are not feasible and solar could be a choice for the resident.

Chairman Blonz asked if they could have 6 units instead of 8 on the property, and therefore meet more requirements. Economics does drive the number of units. Architecturally speaking, Mr. Arzoumanian believes the 8 units work well as they meet side yard requirements and the front yard, sidewalk and road are not public. Meaning the front setback could be interpreted from the middle of the road, he feels it is driveway and not a street for setback purposes. It is a progressive development for the Village.

Drainage was discussed, the plan as submitted shows the general grading of the site and that the west side needs to remain depressed. The drainage system will rely on gravity to feed to the storm connection on Shermer Road. This meets the 2010 MWRD requirements.

Chairman Blonz asked about the units having trouble exiting on Shermer. Mr. Grieve, said the traffic capacities and delays are the same without the development. Chairman Blonz asked about parking. How would parties be accommodated? These are rare events that can be supported by on street parking on Shermer Road.

Chairman Blonz's biggest complaint is about the trees, he questioned the removal of many of the trees in the arborist's report. Why did so many large caliper trees need to be removed.

Mr. Varda said as many as 50 trees were diseased and broken per the arborist, from Sunrise Care. They did not clear cut the property, the trees are a huge benefit to the community. They positioned the homes to control the existing water pathway. The retention system collects and slowly redirects the water to Shermer Road. He took this time to note that the number of units developed drives the success of the development and the improvements. The landscape plan will flourish and the caliper of the trees will allow for steady, healthy growth.

Mr. Arzoumanian added they could work with staff to provide additional trees or change locations.

Chairman Blonz asked for comments from the audience.

Sandra Covey of 9230 Shermer expressed her concerns about flooding and traffic. She would prefer the work community to reflect Morton Grove and not the Ponto Collection. She said that 8 houses will have 4 cars per unit, and with the 8 parking spaces, it adds up to 40 cars on premise. It will add too much traffic on Shermer. No one will be able to cross at Beckwith or Lyons. Additional parking pushed on side streets is not fair to the neighbors. She is worried about snow removal.

She asked why there was no common space for gathering. Ms. Covey said the HOA needs to be very clear on property maintenance and lighting.

George Strack of 9323 Cameron, he shares the longest property line with the development. He and his neighbors are very concerned about the water. Heavy rains flood their property. He is also concerned with the accidents on Beckwith and Shermer and the added traffic with this development.

John Kleine of 9311 Cameron is also concerned with water. He needs a guarantee that the water will not be displaced on his property.

Chairman Blonz asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Kintner has overall concerns about the water retention and its effectiveness. He finds the plan too mathematical without creativeness in the variety of the homes. He likes the overall concept but would like a common area and more style in the units.

Commissioner Mohr agreed with Chairman Blonz regarding the number of waivers. There is not a feeling of community and it is too much the same. He would like to see more open space and a reduction of units. He does trust the engineering for the site, but does feel there are too many units for the site.

Chairman Blonz said the presentation was excellent and the reports were thorough. He feels there is too much on the site, 6 units are preferred. Parking concerns, lack of common area and the loss of trees are his concerns and comments.

Commissioner Kintner made a motion to recommend approval of a Preliminary Plat of Subdivision with associated waivers to Section 12-8-4 and a Planned Unit Development (PUD) Special Use Permit for 8 detached single-family dwellings with waivers to accessway standards (12-9), lot depth (12-8-4:B.2), lot area, lot width, front yard, floor area ratio (12-4-2:D), driveway width (12-2-5:B.5), and dimensions and siting of accessory structures (12-2-6:G) for the property commonly known as 9312 Shermer Road in Morton Grove, Illinois, subject to the following conditions:

1. *Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final site plans, engineering plans, preliminary plat of subdivision, and traffic and parking impact study for review and approval by the Community Development Administrator, Village Engineer, and Village Administrator, and shall comply with all comments and recommendations issued in the following, whether by strict or alternative compliance, subject to the Village Administrator's final approval:*
  - *Appearance Certificate issued for Case AC 22-11*
  - *Comments issued by the Traffic Safety Commission Chairperson, dated October 10, 2022*
  - *Comments issued by the Village Engineer, dated October 10, 2022*
  - *Comments issued by the Fire Department, dated October 5, 2022*
  - *Comments issued by the Building Department, undated*
  - *Comments issued by the Department of Community and Economic Development, dated October 11, 2022*



2. *Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit all turning path diagrams requested by the Fire Prevention Bureau Coordinator, Community Development Administrator, and Village Engineer, subject to the review and approval of the Village Administrator.*
3. *Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final elevations, a materials palette, and landscape plan for review and approval by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. If the revised plans are deemed to be in violation of any applicable requirement, substantially inconsistent with the approved plans, or lesser in quality than the approved designs and materials, the applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.*
4. *The final landscape and improvement plan for the abutting public rights of way shall be modified as necessary to meet the needs and requirements of the Village, subject to review and approval by the Village Administrator.*
5. *The applicant shall bury existing aboveground utilities within the development site as required by the Village, subject to review and approval by the Village Administrator.*
6. *Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the Applicant shall submit a signage plan that includes accessway and parking area signage for review and approval by the Village Administrator and shall install and maintain signage in accordance with the approved signage plan.*
7. *The Applicant shall advise the Department of Community and Economic Development of any proposed change in ownership or operation of the subject property. Such changes may subject the owners, lessees, occupants, and users to additional conditions and may serve as the basis for amendment to the PUD Special Use Permit.*

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Liston.

Commissioner Dorgan voting	no
Commissioner Kintner voting	no
Commissioner Liston voting	no
Commissioner Mohr voting	no
Commissioner Stein voting	no
Chairman Blonz voting	no

Motion does not pass 0-6.

Chairman Blonz asked for any other business or discussion. Hearing none, Commissioner Dorgan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stein.

The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously pursuant to a voice vote at 9:00 p.m.

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Minutes by: Anne Ryder Kirchner