

**MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 5, 2024
MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL 6101 CAPULINA, MORTON GROVE, IL 60053**

CALL TO ORDER

1. Call to Order

Pursuant to proper notice in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the regular meeting of the Traffic Safety Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairperson Keith White.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson White led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance

3. Welcome New Commissioner

Chairperson White introduced a new Commissioner to the Traffic Safety Commission, Chris Sheehan. Mr. Sheehan introduced himself with a brief background.

4. Roll Call

Commissioners Present:

Chairperson Keith White
Commissioner Amit Shah
Commissioner John Puljic
Commissioner Karen Berkowsky
Commissioner Mike Dibra
Commissioner Jeff Dahlberg
Commissioner Chris Sheehan

Commissioners Absent:

Commissioner George Karagozian
Commissioner Ninous Chalabi

Village Staff Present:

Chris Tomich, Village Engineer
Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator
Trustee John Thill, Trustee Liaison
Gina Lietz, Police Department Liaison

5. Approval of Minutes

Chairperson White proceeded to seek approval of the May 9, 2024, minutes. There were no changes or alteration to the minutes. Commissioner Dibra moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Berkowsky seconded the motion. Commissioners Sheehan and Commission Dahlberg abstained their votes. Minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

STAFF REPORT

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

6. PC24-06 – Automobile Mini-mart Station – 6335 Dempster St

Applicant: Alex Skariah

A Special Use Permit application for the construction of an automobile mini-mart station in a C-1: General Commercial District.

Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator, introduced the case. The applicant requests a Special Use Permit for an automobile mini-mart station at 6335 Dempster. The existing mini-mart is a subject property to be redeveloped. The site would maintain the old brand with two gas pump islands and a canopy. The new mini-mart structure would be rebranded as a Joey's, a local owner's brand, and would be nearly 2,500 square feet. They're also proposing a pair of pickup windows in the retail building and requesting 24-hour operation with the windows being open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The applicant is proposing the use of the alley as a southern egress point for the project.

Applicant, Alex Skariah, provided additional comments. He stated that the plan is to make a big convenience store with more foods prepared in-house including fresher and healthier options than just a standard convenience store.

Mr. Skariah and his team, Andrew Bowan from Kenig, Lindgren, O'Hara, Aboona, Inc. (KLOA) and Atul Karkhanis from AK Architects, answered questions from the Commission regarding parking, garbage pickup, snow removal, EV charging, the walk-up window, traffic flow, and other concerns.

- There will be eight parking spots anticipated for customers which is believed to be sufficient as they anticipate people coming in to grab food items and then leaving quickly and not being parked for long.
- Garbage is managed by Lakeshore Recycling, additional pickup can be added if needed.
- Snow removal is handled by a private landscaping company who comes and cleans the snow as needed. In case of heavy snowfall, snow will be pushed to the grassy area and the applicant will come up with a plan to haul snow away if needed. The Commission does not want snow to block parking spaces or be left on public right-of-way.

- Since the property is being redeveloped, the applicant plans to lay conduits in preparation of EV charging stations. EV charging is something they want to add in the future but won't be a part of the current redevelopment.
- The property will include a walk-up window to purchase food and snacks. The applicant hopes by adding this feature they will attract more foot traffic from the local area including kids and teens who are at games near the park district.
- Delivery trucks and vendors who come to restock items or fuel will enter the property from Narragansett and exit onto Dempster Street for best flow. The applicant is unable to control the schedule for when vendors come but will request vendors to come at non-peak hours.
- The proposed monument sign is to code and will not cause any sight issues for drivers.
- There will be plans to reduce the number of air/vacuum stations if needed if they are getting in the way of fueling.
- The applicant would like to permit eastbound traffic along the alley segment between Narragansett and the north-south alley one-half block to the east, which is currently westbound only per Municipal Code, to allow people a safer alternative to make a left turn onto Dempster by using the alley to access Ferris Avenue and then use the intersection lights at Dempster to make a left turn.
- The Village could revisit the need to put a "No Left Turn" sign from the subject property onto Dempster heading west in the future.

Commissioner Dibra made the motion that we approve the Mobile gas station mini-mart with all the discussions that we've discussed as stated. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Shah.

C. Berkowsky aye
C. Sheehan aye
C. Shah aye
C. Puljic aye
C. Dibra aye
C. Dahlberg aye
Chair. White aye

7. PC24-07 – Dempster Commons – 6015 – 6049 Dempster

Applicant: John Kim of JJK Property, Inc.

Request for a Special Use Permit Parking Variance for a shared parking lot in a C-1: General Commercial District.

John Kim was not present at the meeting. Justin Opitz from Kimley-Horn presented the case.

Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator, introduced the case. Dempster Commons has had several vacancies that the owner cannot currently lease because they have no on-site parking available per an ordinance that was passed to approve the OMG Nafisa's Kitchen restaurant at the shopping center. Per this ordinance, all the on-site parking that's currently available is now dedicated to current uses. This is now an issue because even though current tenants are accommodated any future tenant would not have access to on-site parking. To resolve the needs of this space, staff recommended the property owner submit a single party parking variation for the entire site that would identify the maximum parking requirements during operating business hours.

Justin Opitz described the findings of the parking study for the properties at 6017 through 6049 Dempster Street.

- The property is comprised of two strip retail buildings. Two parking lots serve both buildings. There is a North lot that fronts Dempster Street and provides 15 parking spaces including 3 ADA spaces. There is also a South parking lot that has 15 spaces including 1 ADA space. There are 26 standard parking spaces and 4 ADA spaces total for this property.
- A parking study was conducted to determine the current parking demand for the property based on the current tenants. Three different cameras were set up in each parking lot and a nearby Village parking lot on Thursday, May 16, 2024, Friday, May 17, 2024, and Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
- The maximum demand recorded based on the survey data is 22 out of 30 spaces. This suggests there is a surplus of 8 parking spaces which future tenants could use. The goal is to target tenants with low parking demand to fill the empty spaces.
- There will be signage and striping modifications to improve the circulation in the parking lots. A Stop sign will be added near the parking lot exit in addition to One-Way signs to further clarify to motorist which way to enter the parking lot. Striping will also be modified.
- The parking lot currently has one ADA parking space that is not being utilized based on the survey. This space will be converted into two standard parking spaces. This current ADA space does not comply with current ADA guidelines. This will add two additional standard spaces to the parking supply in the lot.
- In case of heavy snow fall, snow will be pushed to the corner of the lots.

Commissioner Berkowsky made the motion to approve the request for a Special Use Permit Parking Variance for a shared parking lot in a C-1: General Commercial District. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg.

C. Berkowsky aye
C. Sheehan aye
C. Shah aye

C. Puljic aye
C. Dibra aye
C. Dahlberg aye
Chair. White aye

8. PC24-05 – MCC Academy Gymnasium Expansion- 8601 Menard Avenue

Applicant: Raffi Arzoumanian from a+c architects LLC

A Special Use Permit application for the expansion of a gymnasium in an R-2: Single Family Residence District.

Brandon Nolin, Community Development Administrator introduced the case. This case is returning to the Commission because it was discovered during staff review that the current enrollment exceeds the maximum enrollment allowed by the existing Special Use Permit. After a review of a mediation agreement for the property, as well as the Special Use Permit that deals with both the school and the mosque, it was determined that even though the gym expansion could be viewed separately from the overall function of the property, Village Staff needs to view both the mosque and the school operations together. In regards to that requirement, the on-street parking activity has been identified as something that might be affected, and Village Staff is going to be out of step with what the mediation agreement specified. A revised report was provided to Traffic Safety Commission Chairperson White, he made his review, and then passed those comments along to Plan Commission Chairperson Kintner. Chairperson Kintner believed that it would be appropriate to send it back to the Traffic Safety Commission to allow for further review and comment before the Plan Commission makes their decision at a special hearing scheduled for September 23.

Raffi Arzoumanian from A+C Architects, David Westergreen from Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Inc., and Habeeb Quadri, Superintendent of MCC Academy were present to answered questions from the Commission regarding traffic, parking, student enrollment, and other questions from the Commission.

- Mr. Quadri addressed the enrollment discrepancies found by the Village. The Morton Grove campus has students from Middle School and High School (grades 6 – 12). The current enrollment at this campus is around 340 students. Mr. Quadri was unable to address why there were discrepancies in the reported enrollment and clarified that the school had higher enrollment historically in the past, but since the purchase of their Skokie campus for grades Pre-K – 5 they have lower enrollment at the Morton Grove Campus.

- Mr. Arzoumanian discussed the efforts made to manage mosque traffic for Friday Prayer Management. There will be a team of employees and volunteers guiding mosque congregants to parking spaces in the parking lot.
- Additionally, the mosque hosts two timeslots for Friday Prayers. After consulting with mosque leaders, it has been determined that it would be more beneficial to extend the time between the two prayers. This will allow more parking spaces to open for the congregants arriving for the second prayer since the congregants from the first prayer will have already exited the lot.
- Congregants have been given notice to avoid street parking, and there will be additional volunteers monitoring nearby streets to ensure congregants are parking in proper areas.
- There are no additional activities happening at the school or mosque during the Friday Prayer hours.
- Mr. Westergreen went over the parking study report. He noted that the mosque does not maximize the parking spaces in the main lot during their peak demand hours. He hopes that by educating the mosque community and putting in place the Friday Prayer Management the main parking lot use will be maximized thereby reducing the impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Commissioner Berkowsky made comments commending the efforts put forth by the MCC Academy to help resolve the parking issues.

Officer Gina Lietz, on behalf of the Morton Grove Police Department, also stated that this new Friday Prayer Parking Management Plan seems like a great way to maximize the available on-site parking use and hopes that it will alleviate the concerns from the neighborhood.

Commissioner Sheehan asked if there will be any impact on parking during the construction of the new gymnasium. Mr. Arzoumanian stated that parking will not be affected by the construction.

Commissioner Dibra made the motion to approve the Special Use Permit application with the Parking Management Plan submitted by the application the meeting for the expansion of a gymnasium in an R-2: Single Family Residence District. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg.

C. Berkowsky aye
C. Sheehan aye
C. Shah aye
C. Puljic aye
C. Dibra aye
C. Dahlberg aye

Chair. White aye

OTHER BUSINESS/COMMENTS – NONE

AJOURNEMENT

With no further business, Chairperson White asked for a motion to adjournment. Commissioner Berkowsky made the motion and was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

Minutes By: Saba Koya

APPROVED