

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 4, 2025
MEETING OF THE MORTON GROVE APPEARANCE 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 Appearance Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Pietron. Anne Ryder Kirchner called the roll.

Commissioners Present: Block, Dahlberg, Manno, Minx, and Zimmer

Commissioners Absent: Hedrick and Pietron with notice

Village Staff Present: Brandon Nolin, AICP, Community and Economic Development Administrator
Anne Ryder Kirchner, Planner/Zoning Administrator

Trustees Present: Minx and Thill

Acting Chairperson Minx proceeded to seek approval of the October 7, 2025 minutes.

Commissioner Block moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Dahlberg seconded the motion. Acting Chairperson Minx called for the vote.

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| Commissioner Block voting | aye |
| Commissioner Dahlberg voting | aye |
| Commissioner Minx voting | aye |
| Commissioner Manno voting | aye |
| Commissioner Zimmer voting | aye |

Minutes approved (5-0)

Acting Chairperson Minx called for the first case.

CASE: AC 25-17

APPLICANT: DLA Architects, Ltd. on behalf of Golf School District 67

LOCATION: 9000 Belleforte Avenue
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

PETITION: Request for approval of an Appearance Certificate for site, landscape, and building plans associated with Case PC 25-12, a request for a Special Use Permit to allow the expansion and modification of an existing school.

In the case of AC 25-17, the applicant DLA Architects (on behalf of Golf School District 67) is requesting approval of site, landscape, and building plans associated with Case PC 25-12, a request for a Special Use Permit to allow the expansion and modification of an existing school (Hynes Elementary School) at 9000 Belleforte Avenue. The parcel is zoned R-2 Single Family Residence and is generally surrounded by other R-2 zoned properties as well as ComEd right-of-way.

The school expansion would include the addition of a new administration office to the west of the current multi-purpose room and would form a new primary entrance to the school. A second addition that would serve as a new media center is proposed for a portion of the school currently consisting of interior courtyard. Several existing classrooms and hallways would be renovated as part of the project. A pair of classrooms currently housed in a temporary structure and connected via a walkway with plastic vestibule on the west side of the school would be removed as part of the project.

The adjoining parking lot to the south would be reconfigured for one-way circulation to create a parent drop-off lane that passes the new front entrance and a new parking area. The southwest parking lot would be reconfigured to accommodate bus circulation and new parking lot would be established at the west entrance to the school. The project would provide for 10 additional parking spaces. The required tree preservation plan distributed in hard copy tonight indicates **3 protected trees** would require replacement rather than the 5 indicated in the Staff report. The applicant should speak to the practicality of planting additional trees within the parking lot and the waiver sought.

The applicant is proposing to locate a transformer, switchboard, and generator near the current entrance to the multipurpose room entrance. To ensure an attractive and consistent façade, Staff recommends requiring the use of a matching brick façade which is included as a condition of approval. The applicant should speak to the proposed utility screening and the proposed location.

Required stormwater management would be provided by a new detention basin to be located in the northeast corner of the subject property along the National Avenue frontage. No new building signage is proposed.

Tina Ewanio, Director of Business Services for District 67, introduced the proposal and noted the design team was present to answer any questions.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked that the equipment screening be masonry instead of a composite wood-like panel.

Jae Yoo, of DLA architects, provided samples of the composite wood fencing and Trex paneling. He noted the screening compliments the paneling.

Carrie Matlock, of DLA Architects said brick matching masonry is a financial hardship for the district. It is hard to match the brick and they have used stain in some areas where brick was replaced and did not match. The composite material is low maintenance, and a preference of District 67.

Commissioner Zimmer asked to plant the twelve trees on the property, there is plenty of room. He would like the enclosure to be masonry.

Commissioner Minx asked if the trees could be planted elsewhere the school property.

Commissioner Dahlberg asked if there could be a landscape bed in the existing staff parking area. It could help delineate it from the play area.

Tim Ball, landscape architect with Gary Weber and Associates, said they tried to find places for the trees. As a landscape architect, his motto is to plant the right tree in the right place with plenty of room to grow. They do not want to cover-up the new façade and entrance of the building. He noted the proposed trees will mature to 35 feet in height and will have a 25 feet area of shade coverage.

Commissioner Zimmer asked if the trees could be planted elsewhere on the school property.

Mr. Ball said they do not want to have more obstacles in the landscape, there is room but the care of the trees is costly. There are many trees on the property currently.

Acting Chairman Minx asked if the trees could be planted on Hynes and remainder at Golf.

Ms. Ewanio discussed the cost of taking care of the trees, and the safety of students.

Minx said they have given options, perhaps they could donate the trees to the Village.

The landscape architects said they would take the options under advisement.

Mr. Nolin said a fee-in-lieu could be given to the tree preservation fund as an option. He noted the waiver of 12 trees could be reduced to 10 trees based on the tree preservation plan.

Commissioner Dahlberg said the trees are important and she does not want to hold up the improvements to the school.

Commissioner Zimmer moved to approve case AC 25-17, for an Appearance Certificate for site, landscape, and building plans, for the expansion and modification of an existing school under Special Use Permit (PC 25-12) for the property commonly known as 9000 Belleforte Avenue in Morton Grove, Illinois, staff recommends the following conditions of approval:

1. *Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall provide the Village with final plans, elevations and material specifications for review and approval. Final plans, elevations and materials must be deemed consistent with the approved materials, as determined by the Community Development Administrator and Appearance Commission Chairperson. This shall include brick screening for new ground-mounted utilities. If such designs are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans or if materials are deemed to be of a lower quality than the approved materials, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.*
2. *Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall submit a revised lighting plan that includes full cutoff fixtures along the south property line, and glare shields or other enhancements, so as to prevent light glare visible to adjacent properties. The final lighting plan will be subject to review and approval by the Community Development Administrator and must be deemed consistent with representations made to the Appearance Commission. If such plans are deemed to be inconsistent with the approved plans or if fixtures are deemed to be of a lower quality than the approved fixtures, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.*
3. *Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall submit a tree inventory and tree preservation plan subject to review and approval by the Community Development Administrator. If such plans are deemed to be inconsistent with representations made to the Appearance Commission, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.*
4. *Prior to filing any Building Permit Application, the owner/applicant shall submit a revised landscape plan that provides for a total of 33 shade trees to be planted at the subject property, or the owner/applicant shall submit a landscape plan for another property owned by School District 67 that includes the planting of 12 shade trees. If such plans are deemed to be inconsistent with representations made to the Appearance Commission, then the owner/applicant will be required to file an application for an amendment to the Appearance Certificate.*

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg.

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| Commissioner Block voting | aye |
| Commissioner Dahlberg voting | aye |
| Commissioner Minx voting | aye |
| Commissioner Manno voting | aye |
| Commissioner Zimmer voting | aye |

Motion passed 5 -0.

CASE: AC 25-18

APPLICANT: Village of Morton Grove

LOCATION: 6101 Capulina Avenue
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

PETITION: The Village Department of Community and Economic Development requests approval of a Text Amendment to Sections 7-2-1, 7-2-4, 7-2-11, and creation of a new Section 7-2-14, to modify and establish regulations relating to tree preservation and protection.

In the case of AC 25-18, the Village of Morton Grove (“applicant”) is proposing amendments to Chapter 7-2 to modify and establish regulations relating to tree preservation and protection. Staff is seeking the Appearance Commission’s review and recommendation of approval of the proposed amendment prior to consideration by the Village Board of Trustees.

In March 2025, the Village was awarded a grant to assist with street tree plantings throughout the community from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative at the Morton Arboretum. In accepting the grant, the Village agreed to subject our Tree Ordinance to review by the Morton Arboretum and make needed revisions to meet the organization’s requirements. While much of the Village’s recent Tree Ordinance were aligned with the Morton Arboretum’s goals and addressed desired components, some revisions were needed to meet grant requirements. The five text changes are procedural in nature, have been approved by the Morton Arboretum, and serve to further strengthen the Village’s ordinance

Commissioner Dahlberg moved to approve case AC 25-18, a request by the Department of Community and Economic Development for approval of a Text Amendment to Sections 7-2-1, 7-2-4, 7-2-11, and creation of a new Section 7-2-14, to modify and establish regulations relating to tree preservation and protection, as presented in the staff report for Case AC 25-18 dated October 28, 2025.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Manno.

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| Commissioner Block voting | aye |
| Commissioner Dahlberg voting | aye |
| Commissioner Minx voting | aye |
| Commissioner Manno voting | aye |
| Commissioner Zimmer voting | aye |

Motion passed 5 -0.

Other Business

Mr. Nolin provided an overview of the proposed 2026 Appearance Awards Program. Chairperson Pietron and Commissioner Zimmer requested that Staff develop a 2026 Appearance Awards program for consideration by the Appearance Commission. Historically, the Appearance Commission oversaw an Appearance Awards program that

recognized property owners for maintaining quality front yards and facades that improved the appearance of the Morton Grove community. It has been several years since such a program existed and Staff researched examples in surrounding communities to develop a proposed program for 2026. Numerous communities throughout the Chicago region have programs designed to recognize the efforts of residents and business owners that contribute positively to the local community's image. Communities surveyed by Staff include, but are not limited to Mt. Prospect, Oak Park, Palatine, Park Forest, Park Ridge, Romeoville, and Skokie.

Hearing no further business, Commissioner Manno moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dahlberg. The motion to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously pursuant to a voice vote at 7:21 p.m.

Minutes by: Anne Ryder Kirchner