

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES OF  
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS  
DESIGN COMMISSION  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**NOVEMBER 10, 2020**

**Chair Fitzgerald** called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: John Fitzgerald, Chair  
Scott Seyer  
Ted Eckhardt

Members Absent: Jonathan Kubow  
Kirsten Kingsley

Also Present: Tony VanDyke, Marton Premier Homes for *508 S. Phelps Ave.*  
Julie Jilek & Beth Anne Ausnehmer, *NSSEO for Miner School*  
Mary Boehmler & Grady Hamilton, Trammell Crow Co. for *Senior Housing Development*  
Lukas Van Sistine, Gretchen Camp, & Teresa Forsberg, ESG Architects for Trammell  
*Crow Senior Housing Development*  
Jake Coryell, Confluence for *Trammell Crow Senior Housing Development*  
Brian Radiszack, SPACECO, Inc. for *Trammell Crow Senior Housing Development*  
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

**Chair Fitzgerald** read the following statement as requested by the Village: I find that the public health concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic render in-person attendance at the regular meeting location not feasible.

**Chair Fitzgerald** also reminded those speaking tonight to state their names before speaking. **Mr. Hautzinger** added instructions for public attendees that want to speak tonight, as well as muting when not speaking.

**REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 27, 2020**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 27, 2020. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.**

### ITEM 3. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW

#### DC20-067 – Miner School – 1101 E. Miner St.

Julie Jilek and Beth Anne Ausnehmer, representing NSSEO, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. The Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO) is requesting variations to allow four new playground ground signs at Miner School. NSSEO is an Illinois public school special education cooperative and school district that serves students with the most significant and complex disabilities. Miner School is an NSSEO therapeutic day school that serves students with a range of complex needs from Early Childhood through Grade 8. Many students have limited motor abilities, requiring the use of wheelchairs and other physical accommodations. NSSEO recently completed construction on the Miner School "Playground for Everyone", an inclusive accessible playground. The previous playground at Miner School was not wheelchair accessible. Construction of the new playground was funded by grants and donations from numerous state and local sponsors.

The petitioner is proposing four new ground signs to be installed within the playground behind the school:

- **Sign Type 1** is a 12-foot tall, 32 sf **playground entrance ground sign**, which is proposed to be installed across the sidewalk leading into the playground as a visual locator to welcome all to use the playground. The entrance sign design includes signage for the state and local business partners that sponsored the playground.
- **Sign Type 2** is a 6'-7" tall, 15.4 sf **playground donor recognition ground sign**, which thanks the state, local business, and community donors.
- **Sign Type 3** is a 6'-7" tall, 15.4 sf **playground welcome ground sign**, which highlights the NSSEO Governing Board and the NSSEO Foundation Board.
- **Sign Type 4** is a 4'-9" tall, 7.3 sf "**Matthew's Reading Corner" memorial ground sign**, which honors Matthew Ruffalo, a Miner student who passed away, and his love of reading.

The following sign variations are required:

1. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-203, to allow a 12-foot tall, 32 sf playground entrance ground sign (Sign Type 1), where playground entrance ground signs are not allowed in the R-3 Zoning District.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-203, to allow a 6'-7" tall, 15.4 sf playground donor recognition ground sign (Sign Type 2), where playground donor recognition ground signs are not allowed in the R-3 Zoning District.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-203, to allow a 6'-7" tall, 15.4 sf playground welcome ground sign (Sign Type 3), where playground welcome ground signs are not allowed in the R-3 Zoning District.
4. A variation from Chapter 30, section 30-203, to allow a 4'-9" tall, 7.3 sf playground memorial ground sign (Sign Type 4), where playground memorial ground signs are not allowed in the R-3 Zoning District.

Chapter 30 sign code does not cover playground signage, so variations are required. In addition to the proposed playground signage, there are two existing ground signs on the site. On the north side of the school, there is an existing, code-compliant "Miner School" ground sign facing Miner Street. On the west side of the school, there is an existing ground sign for "A Mother's Touch Creative Learning Center" facing Dryden Avenue, which was approved by variation in 2010.

The petitioner submitted a letter addressing the sign variation criteria, stating that the primary purpose for the signs is to celebrate the sense of community and honor those who made the Miner School playground a reality. Additionally, the height and size of the proposed entrance sign is needed as a visual locator to welcome all to use the playground. The petitioner feels that the proposed signs will not create a traffic hazard or a depreciation of nearby property values because the signs are setback from the road and are tastefully designed.

Staff feels that the new "Playground For Everyone" is a wonderful facility that will benefit so many people from Arlington Heights as well as other communities. Staff acknowledges that the sign code cannot and does not cover every type of signage, such as this package of playground signage; however, Staff does agree that the sign variation criteria are satisfied, and there is no objection to the proposed signs.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked if the petitioner had any comments at this time. **Ms. Jilek** said they are very excited about their playground and new signage.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked if there was any public comment on the project and **Mr. Hautzinger** said there was none.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Eckhardt** concurred with Staff's recommendation for approval of the sign variations. He said the new signs are tastefully designed and it is wonderful that the playground is being recognized. He was in support of the sign variations.

**Commissioner Seyer** was supportive of the variations as well, and agreed with Staff's comment that the signs are mostly hidden from the street. He asked for clarification from the petitioner about the fence shown on the overall signage plan, and the location of the new sign that is fairly far back. **Ms. Jilek** said there is an existing fence around the playground for safety reasons because some of their students tend to be runners. The playground is open to the public after school hours and on weekends, and there is a gate that remains open and unlocked during that time. They also share the playground with A Mother's Touch for use by their students. **Commissioner Seyer** supported the size and height of the sign based on the fact that is set back from the fence.

**Chair Fitzgerald** asked if the walkway is staying the same size, where Sign Type 1 is being proposed, because the sign appears a lot wider than the walkway. He also asked the petitioner if they gave thought to mirroring the front of the sign on the back as well, because from the playground it looks a little cold. **Ms. Jilek** replied that the existing walkway is wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, and Sign Type 1 will be located at the back where the building ends, on either side of the walkway, but she was unsure of how far the sign extends past the sidewalk. **Ms. Ausnehmer** added that the width of Sign Type 1 was needed to allow the sign to be a visual locator as well as to provide space for the circular donor signs. **Chair Fitzgerald** reiterated his question about the sign being double-sided, instead of looking at the back of sign when existing the playground area. **Ms. Jilek** said they did not consider this because of cost, and their thought is that once people are in the playground, the playground becomes the focal point. **Chair Fitzgerald** said he was in support of the new signs, but he was also open to the petitioner considering the same signage on the back of the sign so it appears more finished.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATION REQUEST FOR MINER SCHOOL LOCATED AT 1101 E. MINER STREET:**

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-203, TO ALLOW A 12-FOOT TALL, 32 SF PLAYGROUND ENTRANCE GROUND SIGN (SIGN TYPE 1), WHERE PLAYGROUND ENTRANCE GROUND SIGNS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE R-3 ZONING DISTRICT.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-203, TO ALLOW A 6'-7" TALL, 15.4 SF PLAYGROUND DONOR RECOGNITION GROUND SIGN (SIGN TYPE 2), WHERE PLAYGROUND DONOR RECOGNITION GROUND SIGNS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE R-3 ZONING DISTRICT.
3. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-203, TO ALLOW A 6'-7" TALL, 15.4 SF PLAYGROUND WELCOME GROUND SIGN (SIGN TYPE 3), WHERE PLAYGROUND WELCOME GROUND SIGNS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE R-3 ZONING DISTRICT.
4. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-203, TO ALLOW A 4'-9" TALL, 7.3 SF PLAYGROUND MEMORIAL GROUND SIGN (SIGN TYPE 4), WHERE PLAYGROUND MEMORIAL GROUND SIGNS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE R-3 ZONING DISTRICT.

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANS RECEIVED 10/20/20, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

1. A RECOMMENDATION THAT, IN THE FUTURE, IF FUNDING BECOMES AVAILABLE, THE SIGNAGE ON SIGN TYPE 1 BE REPLICATED ON THE BACK SIDE OF THE SIGN, MAKING IT A TWO-SIDED SIGN.
2. THIS REVIEW DEALS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE AN APPROVAL OF, OR TO HAVE ANY OTHER IMPACT ON, NOR REPRESENT ANY TACIT APPROVAL OR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED LAND USE OR ANY OTHER ZONING AND/OR LAND USE ISSUES OR DECISIONS THAT STEM FROM ZONING, BUILDING, SIGNAGE OR ANY OTHER REVIEWS. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL TECHNICAL REVIEW, PERMIT DRAWINGS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER COMMISSION OR BOARD APPROVAL CONDITIONS. IT IS THE PETITIONER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO INCORPORATE ALL REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS INTO THE PERMIT DRAWINGS, AND TO ENSURE THAT BUILDING PERMIT PLANS AND SIGN PERMIT PLANS COMPLY WITH ALL ZONING CODE, BUILDING CODE AND SIGN CODE REQUIREMENTS.

**Commissioner Seyer** clarified Chair Fitzgerald's previous question about Sign Type 1; the exhibit submitted shows Sign Type 1 centered over the sidewalk, and the photoshopped image of Sign Type 1 does not. He was not going to implore the petitioner due to costs to change Sign Type 1 in some way, but he was in favor of Sign Type 1 being more symmetrical so it felt more like a grand entrance to the playground. Chair Fitzgerald said that was his thinking as to why this sign looked off-balance and he was open if the petitioner chose to do something, although he did not want additional money spent on that. **Ms. Jilek** said they could review this with the sign contractor and also make sure the sign is centered as much as possible without losing any visibility of the sign from the street, as well as add landscaping if necessary. **Chair Fitzgerald** agreed and did not want to lose any part of the sign as well.

**Mr. Hautzinger** reminded the petitioner that the Design Commission's motion for approval is a recommendation to the Village Board, who has final determination for sign variations. Staff will schedule this matter for an upcoming Village Board meeting as soon as possible.

ECKHARDT, AYE; SEYER, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE.  
ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.