

# APPROVED

## MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION

HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.  
FEBRUARY 22, 2022

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

Members Present: Jonathan Kubow, Chair  
Ted Eckhardt  
John Fitzgerald

Members Absent: Kirsten Kingsley  
Scott Seyer

Also Present: Tom Seibert, Soos & Associates for *Guidepost Montessori*  
Diane Menza, LFI Real Estate for *Guidepost Montessori*  
Jake Schmidt, Planning Staff

### REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 8, 2022

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2022. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 1. COMMERCIAL RE-REVIEWDC#21-079 – Guidepost Montessori – 1000 W. Northwest Highway

Tom Seibert, representing *Soos & Associates*, and Diane Menza, representing *LFI Real Estate*, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the petitioner is seeking approval of the architectural design for exterior modifications and an addition to an existing vacant commercial building for a new day care/private school. This project requires Plan Commission review and Village Board approval for a Special Use and a Land Use Variation to allow a day care/private school. Because this project requires Plan Commission review, the role of the Design Commission is limited to building and signage only.

This project was previously reviewed by the Design Commission on February 8, 2022, where Staff reported that the proposed exterior improvements were minimal, and additional design development was encouraged to enhance the design. The commissioners agreed that additional design development was required, and the project was continued for re-review tonight. Mr. Schmidt provided a summary of the primary issues and feedback from the commissioners.

In response to the Design Commission's comments on February 8<sup>th</sup>, the petitioner has made the following changes to the design:

- The mansard roof shingle color was changed from Charcoal to Weathered Wood.
- The existing dark brown brick on the front of the building will be painted a dark gray color.
- Fiber cement column covers have been added to the mansard roof support columns.
- The EIFS wall above the entry vestibule was slightly enlarged to create a small overhang above the doors.

Mr. Schmidt summarized Staff comments to the revised design. Overall, the petitioner's response to previous comments is minimal and further design development is still required. The new color scheme is an improvement, but it is still dull and uninviting. The dark gray paint color on the existing dark brown brick does very little to brighten up the building, and the entry canopy design is weak and understated.

Staff researched other Guidepost Montessori facilities and found numerous examples of bright and welcoming designs. Taking inspiration from some of those designs, Staff recommends the following:

- Select a new lighter and brighter paint color, such as a light creamy tan color, to be used on all of the existing and new CMU and brick exterior walls.
- Change the color of the fabric awnings from Charcoal to light blue, to match Guidepost Montessori's brand.
- Add light blue fabric awnings above all of the windows on the east side of the building.
- Consider painting the entry canopy soffit and mansard roof soffits light blue to match the awnings.
- Extend the entrance canopy further towards the parking lot to create a more substantial covered entrance feature with support columns to match the front of the building.
- Use a contrasting color, such as medium gray, for the EIFS entrance canopy, column covers, trim, coping, gutters and downspouts.
- Lower the wall sign on the front elevation, and add decorative gooseneck lighting, as seen at many other Guidepost Montessori buildings.

Inspiration photos of other Guidepost Montessori facilities and illustrations of the recommended design revisions were also presented by Staff.

Mr. Schmidt also said that multiple new rooftop mechanical units will be located on the west side of the existing roof. The units will be screened from view by the existing barrel roof on the east, the existing parapet walls on the south, and the parapet walls on the new addition. With regards to signage, only conceptual signage has been provided, with

one wall sign facing Northwest Highway and one canopy sign facing the parking area above the main entrance. All signs should be designed to comply with Chapter 30 Sign Code. A new small trash storage area is proposed to be built with vinyl fencing to match the new playground fencing around the north end of the site.

Staff recommends the Design Commission evaluate the proposed architectural design based on the revisions submitted, with the recommendations listed in the Staff report.

In response to Staff's comments on the revised design, **Mr. Seibert** said that further revisions were made. He presented revised elevations, renderings, and color palette (Color Board #2), which the commissioners and Staff were seeing for the first time. The first revision that included the 'Essential Gray' color, is now being changed to 'Camelback Tan'. This color will be used for the block, the brick, the column covers, and over the entrance. The variation in this color on the renderings is because of the different material textures, and the color will be the same for the block, the brick, the eaves, and the column covers. The roof shingle color is being changed to 'Weathered Wood', and the fence color is being changed from white to 'Almond Smooth'. 'Brainstorm Bronze' was chosen for the awning color to match the range of colors on the roof shingle, instead of the suggestion for a light blue color, which they found that no manufacturer makes, probably because it would not hold up to sunlight. **Mr. Seibert** also stated that extending the entrance canopy adjacent to the parking lot is not feasible because it would conflict with a code required tree in the landscape island located close to the building, and Planning Staff has indicated they would not support a variation to eliminate that tree. **Mr. Seibert** also pointed out that there will be about 3-1/2' of overhead shelter at the front entrance. Awnings were not added on the Kennicott side of the building because it would involve extending canopies out into the public right-of-way.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Eckhardt** thanked the petitioner for their efforts in making revisions to both the original design and to the revisions. He said that he is warming up to the second revised scheme being presented tonight, as opposed to the first revision that was included in the packet for tonight. The new revisions somewhat parallel Staff's suggestion to use a lighter color for the building, in lieu of using two colors. He was okay with the revised color scheme presented tonight, and he was sympathetic to the color of the awnings, which match the roof and is a nice contrast to the building color; however, he felt the revised fence color was not in the same family as the other 2 colors being proposed. Overall, he felt the changes that were made are good. He acknowledged that the columns were made thicker; however, he felt the columns could be even thicker, and additional detailing could be done with the existing column at the southeast corner of the building. He had no further comments at this time.

**Commissioner Fitzgerald** appreciated the changes that were made and he agreed with Commissioner Eckhardt that the columns still appear a bit small; however, he was okay with how they are currently proposed. He loved the idea of the light blue canopies as suggested by Staff, but he also understood why the petitioner chose not to do that. He really liked the idea of adding gooseneck lighting, which would really dress up the front of the building. He pointed out that the drawings show a multi-stem tree in the landscape island near the front entrance; however, he would suggest a single-stem tree instead, and he suggested the petitioner work with Derek Mach, the Village Landscape Architect for other recommendations in that location. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said that although he was okay with the revised colors presented tonight, he really liked the colors proposed in the first revision, which included 'Essential Gray'. He was open to the petitioner going back to those colors.

**Chair Kubow** said he could really appreciate the progress that was made with the first revised design, although he felt it was not quite there yet. He wondered if introducing new colors was trying too hard, and he preferred the gray color to be continuous around the building, utilize the roof shingles as a more contrasting color element, and add a third color for pop.

**Chair Kubow** asked if there was any public comment on the project and there was a response from the audience.

Carol Theesfeld, 712 N. Kennicott Avenue. She liked the new colors, but did not see the back end of the building facing north towards the playground included in the revised drawings. **Mr. Seibert** presented her with Sheet A3. Ms. Theesfeld liked the windows but said the glass appears to be grey. **Mr. Seibert** replied that the glass will be an un-

tinted glazing or Low-E glass that might give a very slight reflection. Ms. Theesfeld asked if flower plantings would be located on the front of the building facing Northwest Highway under the wall signage, to make it attractive for the children. **Mr. Seibert** said that landscaping will be addressed during the Plan Commission review of the project. Ms. Theesfeld agreed with the comment made by Commissioner Eckhardt at the last meeting to create a picture frame on the front elevation that might include elements that make the building look like a fun place to be. She said the building still looks like a roller rink with new paint, and she suggested painting a mural inside the bottom of the windows, or something to make the building aesthetically pretty for the children. **Ms. Menza** said the classrooms inside the building will be highly designed and beautiful for the children. Ms. Theesfeld referred to the roof plan and asked how the rooftop equipment would be screened from Kennicott and from the playground. **Mr. Seibert** clarified that rooftop mechanical equipment will only be located behind the parapet wall on the north side and it will not be visible from any side of the building. Ms. Theesfeld also asked for an update about the existing utility pole at the back door of the building, which the petitioner previously said they were working with the utility company about relocating. **Mr. Seibert** said they will continue to work with the utility company throughout the construction process. Ms. Theesfeld thanked the commissioners and petitioner.

**Chair Kubow** said that he still did not see a school when he looks at the building; the building looks cold, dark, and does not have even one primary color on it. He liked the suggestions put together by Staff to try to brighten up the building and make it feel more welcoming, similar to other Guidepost Montessori buildings. He asked the commissioners for any recommendations or requirements to try to get there.

**Commissioner Eckhardt** said that some of the more current models of pre-schools have been extremely bright and a bit clownish, which he could understand, and he appreciated the comment made by the resident to create some fun and interest on the building to better reflect a school. He liked the sketches created by Staff that include gooseneck lighting and light blue canopies because it adds a little something on the front elevation. His comments from the last meeting about having a boxed-out area on the front elevation to house a different coloration or a mural theme, was an effort to try to squeeze out some 'children-esque' on the front of the building; however, the revisions presented tonight are rather sophisticated, although he felt the signage being shown appears understated and could be larger. With landscaping on the front of the building as suggested, he felt the colors now being proposed would be really fun. **Commissioner Eckhardt** also pointed out that there are a lot of windows on the front of the building and the clear glass will allow some of the fun going on inside the building to be visible. He explained that clear glass on a building appears black during the daytime, and clear glass is very difficult to render in a drawing. In summary, **Commissioner Eckhardt** was okay with the second revision of colors now being proposed for the building, as well as the sophisticated and quiet sign package. Because the building could be more playful, approval could include a recommendation to add the boxed-area on the front elevation. He also encouraged the petitioner to find an awning company that provides metal awnings that do not fade, so a color can be used if the petitioner chooses.

**Commissioner Fitzgerald** really liked the change in the roof color. He also liked the light blue awning color that was suggested, and he was open to anything the petitioner wanted to introduce with regards to that, which could then be approved by Staff. He felt that adding gooseneck lighting would totally transform the entire wall and was well worth the low cost to do so. He reiterated that he really liked the colors that were presented in the first revision, which include the 'Mink Grey' and 'Essential Grey'; he was open to the petitioner reconsidering those colors as well. He preferred that the planter in front of the building be simpler and cleaner, because if it is not properly maintained, it will only look worse.

**Chair Kubow** agreed with Commissioner Fitzgerald's preference for the colors in the first revision; he really liked the gray colors. He said that a robust landscape package will go a long way with the design of the building, and he agreed with the comments that the building does not have to have primary colors all over. The building is simple but it has a classic look to it, which he is warming up to.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FOR *GUIDEPOST MONTESSORI* LOCATED AT 1000 W. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY. THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE REVISED PLANS RECEIVED 2/22/22, DESIGN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS, COMPLIANCE WITH ALL APPLICABLE FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES, THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

1. A RECOMMENDATION TO GO BACK TO THE COLORS PROPOSED IN THE FIRST REVISION THAT INCLUDE 'ESSENTIAL GRAY' AND 'MINK GRAY'.
2. A RECOMMENDATION TO ADD GOOSENECK LIGHTING ON THE SOUTH WALL OVER THE SIGNAGE.
3. A RECOMMENDATION TO ADD A LIGHT BLUE COLOR TO MATCH THE SIGNAGE, WHICH COULD BE APPROVED BY STAFF.
4. 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.

**Chair Kubow** felt the gooseneck lighting was incredibly important and would really tie the building together; he felt it should be a requirement. He asked the petitioner how they felt about adding this lighting to the front of the building, and **Ms. Menza** said that the examples shown of other Guidepost Montessori locations all have that type of lighting. She also said that the signage shown tonight is not the exact signage being proposed, and once the building design has been approved, the tenant will come back with a sign package that will most likely include the blue circle logo at the front entrance, and the name of the school with the logo somewhere within that name on the front elevation, which will provide a punch of color on the front elevation. She added that the tenant has never attempted to have any type of awning or other element that tries to take away from their blue logo, such as blue awnings. **Commissioner Eckhardt** clarified that the only signage that this commission reviews is sign variation requests, but otherwise does not typically review signs outside the downtown area. He was glad to hear that the signage package will be similar to what is shown tonight, which he felt will add some color to the building. He supported Chair Kubow's comment that adding gooseneck lighting be a requirement on the front of the building, which he pointed out there was more than enough space to allow for and would be an important element to help soften the elevation.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ECKHARDT, TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ADD THE FOLLOWING:

2. A REQUIREMENT TO ADD GOOSENECK LIGHTING ON THE FRONT (SOUTH) OF THE BUILDING, TO BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY STAFF.

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