

APPROVED

MINUTES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
DESIGN COMMISSION MEETING
HELD AT THE ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
APRIL 26, 2016

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

Members Present: Ted Eckhardt, Chair
Anthony Fasolo
Jonathan Kubow

Members Absent: Alan Bombick
John Fitzgerald

Also Present: Tom Abatemarco, Prestigious Home Builders for *1534 N. Walnut Ave.*
Paul Rogner, Par Craft Ltd. for *1126 N. Dryden Ave.*
Sarah & Tom Galla, Owners of *1126 N. Dryden Ave.*
Jereme Smith, Architect for *1515 N. Wilke Rd.*
Barbara Marlas, Founder of *Kensington School*
Charles Marlas for *Kensington School*
John Hague, Hague Architecture for *Kensington School*
Jim Kapustiak, Spaceco Inc. for *Kensington School*
Steve Hautzinger, Staff Liaison

Chair Eckhardt informed the petitioners that a unanimous vote was required for any project to pass tonight, since only 3 of the 5 commissioners are here tonight.

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2016
ELECTRONIC SIGNS – POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 12, 2016

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FASOLO, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 12, 2016 & ELECTRONIC SIGNS – POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM APRIL 12, 2016. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 4. COMMERCIAL REVIEWDC#16-031 – Kensington School – 840 E. Kensington Rd.

Barbara Marlas & Charles Marlas, founder and owners of *Kensington School*, John Hague, representing *Hague Architecture*, and the Jim Kapustiak, representing *Spaceco Inc.*, were present on behalf of the project.

Barbara Marlas said that their first school opened in 1969 in LaGrange and has since grown to 10 schools. Through that time a great deal of thought has occurred that has evolved the architecture of their schools, as well as their concerns about the young families and children that they have devoted their lives to. There are now 2000 children in their care, which is a far cry from 46 years ago; this is a mission that they are very proud of and detail is very important to them. She is appealing to the commission tonight to reconsider their commitment to make the approved PUD for the site resemble each other from left to right. She hoped that the struggles they have had through the years to evolve the architecture into 11-foot ceilings allowing for very bright, sunny rooms, white trim and a cheerful Colonial style of architecture, are hopefully a transition to the lovely homes located north of the site. They have put so much into creating an ambience for young families' children's first school with a very bright, cheerful and welcoming environment. This will be the sixth school that is very similar to, if not almost identical in concept. This design has worked very well with large windows and room height that allow for brightness and cheerfulness. She felt that the proposed new school could be a well-respected transition for the site.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. The petitioner is proposing to build a new 15,000 square foot, single-story preschool / children's day care center. The proposed development includes 54 on-grade parking spaces and a large fenced in playground area around the sides and rear of the building. The two acre site is currently vacant and it is located at the northwest corner of Kensington Road and Dryden Place within the Hickory Kensington Area. The property is zoned B-2, General Business District and is part of the existing Arlington Market Planned Unit Development. This proposal requires review by the Plan Commission and approval by the Village Board as a Special Use and for an amendment to the PUD. The amendment to the PUD is required because this proposed use and site plan are not consistent with the PUD approved for the site, which was approved for a commercial shopping center with cross access and shared parking, as well as a plaza / focal point and a pedestrian connection to the residential area to the north. Mr. Hautzinger referred to Exhibit A that was attached to the Staff report, which shows the approved PUD site plan and landscape plaza, as well as the pedestrian access easement / landscaped plaza detail.

Mr. Hautzinger said that the proposed building design has a traditional appearance and colonial style with red brick, black roof, white windows, white trim, and a white picket fence. This building style could fit beautifully in or adjacent to a traditional single family neighborhood; however, in this location, the proposed design looks out of place with the surrounding commercial context, and Staff has concerns that the proposed design does not fit in with the context and vision for this Hickory Kensington area. He referenced the Hickory Kensington Design Guidelines that were developed by Staff and approved by the Design Commission to be used as a tool to guide development within this area. The intent and purpose of the Design Guidelines is to establish the design standards for the overall Hickory/Kensington development, and to ensure a minimum standard of quality, character, and cohesiveness for the development of the area. For the commercial zones, the design guidelines state that the guiding requirement for the architectural style of new developments shall be to coordinate with and complement the existing context of the completed buildings.

Mr. Hautzinger explained that the proposed design is a prototype building that was not specifically designed for this site and did not fit in this location, and does not comply with the requirements of the Hickory Kensington Design Guidelines. Staff felt that the design should be revised to have a more modern aesthetic and material palette to complement the adjacent retail buildings. For a more cohesive development, it is recommended that the design be revised to better complement the existing multi-tenant retail building to the west, shown in Images 1 & 2 in the Staff report.

Staff offered the following options to consider when revising the design:

1. Change the asphalt shingle roof to a green standing seam metal roof to match the adjacent retail building.
2. Change the white trim and white windows to darker colors for a less colonial appearance and to better complement the adjacent retail building.
3. Continue the brick up into the gables.
4. Add fabric awnings above the windows.

Mr. Hautzinger also reviewed the key site features that included the following:

1. Landscaped Plaza. The original PUD included a landscaped pedestrian plaza that needs to be included in this proposal.
2. Dryden/Kensington Focal Feature. Staff recommended a single "Arlington Market" monument style sign for the corner of the site with tenant panels for Kensington school and the adjacent retail tenants.
3. Trash Dumpster Enclosure. The location of the enclosure is prominent, and alternate locations should be explored.
4. Fence. The proposed white picket fence is not in character in this location, and a black "wrought iron" style fence was encouraged. Additionally, it should be set back to allow landscaping along the fence.
5. Landscaping. Overall, the landscaping is minimal. Staff and the Plan Commission will review in detail.
6. Specialty Paving. Specialty paving is encouraged at the building entrance and in crosswalks.
7. Mechanical Unit Screening. The mansard roof screens all RTUs.

Staff recommends the Design Commission evaluate and require revisions to the proposed design, based on the recommendations in the Staff report.

Mr. Hague stated that this is a unique situation where there is such diversity between the approved PUD and the school building being presented tonight. They have worked hard to get the proposed design to where it is, as it represents the children, which is what they want presented both inside and out. They are open to having a discussion about the concerns that this is not a retail use, and hopefully come to a mutual agreement, or possibly make revisions to the design.

Commissioner Kubow said that he was torn about what to do; the last thing he wanted was to require the petitioner to make significant changes to a beautiful building. He understood and supported the need for schools; however, he felt the proposed design did not fit with the Comprehensive Plan for this area, which took a lot of time and effort by the Village to develop. Although he was open to discussions tonight, he felt the petitioner should work with Staff to incorporate some of the obvious guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan, none of which were being followed with the current design. He felt the proposed building was beautiful, and although it did not fit in at this location, he would like to think that more schools are needed, especially for an area where there are new single-family homes being built. He wanted the petitioner to work with Staff to come to a happy medium, and felt that the current design was pretty far off.

Commissioner Fasolo generally agreed with Commissioner Kubow that schools are great for the community and needed. He asked if the petitioner was aware of the Hickory/Kensington Design Guidelines when designing the new school. **Mr. Hague** replied that they were not aware of them and added that the project went before Plat & Sub last December with strong support from the members and encouragement for them to move forward with the design. **Commissioner Fasolo** felt the petitioner needed to take a step back and look at the Design Guidelines, after which they would see how the current design did not fit, although it did tie in with the residences to the north. He always envisioned a retail use or an extension of the adjacent residential for this site, although he was confident that they could work together to come up with a successful design.

Chair Eckhardt touched on the importance of having the pedestrian link from the north, which was part of the approved PUD, and how it was envisioned to connect and tie the two sites together. He questioned if an effort could

be made with some portion of site planning, without moving the building to the east, to create a pathway from the north to make this site appear as part of the entire development/neighborhood. He acknowledged that the building could probably not be pulled over as far as what was previously envisioned because a large piece of the site would be lost. **Mr. Hautzinger** added that it would probably require shifting the building a bit to the east to accommodate the previously approved pedestrian plaza. He also pointed out that there is an easement on the plat of survey for the plaza, and explained that if the petitioner is unable or unwilling to adjust the design to accommodate the plaza, then they will also be seeking an amendment to the plat to eliminate the easement through the Plan Commission process. Staff is encouraging the easement to remain.

Chair Eckhardt reiterated the interest in maintaining the character of the neighborhood with a connecting link, although he was not yet convinced that it had to be continued exactly as previously approved. He acknowledged that this school building will have a different circulation pattern than retail; therefore, it did not require a strong link like a retail element would want to have. He felt there should be some type of sympathetic offering to be a good neighbor, such as a slight shift of the building to create a walkway with plantings. He had no issues with the building design, which he felt was not a complete departure from the surrounding area, and he felt that a corporate identity was important for schools. He asked the petitioner to discuss what they think they can do and what they do not want to do in order to keep the project moving along.

Charles Marlas said that they feel this site is a great site for their school because it gives them an opportunity to serve as a transition between the residential development to the north, down to Mariano's, down to Walgreens, and along the side to Arlington Market. He pointed out that an obstacle on this site is the existing underground stormwater storage vault, which serves the entire PUD and the residential development to the north. In regards to the pergola to the north and the pedestrian connection, he explained that they want to maximize their outdoor playground spaces for the school which are extremely important for a safe, clean and happy environment for the children who spend a lot of time outdoors. Since the previous PUD and retail development are now changing to more of a mixed-use PUD with a child care center and retail, he hoped there could be a re-thinking of the pedestrian access into the residential neighborhood to the north because the school would not be as much of a pedestrian destination to the north. They did try to wrap the sidewalk around and connect the two sites to provide some pedestrian access; however, if pedestrian access is very important, then they would do their best to try and accommodate that by moving some things around, although this would entail them moving the building to the east and taking out some of the playground.

Chair Eckhardt felt the building could be moved a bit to the east and money saved with the underground piping, while not affecting the outdoor playground space. He suggested chamfering the northwest corner of the fenced yard to allow for a smaller pedestrian plaza connection with landscaping from the north, which would help open up the site.

Commissioner Kubow felt that a positive of this location was that it serves as a good transition from the residential to the north, the residential to the east, and the commercial to the south. He acknowledged that the site has been vacant a long time and quite an eyesore, and he felt that a school would be a positive for the community in many ways. That being said, he was still having a tough time with this traditional school design being located within an area that the Village deems more contemporary and modern, and how it would fit into that context. The way he felt today was that the petitioner should go back and work closely with Staff on all of the recommendations, study the Comprehensive Plan and try to find a happy medium of both. He felt the current design needed a significant amount of work to fit in with the Comprehensive Plan and the commissioners should see the project again. He wanted the school to be here and he wanted Staff to work closely with the petitioner to find a way to marry the proposed design with the Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Fasolo generally agreed with Commissioner Kubow, especially since the petitioner had not yet reviewed the Design Guidelines, and felt that the petitioner should at least review the guidelines and work with Staff. He asked if the petitioner was aware of the plaza connection that was approved as part of the PUD. **Ms. Marlas**

replied that there was discussion at the Plat & Sub meeting about whether to continue with the plaza connector, and whether it was really necessary because of the new use, so they have come in good faith tonight. The last report from Plat & Sub was favorable in terms of the building; therefore, they did not come here tonight prepared to change it, nor did they know that they should change. She asked the commissioners for guidelines on going forward, and added that she loved the white trim on the building and changing it to a dark color would contradict the image of Kensington School.

Mr. Marlas explained that their educational philosophy is synonymous with the look and feel of the building as proposed, which they have come to identify themselves with, and to deviate from this design too much with a green standing seam roof and/or raising the brick up into the gables as suggested by Staff, or appearing more like a commercial storefront building, would be detrimental to their image and their brand, as well as not as welcoming to the families of Arlington Heights who bring their children to the school. While he respects the Design Guidelines, he felt it would be unfortunate to try to have to work within those constraints. **Ms. Marlas** added that the over-arching positive of what this site would be to the community should also be kept in mind. She agreed with Staff's recommendation to change the white picket fence to a black metal fence. **Commissioner Kubow** said that if the project moves forward with the original building design, he felt it should include the white picket fence. **Mr. Marlas** pointed out that setting the building back approximately 100-feet from the street helps the barrier and transition from the adjacent residential properties, along with a heavy amount of landscaping being provided.

Chair Eckhardt reiterated that 2 commissioners were not here tonight and a vote had to be unanimous. He suggested the project be tabled tonight so the petitioner could review the Design Guidelines as well as consider the comments made by the commissioners about the site plan. He personally felt the current design was not too far off, and related more to the adjacent residential homes than Mariano's.

Commissioner Kubow asked Staff how they felt after hearing the petitioner's comments tonight. **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that it all goes back to the Hickory/Kensington Plan and the Design Guidelines for this area and that this site is intended to relate to the surrounding commercial properties, not the residences. **Chair Eckhardt** thought that the Hickory/Kensington Plan pertained more to the lumber yard and the buildings over there, rather than this interior site, which **Commissioner Kubow** felt was a good point. **Chair Eckhardt** felt that the petitioner's site was a transition site, which is why he wanted to see what the petitioner could come up with after reviewing the Design Guidelines to try to marry the two ideas.

Ms. Marlas said that she was a little stumped and did not know what to give on because the current whiteness of the building made it look very bright and cheerful. **Chair Eckhardt** replied that they were not necessarily telling her to give on anything; they just want them to review the Design Guidelines and determine if there is a way to compromise between the two. **Mr. Hautzinger** clarified that the Design Guidelines address the entire Hickory Kensington area, not just this particular site and PUD, and will state that the goal of the development of the remaining commercial zones is to complement what is there, fill in these least pieces in a cohesive manner, which Staff felt the current project did not do. Staff was not opposed to the idea of the school building; they are just trying to make it fit in better. He personally felt that a white picket fence would look strange in this location and that a black metal fence paired with a Colonial building, as well as pulling the fence in at least 5-feet and softening it with landscaping, would be an improvement. He reiterated that Staff felt strongly that the proposed building architecture should be adjusted to try to fit in better. He liked the direction of Chair Eckhardt's recommendation that the petitioner work with Staff to find a balance where the proposed design could be adjusted without completing changing the petitioner's philosophy on the design of the school and the function of the building. With regards to the pedestrian connection, **Mr. Hautzinger** explained that it is supposed to be a connection similar to a thoroughfare; not just a connection from the residential neighborhood to the school but beyond to the other commercial properties.

Chair Eckhardt commented that the petitioner should be prepared for comments from the Plan Commission about the pedestrian connection, and he encouraged the petitioner to obtain photos of the adjacent homes to the north to prove how the school design fits. He suggested that the petitioner return to the Design Commission before the Plan

Commission review. **Commissioner Kubow** disagreed and preferred to see the project come back after the Plan Commission review to hear their comments. **Chair Eckhardt** explained that he wanted to give positive direction to the petitioner on the building, prior to Plan Commission review. The petitioner stated their preference to return to the Design Commission prior to the Plan Commission review. **Mr. Hautzinger** added that typically the Design Commission review is completed before Plan Commission review.

A MOTION WASE MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUBOW TO CONTINUE THE REVIEW FOR THE PROPOSED KENSINGTON SCHOOL LOCATED AT 840 E. KENSINGTON ROAD (DC#16-031) TO A FUTURE DATE.

COMMISSIONER FASOLO SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Hautzinger suggested the commissioners clarify the direction the petitioner should take and he referred to the categories in the Staff report which the commissioners could give general comments on. **Commissioner Kubow** felt there were varying opinions from the commissioners at this time; therefore, he reiterated his comments which were that he wanted to see the petitioner review the Design Guidelines and try to incorporate some of the overall design intent with Staff's input, and return to the Design Commission.

Commissioner Fasolo felt that some of the options contained in the Design Guidelines really did not pertain to this type of building, such as awnings, and he was unsure what more could be done to the design.

Chair Eckhardt said that the petitioner should strongly consider a wrought iron fence. An option would be to incorporate wood pilasters at the corners, which would be attractive with both modern and older architecture, especially because of the close proximity of the fence to the sidewalk. He was unsure about encouraging a change to a standing seam metal roof, and he would not discourage the petitioner to change the proposed mansard roof that he felt is appropriate for the building. He felt the design should be made to look like a traditional home in an urban environment. He also felt the petitioners should review the Design Guidelines to convince both the Design Commission and Plan Commission that they have done everything they can with the design of the new school. In terms of site planning, he felt that something could be done to create a connecting link from the north.

Commissioner Fasolo further stated that he was unsure about the best location for the trash enclosure, and that the currently proposed location might actually be the best. **Mr. Hautzinger** said that Staff suggested incorporating the trash storage area into the design of the building or attaching the enclosure to the building, and he pointed out that the dumpster enclosure is currently located in the front yard which would require a variation to allow an accessory structure in the front yard. **Chair Eckhardt** suggested locating it at the corner of the rear yard near the road. **Mr. Hautzinger** suggested the possibility of adding landscaping to screen the trash enclosure in the proposed location.

Commissioner Fasolo also felt that the landscape plaza should be looked at again; he felt it was more suitable for a retail development and he was unsure if it even made sense anymore. He also agreed with Staff's suggestion to set the fence back at least 5-feet from the north and east property lines and provide landscaping along the fence, and he felt the petitioner should review the sustainable features outlined in the Design Guidelines and propose some ideas for the site.

Ms. Marlas apologized for the fact that they were here tonight with a different use for a pre-existing plan for the site, and she realized the dichotomy of that. She hoped that they could be true to both concepts because it is so important that Kensington retain its identity, and she felt that the greater good was being served by what it could bring; they have a message to present of who they are and why they are. She added that the first Kensington School in 1969 derived its name from Kensington Street.

Mr. Hautzinger referred to Staff's suggestion that the petitioner incorporate a design feature/sign at the corner of Kensington & Dryden for the overall site. He reiterated that a sign envisioned for this development would be a single "Arlington market" sign that would include Kensington School and the other retail tenants in a nice design to complement Mariano's sign across the street. **Mr. Marlas** replied that he envisioned that corner to have signage just for the school and he did not want to be on a multi-tenant sign with the retail tenants. **Chair Eckhardt** agreed and felt the school should have their own sign because they are a different use than the retail tenants, and the retail building should have a separate sign. **Mr. Hautzinger** clarified that the approved PUD included one ground sign at the entrance to the development; however, Staff is suggesting one multi-tenant ground sign at the corner of Kensington & Dryden instead. **Chair Eckhardt** and **Commissioner Fasolo** felt this was not appropriate. **Mr. Hautzinger** replied that having two signs along Kensington would require an amendment to the PUD, and the petitioner needs to be clear on what their signage intentions are.

Mr. Marlas said that they have been working with Staff on the shared parking concept. They initially were hoping to have their own dedicated parking, and Staff suggested having a parking study done which they did. The study showed that the retail development to the west currently has more than enough parking and that their parking would be more than enough; however, they are still being put in a situation of shared parking. **Ms. Marlas** added that they are so happy to be here and think that the school will become an institution in the Village; however, they strive for self-contained properties because of the safety of the children and prefer to not share parking. She questioned the value of retaining the PUD idea of shared parking when they hope that other people don't go on the site. **Mr. Hautzinger** encouraged the petitioner to develop their signage plans to clearly show where they are proposed to be located, how many there are, and the design being proposed, as well as to provide exhibits of the proposed signage with landscaping as well.

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