

APPROVED 1-6-2020

**VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE  
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES  
DECEMBER 2, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Ch. Rickard called the December 2, 2019 meeting of the Plan Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and led in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT: Mr. Boyle, Ms. Gassen, Ms. Majauskas Mr. Maurer, Mr. Patel, Ms. Rollins, Ch. Rickard**

**ABSENT: Mr. Dmytryszyn, Ms. Johnson, Ex. Officio Members Olczyk, Livorsi & Menninga**

**A quorum was established.**

Chairman Rickard reminded everyone present to silence any electronic devices during the meeting and noted that copies of the Agenda are available on the shelves at either side of the Chamber.

**STAFF:** Jason Zawila, Planning Manager  
Gabby Baldassari, Development Planner  
Flora Ramirez, Development Planner

**VISITORS:** Scott Richards, 1130 Warren Avenue  
Linda Dean, 5227 Main Street  
Ross Johnson, 1311 Gilbert Avenue  
Pete Mesha, 940 Maple Avenue  
Bill Moriarty, 940 Maple Avenue  
Leo Sterk, 930 Curtiss  
John Symowicz, 940 Maple Avenue  
Joyce Symowicz, 940 Maple Avenue  
Pam Borchardt, 940 Maple Avenue  
Kathy Owens, 940 Maple  
Bill Muth, 940 Maple Avenue  
Michael Cassa, DGEDC, 5159 Mochel  
Peter Spelsen, No Address Provided  
Tim Rose, LFI, 9440 Enterprise Drive

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David Hene, LFI, 9440 Enterprise Drive  
Christos Georgacopoulos, Dupage Medical Group, 3100 Highland Pkwy  
Kenton Rehmer, Eckenhoff Saunders  
John Smart, Amazon Real Estate  
Luay Aboona, KLOA  
Mark Houser, Bridge Development

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: November 4, 2019 meeting**

Mr. Boyle requested a correction on page 17. His name was provided as speaking, but he was not present at the meeting.

**Ms. Gassen made a motion, seconded by Ms. Rollins to approve the minutes from November 4, 2019**

**The Motion to approve the minutes passed by Voice Vote.**

Ch. Rickard reviewed the procedures to be followed for the two scheduled public hearings, explaining that the Plan Commission is strictly a recommending body. The purpose of the meeting is to gather facts, information, and testimony of items on the Agenda. The Plan Commission's decision is not final but is strictly a recommendation to the Village Council for the Council's final decision. He said a report would be forwarded to the Council with a motion to recommend approval, recommend approval with refinements, or recommend denial of the petition. The Village Council makes all final decisions.

Ms. Majauskas entered the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Ch. Rickard stated that the Petitioner will present its case to the Plan Commission, followed by questions to the Petitioner by Commission members. The Public will then have an opportunity to make comments before the Commission regarding the case under consideration. Ch. Rickard asked that each speaker provide his or her name and address for the record.

Following presentations by the Public, a member of the Community Development Department will present Staff's report. Upon completion of presentations by the Staff and the Public, the Petitioner will have the opportunity to question statements made or provide a closing statement. The Chairman will then close the public hearing portion of the meeting, and the Commission will review the information provided and ask questions of the speakers. Upon completion of the Plan Commission's deliberation, a Motion will be made containing a recommendation to the Village Council regarding the case.

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Ch. Rickard then asked everyone who intended to speak on the petition before the Commission to rise and be sworn in.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**19-PLC-0032: A petition seeking Special Use approval to provide off-site parking over 1,000 feet away from the use served and to establish an accessory use before the principal use is established. The property is currently zoned O-R-M Office-Research-Manufacturing. The property is located at 4110 Finley Road, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-06-100-019) Bridgepoint Downers Grove Phase II, LLC Petitioner and Bridge Downers Grove LLC, Owner.**

### **Petitioner's Presentation:**

Nick Siegel, Bridge Development Partners, said he has been overseeing this Bridgepoint Downers Grove project since it was approved in this council a couple of years ago. There were three buildings that were completed late summer or early fall and the leasing has been under way. Building one is their smallest facility with five leases in place with one 18,000 square foot vacancy remaining. As they were in the process of leasing buildings two and three, one of the prospects that came to them was Amazon. As they were working with them they had realized that there was this Phase II building getting ready to begin construction. What is planned on there now is a 133,000 square foot industrial building that was going to break ground in early spring. What Amazon wants to do is use that site as a parking lot for their high end sprinter vans to help with deliveries that are coming in/out of buildings two and three for their infill delivery.

Mr. Siegel stated a representative from Amazon is present this evening along with a representative for the traffic study. They would use building three as the product storage building and the vans would come to buildings two and three and get loaded up and then exit. Part of the plan contemplates building a ramp between buildings two and three so there is less van traffic on Lacey and Finley Roads. Amazon has done a great job with their traffic timing to have 400 parking spaces on the lot coming out in intervals of 30 vans at a time to limit the traffic coming out on the road. With buildings two and three there is nothing really changing from what a typical industrial tenant would be doing. The parking lot is the only difference and that is why they are seeking their variance.

Ms. Majauskas said from what she understands is that those buildings were just built in the last two years. These industrial buildings have been popping up all over. She asked why wasn't it contemplated when the buildings were built.

Mr. Siegel stated they design their warehouses for the 90% user. They do not bring in any tenants with them. When they designed buildings one, two and three they did not know who the user was going to be. In building one they have a pharmaceutical facility

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that delivers to senior living facilities. There is also Cooper's Hawk and a company that makes elevators that have an office in there, so they never know who their tenants are going to be. When they design a building they use a parking ratio that would work for most users. With Amazon the parking that is there is enough but knowing that they have that off-site lot helped with some of their planning with what they wanted to do and how their last mile distribution centers want to work. That is why they need the access and change the course of the building that is about to start construction.

Mr. Zawila said as a point of clarification regarding the applicant's reference to the building that was planned and approved, the applicant has been in for building permit review for a fourth building. For this zoning district office/warehouse buildings are allowed by right and for those uses allowed by right they can just come in and get a building permit. While they were under review for the permit the applicant was approached by Amazon and this is where the approach came for the Commission to consider.

Mr. Maurer clarified that the buildings were approved but not the parking lot. Mr. Zawila stated the building is still under review and they will still have that option if this is not approved or if the proposed tenant does not work out.

Ms. Gassen asked if the buildings that they are building do have the required amount of parking. Mr. Zawila said yes they do.

Ms. Majauskas asked if the parking lot is approved then there would be no building. Mr. Zawila stated that is correct.

Ms. Majauskas asked who owns the property between the two lots. Mr. Siegel said it is a private individual. They have spoken with him with the potential of buying his site. The site is very inefficient because there are wetlands and a big Nicor easement runs through there. They have not been able to agree on a purchase price.

Ch. Rickard asked if it would be fair to say that prior to this potential tenant that parking figured for those three buildings would probably be along the lines of 5% office and 95% warehouse. That is why they plan for less parking on those sites and the need for the remote parking lot. Mr. Siegel stated that is fair to say. The office might be a little higher at like 10% to 15%.

Ms. Gassen asked if they could walk them through a typical day so they can get a sense of how much traffic it can generate. John Smart, Amazon Real Estate, said initially in building three they will receive about 15 semi-trucks over the course of the night. Then they have about 150 employees that sort the packages to the specific route which will be loaded onto the vans. At 6 a.m. they would have a driver come in with their personal vehicle and exchange that in the parking lot south for their delivery van. They would go to building three and gather their packages. There are about 80 stalls which 40 are for queuing and 40 are for loading. There will be a person in the parking lot that will receive an order as to how many vehicles can go. At the building they will fill

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in the loading spots and get loaded. About eight to ten vans will go at a time. There are about eight waves every half hour. That goes from about 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. and they vary with eight to ten hour routes. So they come back at varying times. At the end of the day if they have any undelivered packages they will drop them off at the station and then return to the parking lot. They will then get their personal vehicle and drive home. If they do not have any undelivered packages then they would just return to the parking lot.

Mr. Maurer asked if most of the arrows on the KLOA study are showing on Finley Road. Ch. Rickard stated the royal blue flow arrows appear to be happening outside of the right-of-way and on private property back and forth between the parking lot and building three. He asked if all that back and forth traffic happening on the street or internally on private property. Luay Aboona, KLOA, said everything is happening on Finley. As the vans or cars are going to from the parking lot to building three they will exit onto Finley Road. Any traffic between buildings two and three will happen internal on the site.

Mr. Maurer stated there was a lot of data that was provided by KLOA. He asked if they could let them know how many vehicles they could see traveling from the parking lot to this building three on a daily basis. Mr. Aboona said they focus on peak hour numbers, as far as daily traffic the parking lot will generate about 500 movements in and 500 movements out over the entire day.

Mr. Maurer asked how much traffic they are adding to Finley. Mr. Aboona stated Finley carries on a daily basis over 20,000 cars a day. The increase from this site when compared to daily is minimal and probably at 1%.

Mr. Maurer asked when looking at the peak hour for Amazon did they happen to coincide with rush hour traffic. Mr. Aboona said it is very well spread out the way they do their schedule. The schedule is staggered so it is not all happening at one time. The drivers arrive at 7:30 a.m. so there is an activity that coincides with the morning peak. In the afternoon, the vans start arriving before the peak hour but there is some overlap. Again, it is staggered pretty well with 30 minute waves.

Ch. Rickard asked if he had the numbers for the morning and evening peak hours. Mr. Aboona stated based on the schedule in the morning you have about 74 drivers that would arrive to the parking lot during that one hour period. They would then take their vans to building three to load up. In the afternoon, it would be reversed with 74 vans returning. So it would be 148 movements in the morning and evening. In the morning, there would 37 drivers coming in and taking the vans to building three and the next 30 minutes it would another 37 drivers coming in and going to building three to pick up packages.

Ch. Rickard asked if he can talk about the turning lanes. He assumes that there is a turning lane heading into the northern lot where the buildings are. He is not sure what is near the parking lot as you head southbound. He asked if there were turning lanes to both properties. Mr. Aboona said the development to the north is already set up with

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turning lanes. There is a southbound right turn lane and a northbound left turn lane. As far as the parking lot is concerned, there will be two curb cuts with the northern curb cut will be an in only and will have a southbound right turn lane and a northbound left turn lane. The southern driveway will be an exit only so there is no need for any turn lanes. The driver will have two lanes out for left and right turn lanes. They have gone through a couple of reviews with DuPage County DOT and this design is a result of their comments. They spoke with them today and they have accepted this design.

Ms. Majauskas asked what happens if something happens and the vans get backed up in the morning. Her other question is once the development gets all leased out how much traffic is going to be coming in and out of these three buildings. Mr. Smart said they are very cautious with traffic concerns for all of their facilities because that limits the number of vehicles that can go out and delivery packages. They would have someone at building three with a radio and someone in the parking lot with a radio. If the vehicles don't get out for whatever reason they would not release more vehicles to create a traffic jam at the building.

Ms. Rollins asked if they would need a building or an office building in the parking lot. Mr. Smart stated there is not a plan for an office building. Sometimes there is a box or a tent for the employee. They will have to see what code allows and address that.

Mr. Siegel said building one is fully leased except for an 18,000 unit. They know what the parking is going to look like there. If Amazon takes building two and three that would be at 100% capacity. The parking lot where they could potential put a building would have 150 parking spaces so when they talk about adding these 74 additional cars during peak hours it is still below what could potentially be there. There would also be 45 additional truck docks on the building as well.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any additional questions from the Commission for the applicant. None responded. He then asked if there was anyone in the audience that wanted to speak in regards to this public hearing.

**Public Comment:**

Peter Spelsen asked if it was too late to not build anything there at all until they have more intelligent positions on what to do with that property spot there. Ch. Rickard said they are hearing an application that the property owner has put forth to construct the parking lot.

Mr. Spelsen asked who the owner of the property is and if their minds are already set on putting the parking lot there. Ch. Rickard said the owners are Bridgepoint Downers Grove Phase II, LLC and they are in business to develop the property.

Mr. Spelsen asked if it was too late to make it a farm rather than seeing all this concrete buildings. Ch. Rickard stated the only way it will stay a farm is if one offered to

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purchase it and keep it as a farm. Mr. Spelsen said he is concerned about the increased traffic in the area and feels that it wasn't planned out very well.

Michael Cassa, President and CEO of the Downers Grove Economic and Development Corporation, stated he wanted to congratulate Bridge Development on not only another great investment in their community but for having just won the Developer of the Year Award. Bridgepoint broke ground on this project recently and they are already at a point where they are completing the project in an amazing amount of time. They acquired this additional property which is zoned for business use in the Comprehensive Plan for the additional parking that is needed for the Amazon drivers and vans. Amazon is taking 500,000 square feet of space in our town and from economic development standpoint it is a big win. It will create jobs, occupy buildings and it will make State and National news which is good for Downers Grove. Amazon delivers 5 billion packages annually. They have 250 million feet of warehouse space and they are able to get all these packages delivered on time in either one or two days. If there is any company anywhere that knows the efficiency and timing of getting vans on the road it's Amazon. He is confident that if their own internal study showed that there were going to be any internal problems getting their vans on the road with 74 in an hour within a timely manner they would have not chosen this site. The first Plan Commission meeting that he ever attended in this job was when the folks at Esplanade at Locus Point asked for approval to build a new parking deck. They wanted approval that if they land a huge tenant who is looking for more parking they would be able offer additional parking. They didn't end up needing the parking but the same thing is happening here. If Amazon hadn't come they would be offering a different use for this property. He is very excited about this project and the Downers Grove Economic and Development Corporation fully supports it.

John Symowicz, 940 Maple, said he is actually here for the other public hearing but this has caught his interest. He is a new resident to Downers Grove but he would have to say that Finley Road is the north/south passageway through DuPage County. The one thing that was not mentioned was the daycare center which is just north of there. He has not seen any mention of traffic signals for this project. He feels if they have these roads then they should be on their own property.

Scott Richards, 1130 Warren, stated his concern with any project that comes in is what the impact is going to be on existing businesses and residents who are already in town dealing with traffic. He tries to avoid Finley as much as he can. He was surprised to see that no traffic signal was proposed for getting those vans out onto Finley. He is concerned if there are semi-trucks also involved. He is concerned with the amount of traffic that this project will generate.

Joyce Symowicz, 940 Maple, said she is also a new resident to Downers Grove in the Marquis Building. Their daughter moved to Belmont and Prairie about three years ago. She has had the opportunity to pick up her grandchildren at the Bright Horizons Daycare Center which is in this area. The traffic is horrendous at rush hour when parents are trying to get there and in the morning. On snowy days she would sit in

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traffic for over an hour. The traffic on Finley is horrible and she feels this will just add more traffic to the area.

Mr. Spelsen returned to the podium and suggested making a personal frontage road along Finley from the parking lot to their buildings.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any further questions or comments from the audience. None responded. He then asked staff to make a presentation.

### **Staff Presentation:**

Gabby Baldassari, Development Planner, said she is presenting an overview of the special use petition for the proposed property at 4110 Finley Road. The special use is required to permit an accessory use before the principal use is in place and also to establish parking that is over 1,000 feet away from the principal use. She showed the location of the proposed property on the overhead. The property is currently two parcels and a lot consolidation will be required by staff. She showed on the overhead the proposed buildings and its location to the parking lot.

As part of the proposal, the applicant has provided a traffic study. The diagram does show the traffic movements that will be generated by the use. Lacey and Finley Roads are under the DuPage County jurisdiction and the petitioner is also required to submit plans to the County. The County has recently stated support for the project. The Village's Traffic Engineer is also present this evening. She showed on the overhead the proposed parking lot. All spaces are dimensioned to be slightly larger than average to fit the delivery vans.

Ms. Baldassari showed the special use standards. Staff has determined that the proposal meets the criteria for the special use and therefore recommends approval. A draft motion can be found on page 5 of staff's report.

Mr. Maurer said part of what needs to happen is landscaping and in staff's report there was mention of a pedestrian connection between this lot and the buildings to the north. He asked if that sidewalk was in the ROW on the west side connecting the two properties.

Ms. Baldassari stated the sidewalk and landscaping will be provided to code as well.

Ms. Majauskas said in condition number two it states that if this proposed tenant moves that the parking lot converts back and another tenant could come in and use this parking lot. She asked if the use runs with the land or with the tenant who which applies for it. She also asked who controls the special use. Mr. Zawila stated with this specific case it is tied to the tenant. Because every tenant would have specific operations and staff is not comfortable transfer the use to another user without understanding more about that tenant. If another tenant does come in with similar operations it would have to come before the Plan Commission. A lot of cases the special use does run with the

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land but for this specific special use the Village and the Plan Commission has a right to recommend specific conditions tied to that special use. In this case they are tying it to the tenant in front of you, which is Amazon.

Mr. Maurer asked what is the sidewalk that is being proposed and how does it differ to the sidewalk that is existing now. Mr. Zawila said right now there is a sidewalk on Finley Road between the parking lot and where the office/warehouse buildings were constructed.

Mr. Maurer asked what signage is proposed for the parking lot. Mr. Zawila stated he will have the applicant address that.

Ch. Rickard asked if they could have the Village's Traffic Engineer come up and make comments in regards to the traffic study. Will Lorton, Traffic Engineer for Downers Grove, said he feels that the parking lot is a better option long term throughout the day. When you have an office building you have peaks with the volumes. So the concern about the traffic during peak times with an office building all of the parking would be during those hours. With this plan they are segmenting it so it is not all at once. From his perspective it would be much easier to handle on the network. There are some constraints on Finley with the bridge that crosses I-355. It is a four lane section and it should be a six lane section but that is due to cost and the original design of Finley. There has also been an increase of development in the last 20 to 30 years. Mr. Lorton stated the other thing that was mentioned was semis. The semi's that are currently proposed would come during off peak so it would not impact traffic with these large vehicles.

Ms. Majauskas asked if this is approved is there any control by the Village when these semi's come and go. She asked if they could come in the morning if they wanted. Mr. Lorton said he believes so but it would not be in their best interest.

Ms. Gassen stated you would have that issue regardless of whoever was the tenant. Ms. Gassen asked why there were no red lights. Mr. Lorton stated they were not warranted. There is specific criteria that they have to follow for the installation of signals for various reasons.

Ms. Gassen asked if the traffic study looked at how long it would take someone to turn left onto Finley out of that parking lot. Mr. Lorton said they do have that in the study.

Mr. Maurer asked if there was any other property where a similar case exists in Downers Grove. Mr. Lorton stated the Flavorchem Development is kind of spread out so they are using the local network presently to address that with their semi's and passenger vehicles.

Mr. Boyle asked if DuPage County would limit the curb cuts to the north to help reduce traffic. Mr. Lorton said with the access that they are allowing typically they would only remove it if it becomes a safety route.

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Ch. Rickard asked if there were any questions from the Commission for staff. None responded. He stated that he will ask the petitioner to come forward and make a closing statement.

Mr. Siegel stated there was mention about semi-trucks. Amazon's plan for 15 semi-trucks is really light compared to if buildings two and three were leased to a more industrial user. These buildings each have about 50 docks so that is position for 100 semi-trucks at these buildings. The semi-trucks move slower and cause a bigger back up than the smaller sprinter vans. This will help minimize traffic than the typical user. They don't want to build structures for tenants who are really difficult to revert back to something more market driven if that tenant were to leave. They really like this use because if Amazon were to leave they can go back and build the warehouse which was originally planned.

Mr. Siegel said in regards to the frontage road they would not be able to buy all the properties to the north. There is a huge grading issue and there are two parcels between the parking lot and their building. One is the private owner which is mostly wetlands and an easement you would not be able to put a road through. The second is Nicor themselves and they are not going to sell. They would love to buy more land in Downers Grove, but it is not feasible to buy those properties. There is a traffic light at the intersection of Lacey and Finley so there is one traffic light on sight. It doesn't help the flow of traffic to have two lights so close together. The highway access is to the south so they don't anticipate a lot of semi-trucks or sprinter vans heading north.

Mark Houser, Bridge Development, stated in regards to the traffic study they have accommodated everything that DuPage County DOT had requested. Their strong preferences was limiting the access points to two and having a designated entrance and exit. If they could put a light at building three they would but currently they do not meet warrants for it. They are also probably too close to the light at Finley and Lacey. If at a future date they do meet warrants then they would have no issue with that. Of course everyone would love to have the parking lot adjacent to the buildings and this isn't ideal for Amazon either. It would be a real struggle to try and connect those internally with the wetlands. If they built the industrial building the traffic would be comparable to what they are proposing. They could also put an office building there which would have close to 600 cars parking which would far exceed what they are proposing.

Ms. Gassen asked if there were any other Amazon facilities that are similar to this. Mr. Smart said there are several sites like this and that is why they meet their traffic with the radio calls. Ideally, they would like it all on site but this site will work and they can accommodate the traffic with their internal actions.

Ch. Rickard asked if they wanted to add anything else before they close the public hearing. Mr. Siegel stated they are really excited about the development. He stated everyone has been really helpful with bringing tenants to the Village. He hopes this

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Amazon lease would not be any more impactful than what they had planned for initially. He feels that it will be very successful and thanked the Commission for their time.

Mr. Maurer asked where these delivery vans will be serving. Mr. Smart said they would go between 30 to 60 minutes away from the station. There are some Flex drivers which is similar to an Uber service, which they use very little of it. It helps with influx of packages that get delivered and if they don't have enough vans at a certain station. These would be personal vehicles that people would come and delivery packages in. These would come in after the vans leave in the morning. They follow the same queuing and launch pad as the vans. He showed on the overhead where the queuing would take place.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any further comments. None responded. He then closed the public hearing.

### **Plan Commission Discussion:**

Ms. Majauskas said she does not feel that they meet criteria for a special use for number two. She understands the interest for the investor to have the special use, but she does not see a convenience for the public. It is not desirable for the public. Amazon will be providing jobs but so would something else being built there. She does not understand why Amazon is a company that they need to make exceptions for. This is a new building that was built in the last year. She did not hear anything as to how this is good for the public. Instead it will just increase traffic on a road that is already busy. What she sees is a speculative investor who built these big buildings who now does not have enough parking. Amazon is a great company, but she does not agree with this configuration. The investor made certain choices and they do not comply with what Amazon needs.

Ch. Rickard stated he feels that there is a public convenience and it is proven by the fact of how popular it is. The public thrives on the convenience of having that type of a delivery network available to where they can get product delivered to their front doorstep. He feels the company is the epitome of public convenience.

Mr. Maurer said he gets packages delivered to him at work and to his residence from Amazon. He feels that it is an added convenience for him as well as to Downers Grove residents.

Ch. Rickard stated the parking that was planned for these buildings originally met code and people knew what the traffic involvement could potentially be with three large scale buildings. That would be more truck traffic rather than vans. It was debated and studied and at that time it didn't warrant an additional signal there. An argument can be made that the traffic generated with this proposal is actually less, but it doesn't appear that way because the remote site is all parking and traffic. He feels it is less of an intense use than what it could be. Anyone who deals with trucking, if there were any detrimental traffic situations they are going to adjust their hours to avoid that.

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Mr. Maurer asked if staff has done any comparison as to the traffic generated if it were an office building. Mr. Zawila said staff did ask for them to put a site plan together that would demonstrate what that would look like and they made comments as to the potential impact it would have. Mr. Aboona stated they did a comparison and an office building would generate about 30% more traffic during the peak hours than this parking lot would. Mr. Maurer said he felt this was a very important point.

Ms. Gassen said she also feels that this is a convenience for the public. She feels the one that could make an argument is criteria number three. It all goes back to traffic and with the comment that was just made it helps justify the situation. She supports this application.

Mr. Maurer stated he does not feel that they are setting precedence since it is already being done at Flavorchem. There is also a dealership on Ogden that wanted to park their cars at a remote lot so that they can plow their lot and they are currently doing so. Ogden is a more intense road than Finley.

Mr. Boyle said since the sites are not contiguous that is why it is not a PUD (Planned Unit Development) where it would be more of a campus situation. It is not a realistic solution to try and tie these properties together in terms of trying to cross through wetlands and private property. Since Amazon is in the logistics business it is in their best benefit to make this work. With a ten year lease, as long as they are willing to make adjustments in the future for if a signal is needed. He also finds in favor of this recommendation as well.

Ms. Majauskas stated there is no guarantee that they are limited to 72 vans going out. They could come and go all day and night. If it is only a 50 car difference between an office building and this she would go with the office building. With Amazon they could be coming and going at all hours. She feels they are not just limited to 72 vans and that it could potentially go higher. It is not just about Amazon but what is good for the public.

Ch. Rickard asked if there was any further discussion from the Commission. None responded. He then called for a motion for recommendation.

#### **Plan Commission Recommendation:**

**Ms. Gassen made a motion stating based on the petitioner's submittal, the staff report, and the testimony presented, she finds that the petitioner has met the standards of approval for the two Special Uses as required by the Village of Downers Grove Zoning Ordinance and is in the public interest and therefore, she moves that the Plan Commission recommend to the Village Council approval of 19-PLC-0032, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. The proposed Special Uses shall substantially conform to the staff report, engineering plans prepared by Spaceco Inc. originally on October 18, 2019 and revised on November 20, 2019, and to the landscape plans prepared by**

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**K M Talty Design originally on October 17, 2019, and revised on November 15, 2019, except as such plans may be modified to conform to the Village codes and ordinances.**

- 2. If the parking lot is no longer used for the proposed tenant, a building must be constructed on the property or the parking lot removed and the site restored to green space within two years of the tenant's vacation from the 3800 Finley and 3700 Lacey buildings.**
- 3. A cross access drive shall be provided between the 3800 Finley and 3700 Lacey buildings located north of the subject property.**
- 4. The petitioner shall administratively consolidate the two lots into a single lot of record pursuant to Section 20.507 of the Subdivision Ordinance prior to the issuance of any site development or building permits.**
- 5. The petitioner shall provide the necessary easements.**
- 6. A photometric plan shall be provided that complies with Section 10.030.D of the zoning ordinance.**
- 7. The petitioner shall work with the Village to identify additional landscaping screening requirements on the site in accordance with the Village Code.**

**Motion seconded by Ms. Rollins.**

**AYES: Gassen, Rollins, Boyle, Maurer, Patel, Rickard**

**NAYS: Majauskas**

**The Motion passed**

**19-PLC-0033: A petition seeking Special Use approval to expand an office medical use. The property is currently zoned DC Downtown Core. The property is located directly southeast of the intersection of Main Street and Curtiss Street, commonly known as 5207 Main Street, Downers Grove, IL (PIN 09-08-306-040, -041, and -044), DuPage Medical Group and Woodlawn Corner, LLC/Main 5207, LLC, Petitioner and Woodlawn Corner LLC/Main 5207, LLC, Owner.**

### **Petitioner's Presentation**

David Hene, representative for the owner, introduced his team with him this evening. He thanked staff for helping them throughout this process. DuPage Medical is the hometown doctor group and they have two corporate offices in Downers Grove where they have roughly 450 employees. The economic engine that is this company, starts in Downers Grove and it fuels and drives that innovation across the region in healthcare. They are one of the more active groups that is seen in this sector. There are 127 offices across the region with 5 of those being in Downers Grove. They are currently serving 29 different medical specialties.

Their request tonight is for a special use for a medical office approval for approximately 15,956 square feet of this office building. The overall building size is 16,538 on the ground floor. The difference is due to storage areas which are not counted towards the use of the parking requirements. There is approximately a 4,400 square foot basement which is currently storage and will remain so. The property is zoned Downtown Core

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and it is adjacent to other properties similarly zoned as well as properties zoned Downtown business. The parcel itself is 1.2 acres.

Mr. Hene said they have the building at the north end of the property and an open parking field to the south. The building has been there for many years and there hasn't been a tremendous amount of investment into the property in the last several years. They are hoping to change the building and give it life and vitality. The parking lot to the south currently has 71 parking spaces that will be increased to 76 which will meet the zoning. They plan on adding significant landscaping to the perimeter as well as to the north end of the parking lot. This building used to be a grocery store and is no longer a viable retail building. They are trying to bring it into compliance with current standards of the ordinance.

The Comprehensive Plan designates this as a key focus area which encourages a reduction of concrete and asphalt which contributes to stormwater runoff. They are adding significant perimeter as well as internal landscaped areas so there will be less impermeable surface and more greenery. It is also encouraged to have a development that is pedestrian orientated. There will be a sidewalk that extends from Main Street across the south side of the building. This will help serve not only their building but the Village parking garage on the east side of their site. They would expect people coming to their business would also walk to local business in the area. They will have a bike rack on the east side of their building. They are promoting a diverse set of uses. The Comprehensive Plan encourages shared parking when feasible. They are working with the Village to allow public parking within the lot after business hours.

Mr. Hene stated their development will comply with the zoning. The use is a medical office use and 3,000 square feet would be permitted by right in the Downtown Core District. They are more than that at roughly 10,000 square feet, so they are increasing it by a third. There is a pharmacy in the building as well as a closed restaurant that would be combined into one cohesive office space.

As far as traffic circulation, he feels that it will improve with the special use. They will be providing a sidewalk which will go from the parking garage to the downtown area and they are meeting the parking requirement. Their patients will not have to circulate on the public streets to find parking because they will be providing parking. They will also again be providing shared parking after business hours which will help the traffic circulation in the evening and the weekend. He will now have Mr. Rehmer come up and speak.

Kent Rehmer, Architect, said they have been the architect for DuPage Medical Group for roughly 18 years. The building is an existing one story building of approximately 6,500 square feet. The existing building is painted brick with glass and green fabric awnings. The parking lot is paved to all the property lines with no landscaping. Their goal is to upgrade the appearance of the building not only for DMG but for the community of the whole.

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Currently the parking lot is right up to the sidewalk. There is about a two foot raised six inch curb right at the property line. There are retaining walls that surround two sides of the parking lot. They are adding landscaping to the corners of the parking lot. They would like to make the landscape strips a little larger however the existing draining system of the parking lot prevents them extending them. They also have to maintain the 24-foot drive isle in line with the current curb cut and reserve enough room for a sidewalk. This will connect the Main Street sidewalk to their entrance and it will extend around the building where they are crossing the alley to the sidewalk that is adjacent to the parking garage. Along the street front they would be putting in a decorative fence and they brought some examples of what the fence will look like. He showed slides of what the landscaping and the building will look like and went through a list of the materials that they will be using.

Mr. Rehmer stated one concern staff had was the painted brick. They did walk around the downtown area and there are six other buildings that have painted brick. They do not believe that they would be able to sandblast the brick. They are reducing the amount of brick by adding more windows. In regards to the top of the building there is no articulation, so they are proposing a metal panel ban to provide some relief in the masonry façade. He showed different renderings of the proposed building. They will also meet all the requirements that the Village has for signage.

Ch. Rickard said this seems like a little difficult building to try and deal with and the fact that it resides in the downtown core which has a different flavor. It looks like it might be suited for a suburban area rather than a downtown area. He understands that this is an existing building and it is an improvement over what is there but did they look at other options to give it a more downtown appearance. Would it be possible to make it look like three different uses rather than one building? He asked if they could take the retaining wall and railing area and improve it to make it more of a gathering like in a downtown area.

Mr. Rehmer stated they studied a number of different designs for the building. It really is a challenge to take a one story building and make it appear taller when you are adding windows. He feels the character of the building fits in with the pub next door which has similar design elements. As a maintenance issue they would rebuild that retaining wall as necessary and repair the railing. There are other options for that but they do not have any doors along there.

Ch. Rickard said the goal in this core area is to keep some visual interest and give people some reason to hang out down there. There is plenty to do down there, but this building doesn't give people a reason to hang out there besides go to their appointment.

Ms. Majauskas stated she agrees with the Ch.. They are putting this medical building in the middle of what should be restaurants and shops. The property is so long that it stops people from walking. When she looks at the buildings she does not see any concessions made for what the downtown area should be. She would have an easier time with it if the first floor was maybe a restaurant or retail. There is a reason why

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medical is supposed to be 3,000 feet because it is supposed to be small and compact. She feels that they are asking for five times of what is allowed and they don't care what the downtown looks like. She asked what concessions did they give by being in the downtown area.

Mr. Rehmer said one of the primary items that they did approach was the architecture on the building and making a significant upgrade to what is there. The building and the property is what they have and it is not what they created. It has been a fixture of downtown Downers Grove for many decades.

Ms. Majauskas stated she understands that they are stuck with the building. However, what are they doing to draw people to the downtown area. Examples might be putting a restaurant or retail in there.

Mr. Maurer said the goal or the planning is to create activated façade in the downtown retail zone. There is another medical office building in the downtown and it is at the end of Rogers where it meets Main. The curtains are perpetually drawn because there are private medical issues going on there. There is entire street frontage here which would normally be windows. He asked what would be along the front windows.

Mr. Hene stated the building is one area but the parking lot is another. The landscape and fencing is used to create that edge where an edge currently doesn't exist. The use of the building is not changing tremendously than what it is today. It is already about 10,000 square feet of medical. They can look at options to liven up the sidewalk in the front of the building. You are no longer seeing small medical offices any more. It is really larger organizations and healthcare is changing to a more holistic center. This will provide people with convenience. They do believe that a medical use is a critical component to the vitality of the downtown. It not only provides very stable jobs but it creates an activity that will have an effect on the other businesses there.

Mr. Maurer said he does not disagree but he does not see what it offers to the street façade which is very pedestrian orientated environment. He still gets the sense that there will be a lot of closed curtains.

Mr. Hene stated there is a need for privacy for people who are having examinations. There is a fairly deep sidewalk on the front of the building where they can add benches and planter boxes.

Ms. Majauskas said she would not have a problem with the medical offices being on the second floor. She is concerned that they would be setting precedence if they approve this. She has a problem with cutting off the vibrancy of the downtown.

Ms. Rollins added that the parking lot also adds to the length of the building.

Mr. Hene stated as far as setting precedence, one of the things that would stop it would be the parking requirement. There aren't other properties that would be able to provide

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the parking without the Commission granting a variance. Mr. Zawila said there are two uses in the zoning ordinance that require parking in the downtown. One of which is medical office and the other is residential.

Ch. Rickard stated there is part of the logic behind limiting that use to the smaller square footage because it does make it very dependent on auto use. He understands that people get torn between wanting to fill empty storefronts and what they fill them with. When he walks downtown and he gets to real estate offices, he feels that these are dead zones. There is no reason to stop or hang out there. Mr. Hene said after talking with the architect one of the things that they could do on the Main Street side of the building is move the administration or some of the doctor's office to that part of the building so there will be open light to the street.

Mr. Maurer stated that would be a great help. He is surprised that our code does not require offices above the ground floor in this location. If you think of a Friday night in the summer when the car show is going on and people are sitting in their lawn chairs this would be the dead zone because there wouldn't be anything to see. This is just a blank wall across the street from a historic cemetery.

Mr. Boyle asked if they could take the retaining wall and raised pedestrian path down and just make a wider sidewalk. Mr. Hene said he thinks that would have the opposite effect of what they are trying to achieve because there is a floor height that is fixed. At the north end of the building on the sidewalk you would be looking up to the building.

Mr. Boyle stated the sidewalk is kind of tight there with a stroller so he thought to make better use of it, widening it might help. Mr. Hene said he thinks what they are all trying to say is they need to have their architect take into consideration the core downtown area and come up with another design. Currently the way it is designed it just looks like one long building that will be sitting in the middle of Main Street.

Ch. Rickard said he thinks the goals would be rather than to redesign the entire façade now, but to ask the architect to redesign so it looks more like an urban cur building.

Mr. Maurer stated this might be an area where a planter box or landscaping might be needed. It can match the cemetery that is across the street. Shrubs and benches would serve value to the community.

Ms. Majauskas said she feels that this is a building for Ogden Avenue. Planters and benches might not solve the problem of this big huge building not being a downtown core type of use. She has a problem with the use. This is a medical office that has no business being downtown.

Ms. Gassen asked for clarification about the purpose of this meeting as a special use discussion rather than variance.

Mr. Zawila confirmed this.

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Mr. Hene asked if he could continue with his presentation. The first standard is that the proposed use is expressly authorized as a special use in the district in which it is to be located. As he mentioned earlier they currently have 10,000 square feet in the medical office today. If it was their desire to continue with the 10,000 square feet they could do that on an existing non-conforming basis without any improvement to the site of the building or landscaping. That is not what they are after and they are very much a part of this community. The existing non-conforming space is a pharmacy and fast food failed restaurant. The approximate 4,400 square foot basement is not occupied and is only used for storage and will remain that way. A medical practice did lease the entire building in 1985.

The next is that the proposed use is at the proposed location is necessary and desirable to provide a service or facility that is in the interest of public convenience and will contribute to the general welfare of the neighborhood or community. DuPage Medical will provide stable employment opportunities to its associates while offering essential healthcare services to neighbors, residents of the community at large, and others outside the Village who may not appreciate the many working, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and living options in downtown Downers Grove. DuPage Medical Group employees, patients and vendors will patronize local businesses and enhance the overall environment that stabilizing downtown Downers Grove and the community overall as an attractive and convenient place to work, shop, seek services, and live. The growing population approximate to the site will be able to walk to their appointments or jobs without using private transportation therefore reduce congestion on private roads. The property will remain available for the summer Friday evening car show and the annual Bonfield Express 5K race which they are happy to host.

Mr. Hene read the last criteria for the special use. The proposed use only increases the medical use by a third of the building. DuPage Medical Group and the substantial building and site improvements will positively impact the health, safety and general welfare of persons residing in the vicinity. Renovations to the building exterior and landscaping will enhance the environment and the attractiveness to the neighborhood. Thus solidifying the appointment base and daytime activity downtown. The investment in the property and healthcare services provided will be an increase to property values and improvement in the vicinity. They meet the required parking and all other zoning. It will not burden the on street parking or the public garage that is immediately adjacent. DuPage Medical Group and the owner will work with the Village to accommodate public parking after business hours. He appreciates that they have concerns but feels that they demonstrated that they meet the standards under the special use requirements. They feel they are bringing a first class user who will be helpful to the property, the downtown, and the community at large. They have reviewed the staff report and agree with the conditions. They are available to answer any further questions that they may have.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any further questions from the Commission for the applicant.

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Ms. Gassen asked if staff could just elaborate on condition three regarding parking. Mr. Zawila said they are engaging the applicant in regards to a shared parking agreement because there is not one currently.

Ms. Gassen asked if they do not get the special use, can they continue operating with the current square footage that they have. Mr. Zawila stated that is correct. The applicant was correct that at one point it was entirely a medical office.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any further questions from the Commission. None responded. He then asked if there was anyone in the audience that wanted to speak in regards to this public hearing.

**Public Comment:**

Linda Dean, 5227 Main Street, said she has lived downtown for 34 years. She thanked DuPage Medical Group because she is so happy that there is not going to be another four-story apartment building downtown. She supports the downtown businesses. She does not believe when the Commission says when you reach this building you are not going to go any further. If you are going to shop downtown then you will. This parking agreement is such a bonus because there is not enough parking not only for residents but for visitors. She parks in the parking garage and pays the quarterly fee. If she does not get home before 5 p.m. she does not have a parking space because they are all full. Having that agreement will do wonders for the downtown. She feels they are being picky on how it will look. It will look better than it is now.

Scott Richards, 1130 Warren Avenue, stated he thinks they are doing their best and are trying to be a good neighbor. They are trying to enhance the downtown with their property. They are willing to share their parking lot and it is desperately needed. He is not sure how it will be controlled especially once Fox Tail opens up. The wrought iron fence and the extension of the sidewalk to the parking garage are all wonderful features. When he first saw the rendering he thought it was a generic box. A lot of the residents in town appreciate what they have downtown as far as the quaintness and charm. This building is a little too modern and he would like to see it compliment what is already there. He thinks the look needs to be soften but overall it is an improvement and he supports it.

John Symowicz, 940 Maple, said he is a new resident at the Marquis on Maple. His biggest issue with living downtown is parking. He asked how many doctors they would have at the facility. He is waiting for a parking space in the garage. He feels that this is a great idea to have downtown and people are going to use the doctor office. The only thing worse than a medical facility would be another restaurant. There is no space for the new restaurant that is going to open. He is concerned about the parking and feels that they should provide more parking. He suggested a parking deck.

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Pete Mesha, 940 Maple, stated he also lives at the Marquis building. He loves the downtown and the walkability. He is also the HOA President of the building. One point is that they might be losing the pharmacy and it would be wonderful if they would still have one there. He does not believe that there is another pharmacy downtown. He wanted to confirm that their view would not be changing. He would appreciate screening of any mechanicals. A lighting design would be helpful because the downtown is already so bright. The existing signage is awful especially in the parking lot. He totally agrees with rethinking of the sidewalk and making it wider rather than elevated. He thinks they should also consider permeable pavers and not just the benefit of landscaping. He asked if there was anything changing to the "L" shape.

Kathy Owens, 940 Maple, said she is also a resident at the Marquis. She was surprised to hear some of the comments about people not wanting to walk down to their end of Main Street. When they located here she wanted to be able to walk everywhere. She utilizes everything from hair, nails, dentist, doctors and restaurants. She is not sure if they need another restaurant but would like to see the continued growth in the downtown area. She agrees with the comments about making the front a little more attractive. She sees the people that come and go from there and does not object to that kind of service in the downtown area at all.

Pam Borchardt, 940 Maple, stated she also lives at the Marquis. She specifically wanted to live in the downtown area and she has walked to the downtown area for 34 years. She was concerned that they were going to take this little patch and make a five story building out of it. Over the years she has felt that specific parcel has gotten meaner with their no parking signs. She is thrilled with this plan. She too would also like to see a nicer façade. She feels that the building has been a little separate from them and would like to see them participate in activities like the Halloween window decorating. She is sad that they would be losing the pharmacy. It will be nice to have the building refreshed and the parking lot have more greenery. She feels their town is a nice mix and does not see an issue with a medical building.

Joyce Symowicz, 940 Maple, said she lives in the Marquis building. They bought downtown so they could walk to the things they need and the train. A medical building would be fine, except having worked in the medical field she knows that parking lots can end up filled at doctor offices. She is concerned as to how this is going to impact parking in Downers Grove. Especially for residents who have visitors come and they can't find a parking space. She is concerned that the 70 spaces can be taken up by just the staff alone. What happens if they put in an urgent care and how will that effect parking? Her concern is that their building has a sidewalk to the parking garage so will their patients be parking there. That parking is supposed to be for the residents and the patrons of the downtown. She would suggest that a parking deck be installed. When she moved here she thought about going to restaurants and concerts. She never thought about going to the doctor's office. She would just want them to keep in mind how long someone normally waits in a physician's office and the amount of staff it supports.

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Leo Sterk, 930 Curtiss, stated he regrets that they will lose the retail there but understands what they are doing. He agrees that they need to rethink that whole raised sidewalk. They need to de-emphasize the building and create something that brings your eye towards the street like the cemetery does. If they could mirror each other it might help bring it all together. He would definitely ask them to think about nighttime lighting because that is a long stretch there before you reach the next building. He likes the idea of them moving the administrative offices to that outside wall.

Michael Cassa, DCEDC, said the previous owner of the building knew that Amita Health was going to leave so he looked to find a medical user to replace him. Two advantages for him would be that there would be no improvements required on the property and the building was already set up for a medical use. He eventually sold the property. If it was easy to convert that property into a retail or restaurant use it would have happened. Most projects in a downtown that are significant, well over an acre site, would have to be subdivided. Most properties in a downtown are not this large. What will happen is it will remain a medical use or it will become a complete redevelopment of most likely multi-family. He disagrees with the thought that a medical use is not good for a downtown. If it wasn't then it wouldn't be a permitted use in the Comprehensive Plan. DuPage Medical which is headquarters in Downers Grove has opened facilities in a downtown throughout the western suburbs. They have great additions to the downtown because it is a professional use that brings people and employees to the downtown during the day. You need to look at the alternative that could happen to the site. Either it will be another medical user who by right will not have to make any improvements or it could become multi-family because it is such a large site and then you lose the parking. Getting more professional people in the downtown will help the restaurants and the shops. There should be more of a mix of uses in the downtown.

Ch. Rickard said he walks to his doctor's office and dentist. He agrees that they need more professional uses downtown however in the ordinance it talks about allowing more of those uses on the second floor and leaving the main floor to retail and restaurants.

Mr. Cassa stated he agrees but this building is only one story so what most likely will happen to it is going to be more of the same without the improvements being made. He does not see a redevelopment on this site unless it is multi-family.

Discussion continued in regards to having professional businesses on second levels. Mr. Zawila said since the Zoning Ordinance has been mentioned he just wanted to add that the zoning does allow offices to be on the first floor in the downtown core and the downtown business.

Ms. Majauskas stated she is not against the medical offices and they have been there for a long time. She does not think it is a good idea to put it front and center. She is concerned that the pharmacy is going away. People who go to the doctor and get a prescription now have to get in their cars and go get that filled.

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Ch. Rickard said it is more of a scale issue than of the use. He understands that they could still operate there, but they are wanting to increase that. It is already not an ideal situation and expanding it at a time where they put a lot of effort into the whole zoning breakdown. Nowhere in that Comprehensive Plan discussion for the downtown zoning did he hear anyone talk about expanding those types of uses on the ground floor.

Ch. Rickard asked if there was anyone else in the audience that wanted to come up and speak in regards to this public hearing. None responded. He then asked for staff to make a presentation.

**Staff Presentation:**

Flora Ramirez, Development Planner, stated the petition before you tonight is for a special use approval for a medical office use for the Downtown Core Zoning District. She provided on the overhead some views of the existing building and the list of existing conditions. The building footprint will remain the same as well as the existing parking lot. She showed the proposed site plan on the overhead highlighting some of the improvements. They are proposing connecting the sidewalk to the parking garage, as well as the wrought iron fence, and the landscape islands. The parking requirement for the proposed use has been exceeded. She showed the elevations that the architect had commented on along with the exterior brick that is going to be painted. She showed the special use criteria that staff feels has been met and with that staff does recommend approval. A draft motion can be found on page five of staff's report.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any questions for staff.

Mr. Boyle asked in the parking lot portion, do the trees fall outside of that sidewalk. Ms. Ramirez said those are existing in the parkway. She asked if he was wondering if there was enough clearance for people to get through.

Ms. Gassen stated the raised sidewalk is actually the frontage of all the other buildings on Main Street. If you got rid of the raised sidewalk it will set the building back compared to the other buildings on the street. Mr. Zawila said he thinks that there is 48 inches between the existing fencing and the tree grate that is there.

Ms. Majauskas asked if the special use ran with the land. Ms. Ramirez stated that is correct.

Ms. Majauskas asked if this is approved what is stopping anyone else from wanting a medical facility in the downtown. Mr. Zawila said if it is an office space it is allowed downtown and does not require parking. The medical use in the downtown requires parking.

Ch. Rickard asked if there were any further questions for staff from the Commission. None responded. He then asked if the petitioner wanted to come forward and answer any comments that were made or make a closing statement.

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Mr. Hene offered clarification that if the use is abandoned after six months then the special use expires. What they are presenting to you today is what you will get, rather than what you could get 20 years later. Fortunately for them they are able to meet the parking. He would like to thank all the residents that came out this evening whether for or against their application. He has never seen so many people at a hearing that are in favor of the application. There was comment about the pharmacy and it is closing. The only reason the pharmacy is still open is because it is a State Licensed business. The gentleman that operates the pharmacy is moving to a community outside of Downers Grove and he can't get a State inspection to show up at his new property to approve that he can operate there. He will eventually leave the site regardless of what they do. He then introduced George Georgacopoulos to come up and speak in regards to staffing at the facility.

Chris Georgacopoulos, DuPage Medical Group, thanked everyone for coming out this evening. On a daily basis there will be about 15 care providers. It will be a mix of physicians, nurse practitioners, and diabetic educators depending on the services for that day with an additional 15 staff members to support those clinicians. There will be no x-rays or urgent care there. It will be more pediatrics, internal medicine, gynecology, etc. to support children and adults. One thing DuPage Medical looks at is efficiency because they do not want patients sitting there for an hour. Their main focus is providing excellent care but also in a timely manner. So he does not see the need for any additional parking. He understands everyone's concern but that is not a concern for them. He is available to answer any questions on how they plan to operate the building.

Ms. Rollins asked what the hours of operation are. Mr. Georgacopoulos stated it will vary day to day. Normally it will be about 7:30 a.m. to about 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday they are planning to operate a little longer from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. They are trying to offer alternative hours for their patients. Saturdays will be typically 7:30 a.m. to noon.

Ch. Rickard asked if a different facilities plan had worked out, if this still would be proposed. Mr. Georgacopoulos said this was not necessarily instead, rather a convenient location based off of where existing patients live.

Mr. Hene said there was a comment that was made about lighting where one party thought there was too much and another thought there should be more. There are streetlights to light the public way and they will meet the Village's lighting ordinance. They certainly want a safe parking lot but there are residents that live nearby. He does not believe that they can screen mechanicals from above. A question was asked about the alley and they do not own it so they do not have any plans for it. There were a number of points brought up about a restaurant, if they are not able to move forward with their plan then they would have to look at another plan. They would probably reoccupy medical with medical and if there were to be a restaurant in the old subway then they would not be able to do the shared parking agreement with the Village. His colleague Tim Rose would like to say a few words.

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Tim Rose stated they have been through many projects like this and they started out with buildings like this that were more geared for retail. One challenge that they face with this site is the beautiful frontage that they have on the main north/south street. Most of all the small type retailers that want to occupy those sites, like Jimmy Johns or Subway, they want direct end parking. It is very challenging to rent space that has street frontage. The thing about this building is it is older and not pretty and they are planning to bring 3.5 million dollars to this facility. If they don't get the special use he is not sure DuPage Medical will want to stay there and then it becomes a question of what do they develop this into. It is challenging and he feels it will not be a pretty outcome. The previous owner tried to lease those storefronts. They believe that they are bringing something beautiful to the Village and do not feel that it will be a big impact. They would really appreciate a positive vote and thanked the Commission.

Ch. Rickard said this will then close the public hearing.

### **Plan Commission Discussion:**

Ms. Majauskas stated she feels that this plan has not been thought out. She feels it needs to be revamped to make it viable to Downers Grove. She really didn't like the scare tactics that she heard. She did not appreciate that and believes it is a working relationship between the Village and the business owners. As a Commission they need to decide what is best for the Village. She is not saying that DuPage Medical is a bad idea but rather the plan hasn't been tweaked to make it workable for everybody. The parking lot has been a thorn forever and the current owner doesn't let anybody park there now. She feels it just needs to be reworked to make it better for all of the residents of Downers Grove.

Mr. Boyle said he feels the criteria has been met for the special use. It is an existing building and it is a known business that has been in their community. He feels that there are a couple of items that need to be discussed, probably not by this group, in regards to design elements and pedestrian walkway. He would support the recommendation.

Mr. Patel stated he struggles with this, but feels that DuPage Medical has made a good effort providing improvements to this building. He would also support approval of this.

Ms. Gassen said she agrees with Mr. Boyle that it meets the special use criteria, but she also agrees with Ms. Majauskas. She feels DuPage Medical Group is amazing but she does not feel that it is a partnership and they are not meeting their downtown fully. Again this is not the place to discuss design options. She hopes that they would take into consideration the aesthetics and the walkability movement in the downtown with their design. She is for the project but hopes that they will go back to the design.

Ch. Rickard stated he does not have an issue with the medical use in the downtown. What he sees is a suburban building in the downtown. It looks and functions like a

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suburban building and not something that their Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Core is really looking for. If the applicant is willing he would like to continue this and have the applicant go back and tweak it so it fits more in the downtown area. Right now he is leaning to not vote in favor of it because it does not seem appropriate for the intent of the downtown. It is not only the aesthetics but also the way the front wall functions. He would be more in favor if those items were addressed.

Mr. Zawila commented that the options would be to continue this item or to add a condition to address the concerns.

Mr. Maurer said he agrees with the Ch.'s comments. He is all for medical office in downtown Downers Grove. He believes medical offices on the main street of a heavily pedestrian street is a terrible idea. He thinks about a year ago the veterinary clinic that came in at the edge of downtown. They did a fantastic job working with the community. They are building it like a house with a big front porch and rocking chairs which is appealing to walk past. One of the problems with this building is that raised sidewalk. He finds it very odd that with spending three million that they landscaped the parking lot so extensively. He asked why not put that in front of this building. Nobody wants to look into the building and nobody wants to look out. If you look across the street there is nice appropriate landscaping. It would better to block off that raised sidewalk and not allow people up there. He would support this with an additional condition on the recommendation for approval that they do something to not put a person's medical treatment front and center in a pedestrian environment.

Ch. Rickard stated this is not something small so he feels it should come back.

Ms. Gassen said she was disappointed because she thought this whole site was going to be redeveloped. They are asking for a special use and this is an existing building that they are trying to make more appealing. The biggest loss is the stairway that leads to nowhere. She wishes that there were doors there so there was a reason for people to go up there, but she is not sure how the interior of this building is laid out.

Mr. Hene stated he did not mean for his comment to come off as a threat or an aggressive statement. What he tried to do this evening is to provide factual information to the Plan Commission. Their only objective with the comment and any other comment was for the Plan Commission as well as everyone in attendance here to have the accurate information that is needed to make the decision that needs to be made. He apologized if it came off in a negative way. To address on how to move forward, if it's the Plan Commission's desire that they address the front of the building, figure out how to fix the sidewalk to make it more pedestrian friendly and to animate that façade of the building it would be more acceptable. From now and when they go to Village Council they will work with staff to come up with a better option. If the Village Council doesn't agree with the changes or if they feel they have to come back to the Plan Commission then that is what they will do. They have done a sincere effort to clean up what is not a great property. He would however like to keep moving forward.

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Ch. Rickard said he personally would like to see it come back. He cannot see moving it forward stating that they would approve it if it had these items.

Mr. Hene asked if they could get a conditional approval and leave it in the hands of their capable staff and the Village Council. It is not like they have a blank slate here and they have been at this for many months. It is tremendously expensive and the longer it takes them to get this done it will be even more so. They are willing to take the risk that they can satisfy staff and the Village Council and if not then they lost that gamble.

Discussion continued on whether to add a condition and vote or to have the applicant come back with a new design.

Ch. Rickard stated he understands the applicant's wishes and asked if there was any further comments. None responded. He then called for a motion recommendation.

**Plan Commission Recommendation:**

**Mr. Maurer made a motion stating based on the petitioner's submittal, the staff report, and the testimony presented, he finds that the petitioner has met the standards of approval for a Special Use as required by the Village of Downers Grove Zoning Ordinance and is in the public interest and therefore, he moves that the Plan Commission recommend to the Village Council approval of 19-PLC-0033, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. The proposed Special Use request to expand the office medical use shall substantially conform to the Elevations, 3D Renderings, Site Plan, and Floor Plan prepared by Eckenhoff Saunders Architects, dated September 12, 2019 and last revised on November 20, 2019 and the Landscape Plan prepared by Kimley Horn, dated October 22, 2019 last revised on November 14, 2019, attached to this report except as such plans may be modified to conform to Village codes, ordinances, and policies.**
- 2. The building shall be equipped with an automatic suppression and an automatic and manual fire alarm system.**
- 3. The property owners shall cooperate and enter into a shared parking agreement in a manner acceptable to the Village.**
- 4. The retaining wall and railing along Main Street shall be replaced**
- 5. The basement shall be permitted for storage only.**
- 6. The Main Street façade be enhanced with landscaping and/or scale and granularity of material treatments and keeping with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to soften the façade visually, decrease opportunities of view directly into the windows while improving pedestrian circulation.**

**Motion seconded by Ms. Gassen.**

**AYES: Maurer, Gassen, Boyle, Patel, Rollins**

**NAYS: Majauskas and Rickard**

**Motion passed**

APPROVED 1-6-2020

There being no further discussion, Ch. Rickard called for a Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Boyle moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Patel.  
The Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Halper, Recording Secretary  
(Transcribed from mp3 recording)

**DOWNERS GROVE**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS COMMISSION**

**Minutes**

**December 12, 2019**

I. Roll Call – Meeting Start: 7:00 p.m.

Chair Pelloso asked for a Roll Call:

Present: Chair Pelloso, Commissioner Ellis, Commissioner Farley, Commissioner Marron, Commissioner Kuchar, Commissioner Dantoft

Absent: Commissioner Bement

Staff Member: Mr. Daniel Carlsen

Chair Pelloso asked for a motion to allow for Commissioner Dantoft to participate electronically. Commissioner Ellis made a motion to allow Commissioner Dantoft to participate electronically. Commissioner Kuchar seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

II. Visitor Welcome

Chair Pelloso welcomed Mayor Barnett and the rest of the visitors present at the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves. Brad Phillips is a resident that recently got involved in the Clean Energy Task Force. Ken Lerner from the Pierce Downers Heritage Alliance introduced himself. David Rose introduced himself.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. View and Approval of October 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Kuchar seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

V. New Business

**Role of Environmental Concerns Commission**

Chair Pelloso welcomed Mayor Barnett to discuss the role of the Environmental Concerns Commission. Mayor Barnett thanked the Environmental Concerns Commission for allowing him to attend the meeting, and wanted to discuss the proposed changes to the Environmental Concerns Commission that the Commission brought to Village Council's attention in the first half of 2019 as well as the letter Mayor Barnett sent to the

commission members in response to the requested changes. Mayor Barnett stated he wanted to attend tonight's meeting to make sure that the Commission members and Village Council members are on the same page as to what is expected from the Environmental Concerns Commission now and in the future, and if there are any questions that the Mayor could answer. Chair Pelloso thanked Mayor Barnett for giving the Environmental Concerns Commission this opportunity to discuss the Commission with the Mayor and started by giving a full summation of the letter Mayor Barnett sent to the Commission members which reiterated that the Village Council made a unanimous decision to defer the review of the roles of Board and Commissions.

Chair Pelloso stated that she understands that there is work capacity issues and does not want the Environmental Concerns Commission to be a resource burden, but feels that the Environmental Concerns Commission has been used as a valuable resource to help staff in the past, rather than being a burden, and stated possible action items the Commission would be able to provide benefit to the Village.

Chair Pelloso stated that the Environmental Concerns Commission can be utilized to ease the workload on the staff employees, the Commissioners stated that the unique abilities of the Commissioners can assist the staff in legwork for specific sustainability initiatives, which is why the Environmental Concerns Commission requested changes to their role in the Village. Mayor Barnett stated that members of the Council would like to review the structure of Boards and Commissions, but reiterated that the workload of High Priority Action Items need to be understood before the timing of that process can be determined, and until then the Village Council would assign items to Boards and Commissions as they had continued to do so. Commissioner Dantoft and Commissioner Marron stated that they believe the Environmental Concerns Commission could assist with High Priority Action Items like the Facilities Replacement and Sustainability Plan (FRSP). Commissioner Farley stated she feels like the seven council members like to be in control of every decision. Mayor Barnett stated that there could be opportunity for input but the plan is in very early stages and Council needs to make many more decisions related to the plan before environmental factors are up for consideration.

Commissioner Ellis asked when the requested changes were presented to the Village Council members and when they were considered. Mayor Barnett stated that the Village Council members meet individually or in pairs with Village Staff and the items were considered in late May and June in 2019, and reiterated that the requested changes were not rejected, but that during the Long Range Planning process the Council decided not to review the role of boards and commissions at this time. Mayor Barnett added that all boards and commissions may be reviewed and that Village Council may have different ideas on how each board or commission should serve, but that will be decided during the review period.

The Environmental Concerns Commission stated their frustration with not being directed by Council for any of the requested items that were submitted. Mayor Barnett stated that there could be a possibility to review the list of requests submitted to Council and find an "easy win" for the Environmental Concerns Commission, and that the list can be redistributed to the Commissioners for review.

Chair Pelloso asked if the Facilities Replacement and Sustainability Plan discussions are

supposed to start at the December 17<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. Mayor Barnett stated that the discussions are starting on December 17<sup>th</sup> to serve as high level discussions on scope that the Village Council can begin to agree upon, granular items such as environmental sustainability factors will be a discussion point much further in the process after the high level discussions on project scope has been agreed upon. Chair Pelloso expressed her concern about how the Environmental Concerns Commission will be utilized during the interim period. Commissioner Ellis reiterated that there is opportunity for the Commission to operate in the interim within the current powers and duties but would like feedback from Council if the Commission does submit anything for Council consideration. Mayor Barnett agreed with the concept, but stated that workload capacity for Village staff is still an issue, and before that workload capacity is reduced it will be difficult to find staff members that can implement any requested changes to current boards and commissions.

Resident Brad Phillips commented that he is hoping that the Village Council will seek input from groups like the Environmental Concerns Commission for the FRSP. Mayor Barnett stated that there will be several meetings for public input in general and the scope of public input will need to be agreed upon by the Village Council.

Resident David Rose stated he is concerned that the Village Council is not allowing the Environmental Concerns Commission to have discussions about ways to promote environmental sustainability and public discussion on their own initiative. Mayor Barnett stated that this concern is something that will be reviewed during the greater discussion on the role of each board and commission. Mr. Rose stated that residents may feel they can make a greater difference as an independent resident rather than as part of a board or commission. Commissioner Farley stated that organizations such as the Downers Grove Public Library have filled in as a leader in environmental initiatives.

Resident Ken Lerner stated he was glad to hear that employee workload capacity is identified is in issue and that Village Council is being active at addressing. Mr. Lerner wanted to notify the Mayor that while he understands the environmental issues of the FRSP will be decided at a later time in the process, there might be a possibility for the commission to provide input earlier in the process. Mayor Barnett stated that the Village was able to leverage the previous versions of the FRSP to identify certain environmental concerns from the early stages of the project.

## VI. Staff update on ongoing projects

### **Green Leadership Award Winner**

Mr. Carlsen stated that the Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition (CACC) named the Village of Downers Grove as one of its 2019 Leadership Award winners. The awards are given annually to organizations that take actions to reduce petroleum consumption and improve air quality locally. The CACC is one of nearly 100 coalitions across the country affiliated with the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program. "The individuals and organizations we are honoring are terrific examples for others to follow to learn about the advantages of clean-vehicle and alternative-fuel technologies," said Samantha Bingham, coordinator of Chicago Area Clean Cities.

## VII. Adjournment

Chair Pelloso asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Farley seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.**

Meeting adjourned.

### **Attachments**

Addendum to 12.12.2019 Minutes

Letter from Mayor Barnett to the ECC

## **December 12, 2019 Amended Minutes: Addendum**

At the January 9, 2020 Environmental Concerns Commission (ECC), Commissioner Ellis made a motion to amend the December 12, 2019 Minutes to be presented as an Addendum.

Commissioner Kuchar seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Full call for ECC to be utilized**

- The Environmental Concerns Commission understands that items are directed by Village Council, and most commissioners would be okay with that, but the issue is that commissions are not being leveraged and not being directed to receive any Council direction. The lack of direction left commissioners feeling unmotivated and it took a while to get passion back into the Commission. The Environmental Concerns Commission reached out to Village Council so that the Council understands the valuable resources and skill sets available that the Commission members have to offer. Not only could the Environmental Concerns Commission assist Village Council, the Commission could also assist staff members in endeavors for environmental sustainability with an intent to reduce staff burden or be neutral to staff burden, rather than increase it.

### **List of 12 requests to Village Council were denied in May/June and not communicated to ECC until December**

- The Environmental Concerns Commission was not aware that the Village Council reviewed the list of 12 requests in May and June of 2019 until it was communicated to the Commission at the December meeting, at which time they were notified none of the requests were accepted at that time.

### **Suggest that a member of the ECC be present during conversations with Village Staff**

- The ECC suggested that a member of the ECC could be present during conversations with Village Staff to provide context and intent of any request and receive feedback.

### **More detail on purpose of Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Sustainability**

- Having input from Village Council on issues such as the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Sustainability would improve communications between the Commission and Village Council. The goal of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee is to assess the Village's current state of environmental sustainability, look at what other municipalities and organizations are doing as best practices, and recommend actions that the Village could take that would save costs or be budget neutral. The Commission is disappointed that feedback and input was not given by the Council after submitting the recommendation.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
ROBERT T. BARNETT

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Liz Pelloso  
Environment Concerns Commission Chair

Dear Chair Pelloso,

Thank you for serving your community – we truly appreciate your willingness to devote time, energy and expertise in the service of others.

It's important that we work to align expectations and while I had hoped to attend this week's meeting but am unable to do so thus, this note.

I have spoken a lot over the last year or so about how I believe we can, and should, do more as a community. This includes the work done by our Boards and Commissions. I think we can serve our community better by leveraging the good will and giving spirit of volunteers such as yourselves. It remains my intention to work with the balance of the Council to rethink and restructure how our Boards and Commissions operate.

That said, irrespective of the organizational structure, you are in some ways an extension of the Village Council. The appointed members of Boards and Commissions serve at the will of the elected members of the Council.

There are some realities we must face about resources and time – and they cannot be disconnected from responsibility that ultimately lies with the Council. We do not currently have the necessary resources to accomplish all the things we might hope of our Boards and Commissions.

To be effective in public policy you must have credibility and confidence in the data. Interactions between policies in one area and policies in another must be understood from an overall organizational standpoint.

For instance, you may have heard we are revising our rules as it relates to parkway tree regulations in an effort to prevent accidental destruction of trees do to careless construction practices. Most would agree this is a “good thing”. But making such a change required review of actual experience to identify the details around the types of failure we were trying to prevent. It involved legal review of the proposed changes for conflict with other ordinances that may be present locally or more broadly and review of related court experiences. We do not operate in a vacuum and investment in our community is important thus a review of neighboring municipal ordinances was also warranted. If/when this change is adopted by the Council, the permitting process will now include at least one additional on-site meeting by our Community Development team and additional correspondence with builders and owners prior to the issuance of a permit. This one, important change, has consumed a great number of hours in preparation and will continue to consume additional resources beyond those expended prior to the change ad infinitum for implementation.

Your Village is stretched.

On the immediate horizon, we have directed our staff to focus on several issues the Village Council has deemed to be the top priorities for the short term (12-18 months) and we believe these efforts, combined with the day-to-day operation of the Village and those issues which pop up (experience shows there are always some) will consume all of our available resources.

The roles of Boards and Commissions was specifically discussed by the Village Council earlier this year and while there is interest within the Council in reviewing the structure and considering changes, there is unanimous consent that such consideration does not rise to the level of priority above the 2020 High Priority Action Items list. And your Village Council also decided quite specifically that until such consideration was taken up by the Council, our Boards and Commissions are to continue to function as recommending bodies whose work is provided to them by the Council on an as-needed basis.

In other words, we have decided – for the time being – that the Environmental Concerns Commission will operate in the manner it has for quite some time. It will remain a valued resource for study of issues which originate at the Council but will not be provided the resources necessary to function in consideration of any topics generated by the ECC or other parties. Changes to the structure and charge of the ECC are not going to be made by the Council any time soon. We are planning a 2020Q1/2020Q2 check-in as it relates to the 2020 HPAI and this, as well as several other un-met resource demands, will be brought up again to see what the previous six-months-ish has proven to be in terms of workload.

Several of the 2020 HPAI components may well lend themselves to opportunities for the ECC to provide service to the Village – but if and when those come about, will be determined by the Village Council.

No doubt, this sounds lousy to a group of dedicated volunteers who are passionate about an urgent issue that affects us all, daily. I get that. But for a very long time your Village has resisted adding resources. And, as an extension of the Village any work done by the ECC must include Village staff review and input. We simply do not have the resources to provide to the ECC and the ECC cannot function as an extension of the Village without those resources being part of the process.

I do plan to attend the ECC meeting on December 12th and would welcome additional conversation then, or anytime.

Sincerely,



Bob Barnett

CC:

Commissioner Bement  
Commissioner Dantoft  
Commissioner Ellis  
Commissioner Farley  
Commissioner Kuchar  
Commissioner Marron

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