

Historic Preservation Commission
Proceedings of the September 25, 2024 Meeting

A meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at the City of Lake Forest City Hall, 220 E. Deerpath, Lake Forest, Illinois.

Historic Preservation Commissioners present: Chairman Maureen Grinnell, and Commission members Elizabeth Daliere, Tina Dann-Fenwick, Geoffrey Hanson, Robin Petit, and Leif Soderberg.

Commissioners absent: Lloyd Culbertson

City staff present: Abigail Vollmers, Senior Planner, and Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

1. Introduction of Commissioners and staff, overview of meeting procedures.

Chairman Grinnell reviewed the meeting procedures followed by the Commission and asked the members of the Commission and staff to introduce themselves.

2. Consideration of the minutes of the August 28, 2024 meeting of the Commission.

The minutes of the August 28, 2024 were approved with corrections as requested by Commissioner Hanson and Chairman Grinnell.

3. Continued consideration for a Certificate of Appropriateness approving the fencing at 333 N. Green Bay Road.

Property Owner: Joshua and Jayme O'Donnell

Presented by: Joel Balentyne and Bruce Everly, Midwest Arbor Corporation

Chairman Grinnell asked the Commission for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, she invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Mr. Balentyne reviewed the overall fencing plan for the property. He described the perimeter fence proposed along the south and east property lines as a six foot tall natural cedar fence. He stated that this fence is intended to weather and disappear somewhat into the landscaping. He stated that a second six foot tall cedar fence will enclose the active area of the back yard, meet the pool fencing requirement, and separate the front yard from the back yard. He stated that this fence will be stained a dark tone to relate to the color palette of the residence. He stated that a third fence will extend east/west along the south side of the shared driveway and is proposed as a four foot tall simple powder coated steel, black, picket fence with brick columns equally spaced across the frontage of the home. He stated that this

fence is intended to provide privacy and enclose the front yard. He stated that an electric gate designed in the same style as the four foot fence will provide access from the shared driveway to the petitioners' private driveway. He stated that a fourth wood fence will extend along the entire Green Bay Road frontage of the property, which is also the west edge of the Conservation Easement that extends along the entire west side of the property. He stated that at the north end, the fence will attach to the existing address pillar located on the south side of the shared driveway with a six foot panel that will step down to a five foot panel before reaching the four foot height of the fence that will extend along Green Bay Road. He stated that this fence is proposed to be stained dark to blend in with the vegetation in the Conservation Easement. He stated that periodic brick piers and wood posts are proposed along the Green Bay Road frontage. He clarified that the fence will return and connect to other fences on the property to fully enclose the yard. He explained that the petitioners have dogs that need to be contained. He noted that two options are presented for the spacing of the picket. A tighter placement that provides 21 percent opacity, and an option with wider spacing that provides 37 percent opacity. He stated the petitioners' preference for the tighter spacing given that the fence is only proposed at four feet in height and will have a tree canopy above it. He commented on the various fence types along Green Bay Road near the property and stated that the proposed brick pillars along Green Bay Road relate to the brick pillars on the adjacent properties to the north and south while the fence itself is styled to distinguish this property from the neighboring properties. He provided an updated drawing of the details of the fence proposed along Green Bay Road. He stated that quality materials are proposed for all of the fences.

Ms. Vollmers stated that at the time the landscaping, hardscaping, and lighting for the previously approved new residence was presented to the Commission and approved, consideration of the fencing on the property was continued. She reviewed the direction the Commission provided to the petitioner, to consider fencing that appears more residential in character than the fencing that was presented, to achieve greater openness consistent with the, to the intent of Conservation Easement to preserve the wooded streetscape character, and to explore how best to tie a new fence into the existing pillars at the entrance to the shared driveway. She stated that the revised plans show a traditional cedar fence enclosing the rear and the pool. She stated that the wood fence (not metal) proposed along Green Bay Road was lowered from six feet as previously proposed to four feet to allow the wooded character of the Conservation Easement to dominate the streetscape. She stated that the proposed fence is attached to and steps down from the existing pillars at the driveway entrance. She stated that the new fence, pillars and posts are intended to create a cohesive design approach along the streetscape. She acknowledged that two options are presented by the petitioner for the fence along Green Bay Road, one offering greater openness, 37 percent, which is more consistent with the intent of the subdivision approvals. She stated that findings in support of the fencing overall with the more open fence option along the Green Bay Road frontage are detailed in the staff report.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Mr. Balentyne estimated that the fence on the neighboring property to the north along Green Bay Road is about 60 percent open and on the property to the south, about 50 percent open. He confirmed that as now proposed, the fence along the Green Bay Road frontage is wood. He reviewed the proposed step down of the fence panels from the existing driveway pillars and stated that no consideration was given to curving the panels to achieve a step down to the four foot fence height but stated that consideration could be given to whether using a curve would be consistent with the overall design approach. He stated that six new piers are proposed to be equally spaced along the Green Bay Road frontage. He stated that the fence is intended to be located in front of the large tree near the southwest corner of the property adding that the post holes in that area will be hand dug to work around any large roots.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Ms. Vollmers confirmed that the City Arborist can be consulted at the time the fence is installed. She clarified that the openness requirement imposed by the subdivision approval only applies to the fence along Green Bay Road.

In response to questions from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Balentyne reviewed the three types of fences proposed and the locations of each. He stated that the black metal picket fence that extends east/west along the south side of the driveway will connect to the fence that will extend along Green Bay Road. He explained that the fence along Green Bay Road will wrap around the corner near the driveway to allow for the connection at the northeast corner of the Conservation Easement, about 60 feet back from the street. He clarified that the perimeter cedar fence on the east and south property lines will remain natural and will patina over time and will be screened by plantings. He stated that the interior cedar fence will be stained to achieve a darker tone since it will be viewed from the house.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dalieri, Mr. Balentyne confirmed that the fence along Green Bay Road is now proposed as wood, not metal. He stated that at the last Commission meeting, feedback was provided that a metal fence appeared to industrial along Green Bay Road. He stated that the grout in the new pillars will be light color to match the existing pillars at the driveway. He stated that he did not bring a sample of the stained wood but confirmed that the fence will not be white as portrayed in the images provided. He provided images of colors and the three fence types.

In response to a question from Commissioner Soderberg, Ms. Vollmers stated that the Conservation Easement was established at the time the property was subdivided and was intended to preserve the wood streetscape of Green Bay Road.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Balentyne confirmed that the fence will be located about eight feet back from the sidewalk and that the

vegetation will remain between the fence and the sidewalk and behind the fence. He confirmed that the fence design will be consistent across the streetscape, a wooden picket fence with pillars to replicate the existing pillars at the driveway.

In response to questions from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. O'Donnell explained that the double fence enclosure is needed to secure pets and provide the desired privacy and security while also meeting the openness requirement for the fence along Green Bay Road. He stated that a metal fence with tighter pickets was considered but appeared industrial so a wood fence that will patina over time is now proposed. He pointed out the fences along Green Bay Road on the neighboring properties. He stated that the fence will disappear to some extent into the vegetation. He stated that the input received from the Commission at the last meeting was carefully considered in developing the fencing plan now presented.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Ms. Vollmers acknowledged that the 80 percent openness requirement is not strictly met by the fence proposed along the Green Bay Road frontage. She pointed out however that the fence was lowered from six feet to four feet which increases the openness while providing the privacy desired by the petitioner. She added that the style of the fence was modified in response to previous comments from the Commission. She confirmed that the neighboring properties are not subject to an openness standard.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Balentyne reviewed that the fence along the north property line was selected by the owners to relate to the design and materials of the house and to accommodate a gate at the driveway entrance. He stated that the fence along the north property line is proposed as a four foot tall, powder coated steel fence. He reiterated that the fence along the north property line will connect with the Green Bay Road frontage fence and the inner north/south fence at the northeast corner of the Conservation Easement. He acknowledged that the different fence types will meet at that point but will be concealed to some extent by vegetation.

Commissioner Hanson commented that if the two feet of openness that is achieved by lowering the fence to four feet is factored in, , the openness would roughly be about 70 percent.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. O'Donnell stated that he prefers the less open option for the Green Bay Road frontage fence at four feet tall. He stated that if required by the Commission, the option with the wider spacing is acceptable.

In response to a question from Commissioner Petit, Mr. Balentyne stated that the fence along the Green Bay Road frontage is proposed as a smooth, dark stained, cedar similar to the fence along the property to the south.

Chairman Grinnell reviewed her understanding of the petitioner's goals for the fence along the Green Bay Road frontage including security for small dogs, a style that is generally consistent with other fences along Green Bay Road, and compliance with the requirements and standards.

In response to questions from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. O'Donnell stated that a fence that is more open at the top than at the bottom was considered but not preferred from an aesthetic perspective. He confirmed that there is an inner fence on the west side of the back yard.

In response to a question from Commissioner Daliere, Mr. O'Donnell stated that the intent of the Conservation Easement is to protect the landscaped character of Green Bay Road despite a new house being constructed on the property.

Commissioner Daliere stated that the house will likely be visible through the vegetation. She acknowledged the challenge of designing a fence that meets the openness requirement.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited public comment.

Justin Foley, 335 Green Bay Road, stated that his understanding is that the Conservation Easement was for the purpose of preventing a second curb cut along the Green Bay Road frontage adding that the petitioners are adhering to the spirit of the Easement. He commended the petitioners for responding to the previous Commission comments and for the care they have taken during construction of the home and the attention to keeping the shared driveway unobstructed. He noted the fences on the neighboring properties to the north and south adding that curving the top of the fence would be out of character with the streetscape. He stated support for the petition as presented.

Laura Luce, 111 Ridge Lane, stated that she is representing the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation and read the statement submitted by the Foundation that was previously distributed to the Commission. She noted that she lives on Green Bay Road and has an electric fence to protect her pets.

Hearing no further requests to speak from the public, Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the petitioner.

In response to a question from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. O'Donnell stated that construction is anticipated to be complete in July 2025.

Chairman Grinnell invited a response to public testimony from staff.

Ms. Vollmers spoke to the openness interpretation and to the style of the proposed fences in the context of the modern style of the residence, the Green Bay Road streetscape and the challenges of the site including the Conservation Easement and the shared driveway.

Chairman Grinnell invited final questions from the Commission.

In response to a question from Commissioner Daliere, Ms. Everly stated that ground cover and perennial plantings are planned for the area between the fence and the sidewalk. She stated that there is not sufficient space for shrubs.

In response to questions from Commissioner Daliere, Ms. Vollmers explained that the Conservation Easement must be maintained in a natural wooded character.

In response to a question from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick Ms. Czerniak stated that the Commission does not have the authority to eliminate the Conservation Easement from the plat of subdivision.

In response to questions from Commissioner Dann-Fenwick, Mr. Balentyne stated that the fence along the Green Bay Road frontage will align fairly well with the fences on the properties located to the north and south. He confirmed that the fence will extend in a straight line along the west property line. He reiterated that the metal fence along the north property line will not extend west to the street but will stop at the northeast corner of the Conservation Easement.

At the request of Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Balentyne again reviewed the locations of the three proposed fence types.

Commissioner Dann-Fenwick suggested further study of how the fence will step down from the existing driveway entrance pillars. She encouraged consideration of a curving step down or another approach with attention to proper proportions.

Chairman Grinnell stated that in her opinion, a curve would not be consistent with the overall design of the new residence.

In response to a question from Commissioner Daliere, Mr. Balentyne stated that the sidewalk is not parallel to the property line and as a result, the fence is setback about nine feet from the sidewalk at the south end of the property and setback about eleven feet at the north end. He stated that the fence is setback about three feet from the property line as currently proposed.

In response to a question from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Balentyne stated that as proposed, the fence along Green Bay Road is capped with a two by four piece with beveled edges. He stated that the slats in the fence picket fence attach to the cap

and have internal supports. He stated that the slates are 2-1/4 inches wide by one inch thick.

In response to questions from Commissioner Hanson, Mr. Balentyne stated that there are two inch gaps between the slats in the option 2 design.

In response to a question from Commissioner Soderberg, Mr. Balentyne stated that the new pillars along Green Bay Road will match the color of the existing piers and the fence along Green Bay Road will be stained to closely resemble the color of the fence on the property to the south, a soft charcoal gray. He stated that the metal fence along the north property line will be the same color as the fence along Green Bay Road.

In response to a question from Chairman Grinnell, Mr. Balentyne stated that the natural cedar fences along the east and south property lines will patina after six months.

Hearing no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Grinnell invited final comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Petit commented that the fence plan is complex with three different fence styles, two materials cedar and metal, and four different finishes including natural cedar, stained cedar, stained pickets, and powder coated metal. She encouraged the petitioner to consider more consistency overall. She expressed concern about the compatibility of white pillars and a darkish stained fence along Green Bay Road due to a potentially stark appearance. She suggested that it may not be appropriate to allow the existing driveway pillars to drive the design of the fence along Green Bay Road.

Commissioner Soderberg stated that he is focused only on the fence along Green Bay Road. He noted that only two of the neighboring homes have distinctive fences along Green Bay Road with the rest being stockade fences of varying ages. He stated although the style of fence proposed is different, it needs to fit in with the other fences along the streetscape. He suggested that a mock-up reflecting the style, height, and color be erected. He stated that in his opinion, the plans appear to be close to a workable solution.

Commissioner Dann-Fenwick stated support for the four foot fence as opposed to the previously proposed six foot fence along Green Bay Road and the proposed plantings between the fence and the sidewalk and to the extent possible, the preservation of existing trees in that area. She stated support for more openness along Green Bay Road to allow the fence to appear less dominant.

Commissioner Dalieri observed that trying to achieve so many conflicting objectives with the fence plan is difficult; compatibility with other fences along the streetscape,

compatibility with the design of the residence, securing pets, complying with the Conservation Easement, and tying in with the existing driveway pillars. She acknowledged the difficulty of the situation. She stated that the Commission should review the proposed color of the stain in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the contrast with the existing pillars. She commented that dark gray fencing is a modern look.

Commissioner Hanson stated that it has been difficult to get a clear understanding of the various types of fences proposed but noted that overall, he is satisfied with the fence styles, colors, and textures. He noted that the lot is very large with a significant amount of vegetation. He acknowledged the support of the neighbor who shares the driveway. He stated that it would be helpful to see details of the option 2 fence including the slats, the dimensions of the openings, and the color. He stated support for the four foot fence. He noted that as presented, the fence and pillars have the appearance of more of a wall adding that he would like to see more openness along the street frontage. He expressed concern with the almost black and white color scheme noting that is the trend of the moment. He suggested consideration of colors that are more compatible with the Green Bay Road streetscape.

Chairman Grinnell summarized that the remaining concerns for the Commission appear to focus on the fence and pillars proposed along Green Bay Road. She invited a motion to allow the fencing internal to the property to move forward.

Commissioner Hanson made a motion to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness approving all aspects of the fence plan with the exception of the fence and pillars along Green Bay Road. He stated that the approval is based on the findings detailed in the staff report which are adopted as part of the motion and the Commission's deliberations are incorporated as additional findings. He stated that the approval is subject to the following condition.

Plans submitted for permit must reflect the project as presented to the Commission. Any refinements made as the result of final design development shall be clearly called out on the plan. Staff is directed to review any changes, in consultation with the Chairman as appropriate, to determine whether the modifications are in conformance with the Commission's direction and approval prior to the issuance of any permits.

Commissioner Hanson stated that consideration of the fence along the Green Bay Road is continued to allow the petitioner to consider all of the comments from the Commission including, but not limited to:

- Increasing the openness of the fence.

- Considering alternate designs for the step down of the fence panels from the existing pillars at the driveway entrance with careful attention to appropriate proportions.
- Providing a mock up of the proposed fence and pillars illustrating the material, texture, dimensions, and color.
- Providing a landscape plan detailing the intended plantings between the fence and the sidewalk along Green Bay Road.

The motion in its entirety, both the approval and the continuation, was seconded by Commissioner Petit and approved by the Commission by a 6 to 0 vote.

OTHER ITEMS

5. Opportunity for the public to address the Historic Preservation Commission on non-agenda items.

There were no additional public comments.

6. Additional information from staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Abigail Vollmers
Senior Planner, Community Development