

**The City of Lake Forest**  
**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**Proceedings of the June 26, 2023 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Lake Forest Zoning Board of Appeals was held on Monday, June 26, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Zoning Board of Appeals members present: Chairman Ari Bass and Board members Pete Clemens, James Moorhead, Mike Adams, and Laurie Rose

Zoning Board of Appeals members absent: Board members Henry Kleeman and Art Miller

Staff present: Catherine Czerniak, Director of Community Development

**1. Introduction of Board members and staff, overview of meeting procedures - Chairman Bass**

Chairman Bass reviewed the meeting procedures and asked the members of the Board to introduce themselves.

**2. Consideration of the minutes from the May 22, 2023 meeting.**

Consideration of the minutes was postponed.

**3. Continued consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of variances related to the proposed improvements to the athletic fields at Deerpath Park, 115 W. Deerpath. Height variances are requested for the replacement field lights and for new lights on the tennis/pickle ball courts. A setback variance is also requested to allow a slight expansion of the footprint of the existing tennis courts into the required 20 foot setback to incorporate a pickle ball court.**

**Property Owner: The City of Lake Forest**

**Representative: Chuck Myers, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry**

Chairman Bass introduced the agenda item and asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the staff.

Ms. Czerniak noted that the City Council spent several months discussing the Deerpath Park Athletic Fields project before granting overall approval. She stated that the work on the fields is underway and involves installing artificial turf fields on the eastern two-thirds of the site. She stated that the fields will be flexible and can be configured for different sports. She stated that the western third of the site will be restored as a natural area within the flood plain with some walking paths and a look out. She

reviewed that in January, the Zoning Board of Appeals recommended approval of setback variances to allow the north pavilion and playground to be located on the north property line based in large part on the fact that the City owns the adjacent property. She added that the Board also recommended approval of a variance to allow a maintenance building to be located on the north property line but noted that for budgetary reasons, the maintenance building was eliminated from the project. She stated that the Board continued consideration of a request for a height variance for the light poles on the field and requested additional information. She noted that since the last meeting, the tallest light poles were reduced from 90 feet to 80 feet in height. She noted that the tallest of the existing light poles on the field are 80 feet. She stated that lighting technology has improved significantly since the pre-existing lights were installed on the field over 20 years ago. She stated that the lights will be directed down, on to the field and light spillover away from the field will be minimized. She stated that the mix of 60 and 80 foot poles are placed to provide an even level of light across each field for player safety. She stated that the lights will only be on when the fields are in use for organized games and practices. She stated that a condition of approval is recommended requiring the lights to be turned off within 30 minutes after play is completed or 10:30 p.m., whichever is earlier. She stated that two additional variances are requested as a result of changes to the plans since the January meeting. She stated that variances are requested to allow the existing tennis courts on the Deerpath Middle School property to be expanded south, to the north property line of the athletic fields to accommodate pickleball, and to allow lights at a maximum height of 45 feet to be installed on the courts. She stated that lights on the courts are not part of the current project but are desired for use only when there is active play on the courts. She noted that Mr. Myers, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, is available for questions.

In response to questions from Board member Clemens, Mr. Myers stated that the pickleball and tennis court schedules have not yet been set. He stated that a mix of open courts and reserved courts is anticipated.

In response to questions from Board member Rose, Mr. Myers stated that the lights on the field are intended to maximize the opportunity for play on the fields. He confirmed that the lights are directed down to avoid spillover on to neighboring properties. He confirmed that current technology allows for enhanced control and customization by City staff. He stated that he is not aware of a dimmer option for the lights. He stated that as a result of the elimination of the maintenance buildings, the south pavilion was increased in size slightly to provide some storage space for equipment. He stated that no variances are requested for the south pavilion.

In response to questions from Board member Moorhead, Ms. Czerniak stated that all of the City owned property in this area cannot be considered a single zoning lot because there are a variety of uses and all of the parcels are not zoned the same.

In response to questions from Board member Adams, Mr. Myers stated that reducing the light poles to 80 feet did not compromise the safety or use of the fields.

In response to questions from Board member Clemens, Mr. Myers confirmed that the lighting on the tennis and pickleball courts will be controlled by the City's Recreation Department staff. He reiterated that lighting on the courts is not part of the current project.

In response to questions from Chairman Bass, Ms. Czerniak stated that a condition requiring the lights to be turned off 30 minutes after play or by 10:30 p.m., whichever is earlier, is recommended for both the fields and courts.

In response to questions from Board member Rose, Mr. Myers confirmed that landscaping throughout the site is planned and reflected on the site plan. He stated that an open storage area is proposed in the northwest corner of the site for field equipment such as goals. He confirmed that extensive landscaping is proposed around the storage area. He stated in the areas where artificial turf is installed, no plantings are proposed.

Hearing no further questions from the Board, Chairman Bass invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final questions or comments from the Board.

Board member Moorhead stated support for the variances noting that the plan is well thought out.

Chairman Bass agreed noting that the plan responds to the comments previously raised by the Board.

Board member Rose agreed with the comments of the other Board members.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Bass invited a motion.

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of the following variances based on the findings in the staff report and incorporating the Board's deliberations as additional findings.

1. A variance to allow lights on the athletic field up to a height of 80 feet.
2. A variance to allow lights on the tennis and pickleball courts up to a height of 45 feet.
3. A variance to allow expansion of the existing six tennis courts to the south up to the property line.

He noted that the recommendation is subject to the following conditions of approval.

1. The athletic field lights and the lights on the tennis and pickleball courts shall be turned off no later than 10:30 p.m. or 30 minutes after play ends, whichever is earlier.
2. The light poles and light fixtures shall have a non-reflective, matte finish.
3. Consideration shall be given to replanting trees around the tennis courts to the extent possible recognizing space limitations, topography, drainage, and other factors that may come into play.

The motion was seconded by Board member Clemens and was approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

**4. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of a front yard setback variance to allow a new portico at 811 Oakwood Avenue.  
Property Owner: 811 Oakwood, LLC (Michelle Patenaude, 100%)**

Chairman Bass introduced the agenda item and asked for any Ex Parte contacts or conflicts of interest. Hearing none, he invited a presentation from the petitioner.

Ms. Patenaude stated that she is a longtime resident of Lake Forest and recently moved near the Central Business District into a gem of a neighborhood. She stated that the front stairs to her home are rotting and while replacing them, she would like to add a landing and lights. She stated that the porch today is walled in with windows and over time, a side door was installed replacing what was likely an original front door. She stated that the house needs a front door, open porch, and a light. She noted that the extension of the steps and portico require a variance. She noted that she has received verbal support from several neighbors.

Ms. Czerniak noted that several similar requests for variances have been granted in the Oakwood neighborhood. She noted that the property was created, and the house built prior to current Code limitations. She noted that as property owners upgrade older homes in established neighborhoods, it is not unusual for the Board to support minor encroachments into the zoning setbacks. She stated that a landing at the top of stairs, at the door, is required by the Code today for safety. She stated that the porch will be no closer than 23 feet to the front property line.

Hearing no questions from the Board, Chairman Bass Invited public comment, hearing none, he invited final questions and comments from the Board.

Board member Rose stated that the replacement porch as proposed makes sense from a life safety point of view. She stated that the plan appears compatible with the neighborhood noting that many front porches in this neighborhood, constructed prior to current regulations, encroach into the front yard setback.

Board member Adams thanked the petitioner for providing the mockup on the site. He stated support for the variance and the project as presented.

Board member Clemens stated support for the project and noted that other homes on the street have porches that encroach further into the setback.

Hearing no further questions or comments from the Board, Chairman Bass invited a motion.

Board member Moorhead made a motion to recommend approval of a variance from the front yard setback to allow replacement and upgrading of the porch as presented to the Board. He stated that the motion is based on the findings detailed in the staff report.

The motion was seconded by Board member Rose and approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

- 5. Consideration of a request for a recommendation in support of an update and amendments to the Special Use Permit for Gorton Community Center, 400 E. Illinois Road. This request is intended to align the Special Use Permit with current activities and establish parameters as may be appropriate for activities in the building and on the site recognizing the adjacency to residential properties.  
Property Owner: The City of Lake Forest  
Tenant: Gorton Community Center  
Representative: Staff**

Consideration of this item was postponed at the request of the petitioner.

**5. Public testimony on non-agenda items.**

No public testimony was presented to the Board on non-agenda items.

**6. Additional information from staff.**

Ms. Czerniak noted that over the course of the next two meetings the Board will likely be asked to consider requests from the Elawa Farm Foundation and Gorton Community Center for amendments to existing special use permits to recognize and authorize expanded programs and activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Czerniak  
Director of Community Development