

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
November 12, 2025
7:00 P.M.

A recording of this meeting is available on the Village of Oak Park Website: <https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-commissions/commission-tv>

Call to order / Roll Call

PRESENT: Chair Masaru Takiguchi, Members Peter Weismantle, Kimberlee Smith, Glenn Brewer, and Seth Jansen

ALSO, PRESENT: Rasheda Jackson, Counsel, Bob Bernhart, Zoning Administrator

ABSENT: Members Matthew Shoener, Kimberly Zeiser

QUORUM: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. and declared that a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the November 12, 2025 Agenda. The motion was seconded. A voice vote was taken and the Agenda was approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the October 8, 2025 minutes. The motion was seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

Non-Agenda Public Comment – None

New Business / Public Hearings and Findings of Facts

CALENDAR NUMBER: 23-25-Z

The Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) will conduct a public hearing on an application filed by the Applicant, 427 Madison, LLC, seeking a special use permit from Section 8.3 (Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Zoning Ordinance of the Village of Oak Park to construct a four (4) unit, 3-story plus penthouse townhouse development at 427 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois, Property Index Number 16-18-206-014-0000 (“Subject Property”) in the MS Madison Street Zoning District.

In addition, the Applicant seeks the following variances from the requirements of Table 5-1 of the Zoning Ordinance:

1. A reduction of the rear yard setback from a required 25’ to 18’-7.5”, inclusive of the alley, along the west lot line; and
2. An increase in maximum height from 35’ to 40’.

Zoning Administrator Bernhart summarized the legal notice and project.

The Zoning Board of Appeals attorney swore in those wishing to provide testimony.

John Schiess spoke on behalf of the applicant/owner and provided a summary of the application. They provided context for the site, including that the applicant previously received approval to build six townhomes, but financial difficulties with the proposed construction led them to revise their plans. The revisions resulted in structural changes and the reduction of proposed density by two units, creating the need for the new special use application and associated variance requests.

Schiess presented slides that showed photos of the site, the surrounding land uses, the building design, adjacent zoning, the proposed site plan, landscaping, floor plans, revisions since the previous special use proposal, and elevations. Discussion touched on the adjacent alley and utilities within it, the previous use of the site as a gas station and the associated ground contamination, on-street parking, and curb cuts. Schiess also described the variance requests to increase maximum building height and reduce the rear yard setback.

Responses to the special use approval standards were presented. They focused on proposed compliance with all applicable building code and safety requirements, neighborhood compatibility, and improvements over the previous use of the site.

Responses to the variance approval standards were provided. They focused on similar setbacks on nearby properties, greater nearby building heights in the same zoning district, the hardship presented by the site for building the number of units needed, the history of subdivision/platting of the site going back to well before the current owner acquired it, compliance with other requirements, and the minimal potential impacts of the development.

Zoning Administrator Bernhart mentioned that the proposed development has been through a preliminary design review with the Village consultant, and the consultant indicated they would approve the proposed design. Bernhart also stated that Village staff have proposed a condition of approval that the owner/applicant will work with staff to modify the existing environmental indemnity agreement as needed to reflect changes in ownership structure of the units or other details. Schiess stated that the owner/applicant had been in discussion with the Village Engineer and has agreed to the proposed condition of approval.

The public hearing was closed.

Member Jansen mentioned that the standard rear yard setback requirement, if met, would greatly reduce the turning area for vehicles entering garages and so the requested relief seemed sensible. Member Weismantle added that meeting that requirement could also reduce the bedroom count.

A motion was made to recommend approval of the special use application to the Village Board.

The Village Board recommendation was approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

There was a motion to approve the findings of fact with the additional condition that the Applicant will work with Village staff to modify the environmental indemnity agreement as needed. The findings of fact, as amended, were approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

Motions to approve the two variance requests were made and seconded, with each one approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

The resolution was approved by a five (5) to zero (0) vote.

Other/Old Business (none)

Zoning Administrator Bernhart mentioned that there was one case for the upcoming December ZBA meeting.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, which was approved by a voice vote.