

**ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING
MAY 3, 2023
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 Jim Lencioni; Members Steve Ruszczyk, Mas Takiguchi and Kimberlee Smith

ABSENT: David Brumirski and Mark Hansen

ALSO, PRESENT: Rasheda Jackson, Counsel; Mike Bruce, Zoning Administrator

QUORUM: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. and declared that a quorum was present.

Agenda Approval – Motion by Member Ruszczyk, Seconded by Member Smith. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote as submitted.

Chair Lencioni asked to hold off on reviewing the Minutes until the end of the meeting.

Non-Agenda Public Comment – None

New Business / Public Hearings and Findings of Facts

Rasheda Jackson, Counsel, swore-in those wishing to testify.

Mr. Bruce read a description of the case as follows:

CALENDAR NUMBER: 03-23-Z The Zoning Board of Appeals (“ZBA”) will conduct a public hearing on a special use permit application filed by the Applicant, Mel Garland, on behalf of Think Big Academy, to operate a day care center pursuant to Section 8.3 (Table 8-1: Use Matrix) of the Oak Park Zoning Ordinance at the property located at 845-847 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois, Property Index Numbers 16-18-106-012-0000 (“Subject Property”) in the MS Madison Street Zoning District. **(Continued from April 5, 2023)**

Mel Garland, owner of Think Big Academy, spoke to the Commission. Ms. Garland indicates that she has been in the day care business for 30 years and that she operates a day care facility in Chicago. She has been a resident of Oak Park for five years.

Ms. Garland discusses how she operates her facility and the fact that she uses educated teachers as her staff. She says that the proposed location has served and will continue to serve local businesses as well as members of the community who may need quality childcare. Many daycare centers in Oak Park have a waiting list and there are many new residential developments & growing families coming to Oak Park including the 24-unit condo building being built next door. This shows there’s a need for more child care options in the area.

Ms. Garland says that Think Big Academy is very compatible with the general land use of adjacent properties and other properties within the immediate vicinity. We are on the same street with many

commercial spaces and surrounded by many single-family homes. With the current space being used as a daycare it should be a very smooth transition.

She says Think Big Academy is consistent with the spirit and intent of the ordinance, adopted land use policies and comprehensive plans. The current space has been operating as a daycare for 5+ years. Think Big Academy expansion will increase the amount of families we can serve in Oak Park. We also look forward to expanding and creating job opportunities in Oak Park.

Ms. Garland says that the special use of the specific location will be used for Daycare. We have consulted with DCFS to ensure that the location is suitable for the operation of a Daycare Center. The building will undergo a complete renovation and build out to meet the Federal, State, and local requirements.

John Hague, Architect, spoke in favor of the proposal. No one spoke in opposition to the proposal.

Shannon Williams, Executive Director of DTOP, spoke in favor of the proposal.

Eric Mazelis, Economic Development Corporation, spoke in favor of the proposal.

Motion by Member Ruszczyk to have Rasheda Jackson draft a positive Recommendation to the Village Board. Seconded by Member Smith. The motion was approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote.

Motion by Member Smith to adopt the draft Recommendation to the Village Board. Seconded by Member Ruszczyk. The motion was approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote.

Mr. Bruce read a description of the case as follows:

Drew Nelson, Architect for the Applicant, says the project consists of a one-story addition to a two-story home. The addition will be to the south of the home. It will provide a new mudroom, powder room, and kitchen. There will also be a new porch facing N. Grove Avenue. The owner desires an entry and porch on N. Grove Avenue in order to feel a greater connection to the neighborhood. The current main entry to the home is off Augusta Street and a secondary entrance is through the detached garage off Augusta Street. Therefore, the home feels detached from its neighbors on North Grove even though the Grove yard is considered the front yard per zoning code. The addition to the south as well as the porch addition will allow the home to embrace its neighbors on Grove and create a deeper connection with the community.

Mr. Nelson says that aligning the new front porch with the existing home makes it easier to create an aesthetic that is in harmony with the existing home and does not look like a poorly designed addition. More importantly, aligning the addition allows the new porch to be aligned with the neighbor's home to the south which is set back 12'-0". This allows sight lines down the street which are not blocked by the south neighbor. This creates a better connection to the activities of the neighborhood and allows the owner's to more easily monitor/see their children as they play in the neighborhood.

Motion by Member Smith to approve the variance request as proposed and direct Rasheda Jackson to draft a positive Resolution. Seconded by Member Ruszczyk. The motion was approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote.

Motion by Member Smith to approve the positive Resolution. Seconded by Member Ruszczyk. The motion was approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Motion by Member Smith to approve the May 3, 2023 draft minutes. Seconded by Member Ruszczyk. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved by a four (4) to zero (0) vote as submitted.

Other / Old Business – None.

The meeting was adjourned.