

# **CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE**

*803 Joliet Road  
Countryside, IL 60525  
[www.countryside-il.org](http://www.countryside-il.org)*



## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Regular Meeting of the Plan Commission**

### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

7:15 P.M.

City Hall

### **Board Members**

**Chairman Robert Schwarz, Secretary Tina Grotzke,  
Marco Gutierrez, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr,  
Tom Geraghty, Danielle Edenfield, Jonathan Gertsmeier**

Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chairman Schwarz.

**Roll Call:** Secretary Grotzke called the Roll of Members physically present:  
**Present:** Chairman Robert Schwarz, Steve Kehr, Tina Grotzke, Tom Geraghty, Ronald Ward  
Marco Gutierrez, Danielle Edenfield, Jonathan Gertsmeier  
**Also Present:** City Attorney Erik Peck, Planning Manager Richard Trent, Rec. Secretary Prokop  
**Resigned:** Bryan White

**Approval of Minutes** -- The Regular Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2024 were previously distributed to Board Members. There were no corrections; motion made to approve the minutes as presented.

**A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Gertsmeier, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Grotzke, Ward, Kehr, Gutierrez, Edenfield, Gertsmeier**

**Nay: 0**

**Chairman's Comments** - None

**Action Items:**

**1. CASE #PSU24-0007: Consideration of a Special Use**

- a. To consider granting a Special Use to permit a physical therapy clinic (Next Step Physical Therapy) in the B-2 Zoning District at the subject property of 919 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit #A.

Ms. Grotzke moved to open the Public Hearing in this matter, seconded by Mr. Gertsmeier and carried by unanimous voice vote. PM Mr. Trent presented the Staff report. The Building Department has received the required Proof of Notice.

PM Mr. Trent stated that a Special Use request was filed by Petitioner, Daniel Foley, to permit a physical therapy clinic (Next Step Physical Therapy) on the premises of 919 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit #A, currently zoned B-2, Limited Service Business District. Aerial views presented reveal the property to be located along 55<sup>th</sup> Street, north of Plainfield Road, west of Brainard Avenue, and on the west side of the Highland Plaza. There is one (1) ingress/egress drive that services the entire site, with a cross-access that runs south to Fuller's Car Wash. There is no cross-access agreement between the parties today and no immediate plans to establish one in the future.

The west half of the Plaza is approximately 34,970 square feet or .80 acres in size. The space in question is approximately 1,700 square feet. Views of all four (4) elevations were presented and several adjoining businesses were noted. The south elevation depicts the rear area and connects to the cross-access; the north elevation is under construction (along 55<sup>th</sup> Street); the east elevation shows several businesses (within Highland Plaza); and the west elevation also shows other businesses (within the Plaza).

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan provides specific Goals and Recommendations for each of the subarea plans, this particular property, however, is not within a specific Subarea Plan but is identified under the **Commercial and Industrial Areas** and is designated as Commercial. When contemplating “uses”, the goals and recommendations are: 1) to enhance economic viability . . . of the City’s primary commercial corridors; and 2) to attract, retain and expand businesses in the City’s key Areas. Two (2) recommendations are: 1) continue to provide regulatory and permitting process, giving business owners fair certainty for new ventures in the City; and 2) encourage and support redevelopment of key vacant sites or obsolete uses that have the potential to catalyze additional investment in the area.

A Special Use is required to establish the physical therapy clinic to be known as “Next Step Physical Therapy”. Mr. Dan Foley has been practicing orthopedic sports specialties in the Chicagoland area for the past five years. He is ready to establish his own business and would like to remain close to home and try to be a resource to the community. How many PT facilities are there in Countryside? Staff is aware of only two (2): Athletico on Joliet Road (6502 Joliet Road) and ATI on Plainfield Road (705 W. Plainfield Road). The Petitioner would be an area resident with a desire to establish a small business -- occupying approximately 1,700 square feet. The Preliminary Floor Plan submitted provides a snapshot of the layout of the proposed business. The existing space has a few walls that need to be removed – minimal build-out – with the intention of creating an open space, two (2) work stations, lobby, office, and public and private bathrooms. Mr. Foley has provided written information (a brochure) regarding his goals and mission for providing service to his clients.

Hours of Operation for the facility are noted as being: Monday/Wednesday., 8:00 am to 8:00 pm; Tuesday/Thursday, 7:00 am to 6:00 pm; Friday, 6:30 am to 3:30 pm; Saturday, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, and no Sundays. Mr. Foley would be the sole practitioner to begin with but may take on one to two additional PTs as the business grows. Highland Plaza provides approximately one hundred eighteen (118) parking stalls in the front, west side, and rear of the building (113 regular stalls and 5 ADA stalls) to be shared amongst all the businesses. Parking for this particular use should have a minimum of eleven (11) stalls at their disposal. There appears to be adequate parking for all uses.

Staff recommends approval of granting the Special Use to permit the physical therapy clinic to be known as Next Step Physical Therapy in the B-2 Zoning District at the property located at 919 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit #A, as requested, subject to the five (5) conditions as presented in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated November 11, 2024.

The Petitioners, Tim Foley and Dan Foley, were sworn in *en masse* by Chairman Schwarz.

Attorney Tim Foley thanked Rich Trent for the essential assistance he provided. Next Step would provide patient care and rehab services. Unlike the B-1 Zoning District, the B-2 Zoning District provides for retail and independent service businesses. Parking is often a contentious issue, but in this case there is adequate parking. The materials provided include a copy of the survey showing the parking spaces to the west highlighted; they include 39 parking spaces. In the event that one (1) or two (2) other individuals are hired, that would only require an additional space or two. This use is compatible with

other uses in the B-2 Zoning District. The PT clinic is intended to enhance and promote the health and wellness of the community in general and Mr. Foley's patients in particular. The visibility along 55<sup>th</sup> Street is attractive and lends itself to welcoming clients. Mr. Foley already has a patient base which he will discuss. There are four (4) internal walls, three (3) of which would be removed, leaving the back wall to remain as a hallway and office location. Permits would be submitted.

Dan Foley grew up in LaGrange, as did his wife; they moved back to this area earlier this year. Mr. Foley graduated from LT, attended St. Louis University for PT, graduated in 2018, and has worked in outpatient orthopedics since that time with various chains. Mr. Foley has enjoyed that work but thought there was a better way to do things, which resulted in the origin of Next Step PT. Many patients do not get one-on-one time in large PT chains; it's just a cookie-cutter approach; they all get the same exercises. Mr. Foley aims to be different – all one-on-one time. Each session may look a little different, based on the individual's goals; that's what PT should look like; he was not able to do that in his previous jobs.

In January 2024, Mr. Foley began seeing patients in a small space in Western Springs; by June he needed more space. The new facility would allow him to practice his own techniques and be a resource to the community and an asset to patients in pain, after surgery, getting rehab; his service would be superior to what is typically seen in the big chains. Mr. Foley has seen a better response in the short time he has been open. This location could draw more people in; he would be able to help patients achieve their goals and provide health and fitness initiatives for the community.

Ms. Edenfield asked about a goal date for opening – Mr. Foley stated January 1, 2025 – but they would see how long the build-out would take. Mr. Gutierrez commended him for not following the cookie-cutter approach. There were no other questions from Board Members and no comments from Interested Parties. Ms. Grotzke welcomed them back to the area.

Chairman Schwarz entered the Petitioner's Application and the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated November 11, 2024 into the record as Exhibits "A" and "B" respectively. Mr. Gutierrez moved to close the Hearing in this matter. Seconded by Ms. Edenfield; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Gutierrez moved to approve granting a Special Use to permit a physical therapy clinic at the property commonly known as 919 W. 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit #A, subject to the five (5) conditions as presented in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated November 11, 2024.

**A motion was made by Mr. Gutierrez, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Grotzke, Ward, Kehr, Gutierrez, Edenfield, Gertsmeier**

**Nay: 0**

Chairman Schwarz stated that this matter will come before the City Council at its Regular Meeting on December 11, 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

### **Public Comments - None**

### **Other Business**

**Ticket Statistics (for September/October 2024)** - In September, 15 tickets were issued in total - 8 issued for parking/storing of tractor/trailers. In October, 28 tickets were issued in total - 24 issued for parking/storing of tractor/trailers alone – the highest number seen to this point. Each ticket is about \$150 (pursuant to Section 5-2-11 of the Code). Discussion ensued – City is looking to speak with the Owners and bypass the Managers of Best Western & Holiday Inn. Staff is definitely concerned; tickets are given to the license plate holder and not generally to the property owner. The City believes that staff at these establishments are giving placards out regardless of who asks for it, not just for those people staying at the hotel. The owners need to be made aware of this situation. Mr. Geraghty has repeatedly witnessed drivers parking their trucks on Fridays and returning to pick them up on Sundays.

On a side note, Mr. Trent stated that the elevators in the West Wing of Holiday Inn have been decommissioned – the wing is an empty shell right now; owners may return to the City to seek another request – possibly in line with a residential use by converting the units into living spaces. In that case, new elevators would need to be installed – very expensive. The cables were cut on both elevators and the doors welded/pinned shut; the building is seven (7) stories; Mr. Trent witnessed the decommissioning of the elevators along with other state, local and city officials.

**2018-24 Zoning Cases** - New items were updated for the calendar year: 1) the former City Hall – Luka 1 Travel Center development has asked for an additional extension, which the City Council granted – a two-month extension *only*, which will expire on January 8, 2025. If they do not move forward with the project at that time, the City will probably put the entire site back on the market. The main problem is securing definite leases for the end users. Several retail operations are scheduled for the site. Attorney Peck stated that until leases are in place for all proposed businesses, the City will not enter into the RDA.

2) Highline Automotive – expanding into the former Sonamatic Service Center (special use); they also requested a variance seeking to connect both sites; both approvals received a one (1) year extension. Both approvals have now expired but they have submitted another extension letter, which goes before City Council tomorrow. They are requesting an additional year for both approvals (special use/variance) – working towards securing IDOT permits and approvals.

### **Upcoming Cases**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2024, however there are **no** business items to discuss. In all probability, the next meeting will be set for January 7, 2025. Happy Holidays to all!

Mr. Trent spoke with the Gerald Honda people – massive renovation is currently underway. They would like to remove their old monument sign (Ordinance No. 13-59-O) and build a new one in the same location; which will require new variances.

Hearing Dates for the 2025 Calendar Year were distributed; all scheduled meetings will occur on the first Tuesday of the month (no exceptions this year).

Questions about various projects -- Caraways: received their approvals but have not obtained their building permit; they have not identified all of their contractors. Discussion ensued re: parking lot disruption; the owners are doing their own demolition, but they must have licensed plumbers, electricians, etc. which they have not named at this point for the job; no permits have been issued to date.

Jack in the Box -- plans have been submitted but not approved yet. Signage and lighting are being carefully reviewed due to resident complaints received over the years from the previous business (Arby's).

The Meade Electric trucks parked on gravel along Joliet Road (6260 Joliet Road) have until November 30, 2024 to vacate the site. Recently, the property owner has come in for a permit for a new wood privacy fence along Joliet Road. Citations will be issued if the trucks/equipment are not gone by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Time Out lounge -- the owner is still dealing with their insurance company re: the status of the roof. They have every intention of reopening the business but the roof must be repaired. Their circumstances are unknown; many other businesses have inquired and expressed interest in this site, including Raising Canes.

Noto Banquet Facility -- is currently undergoing demolition. And finally, Staff noted that the Wishing Well property directly across Brainard Avenue from City Hall was purchased by the City. Many people have expressed interest in this site, mostly as a possible car wash facility. Next to that property (to the east), it was noted that the middle dome is currently listed for sale.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, that this meeting be ADJOURNED. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Grotzke, Ward, Kehr, Gutierrez, Gertsmeier, Edenfield**

**Nay: 0**

**Chairman Schwarz declared the meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.**

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,



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ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

/fp