

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

*803 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525
www.countryside-il.org*



Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Plan Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

7:00 P.M.

City Hall

Board Members

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Schwarz.

Roll Call: Secretary Grotzke called the roll of members physically present:

Present: Robert Schwarz, Tom Geraghty, Marco Gutierrez, Tina Grotzke, Jon Gertsmeier, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr, Jack Benton, Danielle Edenfield

Also Present: City Attorney Erik Peck, Planning Manager Richard Trent

Approval of Minutes – The regular meeting minutes of November 4, 2025, were previously distributed to Board members.

A motion was made by Mr. Benton that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 9 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gertsmeier, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Ward, Kehr, Benton, Edenfield

Nay: 0

Chairman's Comments – The mandatory Sexual Harassment Training, which includes a 24-minute video, must be completed by each Board member by December 26, 2025. The certificate should be printed and sent to the City Human Resources Director or Mr. Trent.

Action Items:

1. CASE #PZV25-0005: Consideration of a Variance

- a. To consider a variance to exceed the maximum height of a fence in the front yard from three feet to six feet for the construction of a privacy fence in the R-3 zoning district at the subject property of 9925 West 57th Street.

Ms. Grotzke moved to open the public hearing on this matter, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, and carried by unanimous voice vote. Planning Manager Trent confirmed that the required notices were sent.

Mr. Trent noted that the Petitioners, Rasdip Singh and Jennene Fields, have a six-foot (6') wood privacy fence along their east and south property lines. They are requesting permission to extend the fence north toward 57th Street and beyond the front of their house, to the northwest corner of the neighbor's house, to provide a longer buffer between the subject property and the neighbor to the east. A three-foot (3') picket fence would extend beyond the privacy fence to the front property line.

Mr. Singh and Ms. Fields have children who play in the yard, and athletic equipment ends up on the neighbor's property. The fence would contain the athletic equipment and mitigate sound in order to prevent disputes between neighbors. Mr. Trent shared images of the subject property, which is approximately 0.77 acres in size (+/- 33,366 sq. ft.), and the neighboring properties.

Mr. Trent noted that the Comprehensive Plan, updated as of March of 2024, does not highlight a site-specific land use redevelopment recommendation, but does describe "Residential Areas and Neighborhoods".

Per the plan, the subject property is identified as "Single-Family Detached". The goal for this property designation is to provide high-quality housing for all residents. The recommendations are to promote investment in existing neighborhoods and encourage new development complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The requested six-foot (6') privacy fence extension would encroach into the front yard, which would not be permissible per Code; therefore, a variance is being requested. The Petitioners have a basketball hoop in the driveway. Balls often enter the neighbor's property, prompting the children to also enter the property to retrieve them. Mr. Singh and Ms. Fields believe a privacy fence would alleviate the neighbor disputes. Considering the circumstances, staff has recommended approval of the Variance to exceed the maximum fence height, subject to the conditions as stated in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated December 2, 2025.

Chairman Schwarz asked whether the Petitioners would be allowed to build a six-foot (6') fence to the front corner of their home. Mr. Trent responded that this would be allowed, but the fence being proposed would be to extend along the garage and into the front yard. Chairman Schwarz inquired regarding the distance between the corner of the Petitioners' garage and the proposed endpoint of the fence. Mr. Trent responded that it is estimated to be 10 to 15 feet, and that section is the only one that requires a Variance. As the fence is proposed to end at the northwest corner of the neighbor's house, the neighbor would be allowed to build the proposed fence along the property line per Code; however, he has no wish to do so. The Petitioners would like to offset the fence onto their own property to allow for maintenance.

Board Member Gutierrez inquired regarding the front yard setback requirement. Mr. Trent responded that the minimum setback is 30 feet (30') in the R-3 district. Board Gutierrez asked whether the Variance was requested because the fence would encroach on the setback. Mr. Trent responded that the Variance was requested because the proposed fence is higher than three feet (3'), which is not allowed in the front yard. Board Member Gutierrez acknowledged that a three-foot (3') fence would not stop a basketball and asked whether the Petitioners would be allowed to construct a three-foot (3') fence that extends to their front property line and wraps around. Mr. Trent responded that they would.

Board Member Kehr asked why the garage was considered to be the front of the Petitioners' house. Mr. Trent indicated the images on the slides and noted that the garage is attached to the house and is offset toward the front.

Board Member Gertsmeier asked whether the existing six-foot (6') fence was to the back and the east, and whether anything was proposed for the west or front. Mr. Trent responded that it was, and that nothing was proposed for the west or front.

Mr. Singh was sworn in by Chairman Schwarz and noted that the Staff Presentation was complete. One major reason for the fence is to prevent the neighbor from harassing him and his children. His three-year-old daughter has seen the neighbor shouting and is now afraid to play in the yard.

Mr. Singh noted that because the fence would be permitted per Code, if his neighbor were to build it, it would not look out of place. He noted that most encounters with the neighbor occur near the basketball hoop, especially when balls enter the yard, which is why he would like the fence to extend past it.

Chairman Schwarz noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals was considering approval of a Variance, not moderating between neighbors. He requested that attendees in the audience remain respectful and avoid speaking out of turn.

Mr. Singh clarified that the distance from the corner of his garage to the corner of his neighbor's house was closer to 30 feet than 15 feet. The proposed three-foot (3') picket fence at the front most portion of the yard would stop balls from rolling into the neighbor's yard.

Board Member Gutierrez requested the ages of the Petitioners' children. Mr. Singh responded that they were almost four (4), eleven (11), and almost thirteen (13).

Board Member Gertsmeier asked whether the pattern of the extended fence would match that of the existing fence. Mr. Trent responded that it would. The side with the structural supports would face the Petitioners' property, while the more attractive side would face that of their neighbor. Mr. Singh added that the fence would be quite far from the street and not noticeable to drivers or pedestrians.

Board Member Geraghty asked whether the fence would be offset onto the neighbor's property. Mr. Singh responded that the fence would be offset onto his own property and noted that the image on the slide makes it look like the fence would be on the neighbor's property.

Chairman Schwarz asked whether the Petitioner had any objection to the petition being "Exhibit 1" of the hearing, or to Mr. Trent's presentation being "Exhibit 2". Mr. Singh responded that he did not.

Chairman Schwarz opened the floor to public comment.

Lupco Zabjanovski, the Petitioners' neighbor, was sworn in by Chairman Schwarz and noted that extending the fence would not solve matters. He cited the reasons he sometimes becomes annoyed with the Petitioners: there appears to be a factory operating in the Petitioners' garage, involving forklifts; a foul odor sometimes emanates from the side vent in the Petitioners' garage; and the basketball hoop is located 10 feet from his house. The children often play basketball from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., and the constant noise of the ball disturbs him. He noted that the fence would allow the Petitioners to store more equipment in their yard, and there is a tree in the way of the proposed fence extension, though it appears to be dying.

Board Member Edenfield asked whether the Commission should address the issues raised by Mr. Zabjanovski. Mr. Trent responded that, as Mr. Zabjanovski lodges complaints, they would be referred to the Code Enforcement Officer, who will investigate these issues. Staff noticed the vents on the garage but was unsure of their purpose.

Staff is unaware of a business being run on the property, and the issue will be investigated. Staff has already advised the Petitioners to relocate the items that were stored outside. These issues are, however, not within the purview of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Gertsmeier, to close the evidentiary portion of the public hearing, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Gutierrez, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, that this matter be APPROVED subject to the three conditions of the zoning department stated in the memorandum dated December 2, 2025. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye:	9	Schwarz, Edenfield, Geraghty, Gertsmeier, Grotzke, Gutierrez, Ward, Kehr, Benton
Nay:	0	

Chairman Schwarz stated that this recommendation will be presented to the City Council at its regular meeting on December 10, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Trent advised Mr. Singh to attend the hearing, noting that he will not be expected to make a presentation but may be asked questions.

Public Comments – No members of the public expressed a desire to speak.

Other Business

6025 South LaGrange Road – Discuss potential Concept Plan for the construction of a new Medical Clinic on a business-zoned lot (B-2, Limited Service Business District) formerly known as the Time Out Restaurant site.

Mr. Trent noted that, in this case, the potential Petitioner was invited to pitch an idea and receive feedback before formally submitting a request. Mr. Trent shared details regarding the area and images of the subject site, which is approximately 33,348 square feet, or 0.77 acres in size. The existing building slightly exceeds 5,000 square feet. The developer would like to demolish it and build a “medical clinic” of approximately 5,310 square feet. The developer intends to allocate 40 parking spaces for the clinic. The site is within the LaGrange Road Arterial Road Corridor Overlay District, also known as the ARC.

A “medical clinic” within the ARC Overlay District would have certain requirements. A business in which less than 50% of its income is derived from sales that generate a retailers’ or service occupation tax for the City would require a Special Use permit. Such businesses are often required to pay a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) fee. The property is not within a Subarea Plan; however, it is part of the “Commercial and Industrial Areas” and thus there are goals and recommendations (under the 2024 Comprehensive Plan). This property is identified as a “Community/Corridor Commercial” site. The goal is to enhance the economic viability, productivity, and uniqueness of the City’s primary commercial corridors.

Mr. Trent shared renderings of the proposed building, which is to be called “UChicago Medicine”, and an illustration of one of its existing sites.

One of the potential Petitioners, Elliott Jamison, spoke on behalf of “UChicago Medicine”. He noted that the current owners have tried to market the site to potential restaurant owners; however, the building was involved in a vehicle accident and condemned. Mr. Jamison noted that the space is too small for a restaurant or coffee shop, aside from a small family restaurant, the owner of which would lack sufficient funds to demolish and rebuild the building. The urgent-care clinic would offer high-quality medical services and good jobs. Per his research, the location is ideal from a supply and demand standpoint. Because it is near residential uses, families would be able to access the clinic easily. The project would be a significant investment, and the potential owner would like to become part of the community. He understands the tax implications and is willing to pay a PILOT fee.

Chairman Schwarz asked Mr. Trent whom the potential applicants should speak with next. Mr. Trent responded that staff would coordinate with the Finance Director, who would calculate the lost revenue implications (retailers’ or service occupation tax) and provide an approximate PILOT tax amount. The potential Petitioner would also benefit from Commission feedback.

Commissioner Edenfield cited a successful urgent care in the area but noted that another was empty when she visited. She expressed approval for the project, noting a preference for a professional use over a fast-food restaurant. She added that entering and exiting the site via LaGrange Road would be an issue. Commissioner Geraghty stated that the median prevents drivers from turning into the property when driving south, and they would have to make a U-turn to reach the site. Mr. Jamison responded that the proposed clinic would be connected to the hospital, so health workers would be able to refer patients to specialists there if needed; competing clinics may not have this resource. Mr. Jamison noted that locals would be able to work with the traffic patterns, and the parking area would be sufficient, avoiding a backup into the road.

Commissioner Grotzke noted that she had hoped for a new restaurant and thanked Mr. Jamison for explaining the inadequate size. She noted that the building rendering was boring and recommended that the potential developer add stone and rustic elements so that the building would fit in with other buildings along LaGrange Road.

Commissioner Gertsmeier asked whether the clinic would be open 24/7 and how the potential owner planned to advertise. Mr. Jamison responded that most urgent cares are open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The proposed clinic may have later hours, but it would not be open 24/7. “UChicago Medicine” is affiliated with the University of Chicago, and the university would handle the advertising and become involved in the community by sponsoring athletic teams and school bands. “UChicago Medicine” has operated for over 20 years in 50 locations and has never closed a clinic. Commissioner Gutierrez asked whether a path was possible for the clinic to be open 24/7. Mr. Jamison responded that most urgent-care clinics were not open 24/7, but if the demand existed, the potential owner would consider it.

Commissioner Ward suggested the property at 9901 W. 55th Street as a more suitable location. Chuck Holliday, Senior Vice President of Jamison Commercial Partners, responded that he would consider it, but the potential owner wishes to be on LaGrange Road. Mr. Jamison added that the subject site was found to be among the best locations in the Chicago suburbs.

Commissioner Gutierrez asked whether the potential Petitioners had purchased the property yet, noting that the clinic would be welcome if it were done well. Mr. Jamison responded that they had not purchased the property. Commissioner Geraghty, citing an aging population and youth sports, and recommended that the elevations along LaGrange Road be improved.

Mr. Jamison thanked the Plan Commission and requested recommendations for an architect. Mr. Trent recommended that the potential Petitioners view the exterior of the Municipal Complex, where the meeting was taking place, as well as the City Center development. The noted buildings, as well as those along LaGrange Road, incorporate natural stone. Mr. Trent requested that the potential Petitioners leave their contact information so that he could contact them after speaking with the Finance Director. Mr. Trent recommended that they view the PCZBA Application Packet on the City website and begin preparing the necessary materials if they wished to move forward with the project.

Ticket Statistics (for November 2025) – In November, 10 tickets were issued in total, compared to 25 in November 2024. Seven (7) tickets were issued for parking and storing tractors and trailers, and two (2) tickets were issued for trucks parked on property not registered to the business. The year-to-date total was 119 tickets, compared to 169 for the same period in 2024.

2018-25 Zoning Cases – The list of past cases was updated.

Next Meeting – The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2026. The agenda is expected to include a Variance request for a homeowner who built a shed in their side yard (5603 S. Peck Avenue); and the Petitioners for the property located at 6420 Joliet Road (Noto Event Center), may resubmit their project proposal after it had expired. If the agenda items are not ready by December 11, 2025, staff will notify the Commission, and the meeting may be canceled.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke that this meeting be ADJOURNED; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Chairman Schwarz declared the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,



ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

/ms