

**SUMMARY NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD**

On Wednesday, June 5, 2019, the Zoning Board of Appeals met at 7:00 p.m. in the Village Hall first floor Board Room located at 361 Happ Road to consider one (1) issue:

Members in Attendance:

Cheryl Charnas, Chairperson
J. Patrick Doherty
James Appel
Christine Geraghty

Members Absent:

Bert Getz, Jr.
Robert Hayward
Richard Crotty

OTHERS PRESENT: Building Commissioner Ron Johnson and Trustee Todd Fowler and Trustee Charles Orth.

Chairperson Cheryl Charnas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. by introducing the Zoning Board of Appeals members.

Chairperson Charnas requested a motion on the consideration of the December 5, 2018, summary notes. A motion was made by Member James Appel and seconded by Member Pat Doherty to approve the December 5, 2018, summary notes.

The following vote was taken:

AYES: 4

Cheryl Charnas, Chair
J. Patrick Doherty
James Appel
Christine Geraghty

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 3

Bert Getz, Jr.
Robert Hayward
Richard Crotty

Motion Carried

1. **1950 WILLOW ROAD - Consideration of a request for a variation from Chapter 18 – Appurtenant Structures, Article V – Playground Equipment, Section 18.36 – Height and Location Regulations of the Village of Northfield’s Code:**
 - A) A variation to allow playground equipment to be a maximum 27 feet in height from the 15 feet allowed by Village Code, resulting in a 12 foot height variation for the installation of new playground equipment at Clarkson Park.

Mr. George Alexoff, Director for the Northfield Park District, petitioner was present. Mr. Alexoff outlined the park district’s request for a height variation in order to allow for the removal of the existing playground equipment and the installation of new playground equipment at Clarkson Park.

Village Code allows for playground equipment to be 15 feet in height. The existing playground will be updated with new equipment utilizing the existing concrete curb where possible. The maximum height of the proposed play structure is 26'4" from the ground surface to the top of the roof. The Northfield Park District serves the community by developing and maintaining high quality facilities, open space, recreational, educational and cultural opportunities for its residents. The proposed play equipment encourages skill development through interactive play, sensory experiences, challenging activities, imagination and independence while providing unique play opportunities compared to other district facilities.

Mr. Alexoff added they feel this is the best playground equipment for the community. The excitement will last for several years. During the review process the past year, one of the comments they received was there needs to be more shade. The height variation to allow the platform will give additional shade to the area. This type of playground equipment is also in Lincolnwood and Gurnee.

Member Doherty visited the playgrounds in Lincolnwood and Gurnee. He felt the playground equipment was fantastic and very sturdy. He is concerned about the height and would not want to see anyone get hurt.

Member Geraghty asked if they would customize the top part to make it lower, if they would have to remove the slide.

Mr. Alexoff said they would be able to keep the slide if they had to lower the platform.

Member Doherty thought the nearby trees in the area gave the appropriate shade needed for the playground equipment and was wondering if they could eliminate the top platform of the playground equipment.

Mr. Alexoff said the platform will give additional shade to the area.

Member Geraghty agreed the playground equipment does get hot from the sun during the day.

Member Appel wanted to know if there was any chance for a child to stand on the top of cage to get up to the highest platform.

Mr. Alexoff responded children would not be able to climb up on the top of the cage.

Member Doherty shared pictures with the Zoning Board of Appeals members he took today at the Lincolnwood and Gurnee parks.

Member Geraghty questioned what is the lifetime of playground equipment and how long has the existing equipment been at Clarkson Park.

Mr. Alexoff said the existing playground has been at the park for 18 years. The life expectancy is 15-20 years.

Member Doherty asked what they will do with the old playground equipment.

Mr. Alexoff said for liability issues it cannot be sold, however, there is a program where the equipment can be donated to a third world country.

Chairperson Charnas questioned if the other park districts jurisdictions with this equipment had any issues with the height.

Mr. Alexoff said the park districts in Gurnee and Lincolnwood have different restrictions in place.

Member Geraghty asked if they installed the equipment as proposed and it became a problem, if it could be changed at a later date.

Mr. Alexoff answered if the playground equipment became a safety hazard, they could change it at any time.

Member Doherty wanted to know if there was any reaction from the public meetings the park district recently held.

Mr. Alexoff responded the public meetings were well attended and they did not receive any negative comments. Some residents were trying to put the height of the proposed equipment in perspective and how is it going to fit in the park. The height of the tallest piece of the existing equipment is 15 feet. The playground equipment at Middlefork School is 17 feet. It is definitely bigger than what is existing. However, if they replace the equipment and stay within the 15 feet, then there is nothing different for the kids. There is no challenge for the kids.

Member Appel would like to see the top lowered, but feels the new equipment would be a good addition to the park and it goes along with the new Sunset Ridge School. However, the top section seems so much taller than what is currently existing.

Member Geraghty agrees it is very tall, but she does not know how much lowering the platform is really going to get them. She has a 12, 9 and 6 year old. The 12 year old has not been at Clarkson Park for a very long time and feels the proposed playground equipment would be an asset and a great opportunity for tweens to actually find something to do other than be on their cell phones.

Chairperson Charnas asked if anyone present would like to speak. No one wished to speak.

Building Commissioner Ron Johnson mentioned this will move onto the Architectural Commission next week. They will review the design and colors. Normally the Zoning Board of Appeals has final authority, however, in this case it will also need approval by the Architectural Commission.

Member Doherty said ultimately it would go onto the Village Board for approval.

Building Commissioner Ron Johnson said Architectural Commission has final authority so it would not go to the Village Board for final approval.

Member Doherty thought he would be overwhelmed by the size of the playground equipment he saw in Gurnee and Lincolnwood. He did not find that to be the case at all and actually liked what he saw.

Member Appel asked if the parks in Gurnee and Lincolnwood had more open land around the playground equipment.

Member Doherty felt it was not all crammed together and everything was very comfortable in his judgment.

Chairperson Charnas commented there isn't enough for kids to do and here is an opportunity to engage a segment we are missing right now.

Member Geraghty feels Clarkson Park is underused and is always surprised when she drives by and there are not more kids at the park playing on the equipment.

There being no further discussion, the following motion was made:

A motion was made by Zoning Board of Appeals Member Patrick Doherty, seconded by Member Christine Geraghty to approve the following:

1. 1950 WILLOW ROAD - Consideration of a request for a variation from Chapter 18 – Appurtenant Structures, Article V – Playground Equipment, Section 18.36 – Height and Location Regulations of the Village of Northfield's Code:

A) A variation to allow playground equipment to be a maximum 27 feet in height from the 15 feet allowed by Village Code, resulting in a 12 foot height variation for the installation of new playground equipment at Clarkson Park.

for the property located at 1950 Willow Road consistent with the site plan and Architectural exhibits received on May 23, 2019.

Subject to the following development conditions:

- 1) An approval pursuant to any requested review by a Village consultant, staff member, Board or Commission shall be an approval of only those items specified in any motion, resolution, ordinance or written report. Under no circumstances shall such an approval be deemed to be the approval of any other matter by virtue of the fact that those other matters may appear on the supporting documents such as a site plan, engineering plan, or plat that was the subject of the review. Neither shall any such written approval be deemed to be an approval of any matter, which is within the jurisdiction of any other Village consultant, staff member, Board or Commission or any County, State or Federal Agency.**
- 2) The petitioner shall comply in all respects with the ordinances of the Village of Northfield and nothing in this variance shall be construed as a waiver of any of those requirements.**

- 3) This variation will be in effect until June 5, 2020. Any variation granted hereunder for any purpose shall lapse and be of no further force and effect unless a building permit has been issued by the Village for such purpose within one year after the effective date of the variation.

The following vote was taken:

AYES: 4

Cheryl Charnas, Chair
J. Patrick Doherty
James Appel
Christine Geraghty

NAYS: 0

ABSTAIN: 0

ABSENT: 3

Bert Getz, Jr.
Robert Hayward
Richard Crotty

Motion Carried

There being no further discussion upon a motion made by Member Appel and seconded by Member Geraghty, the Zoning Board of Appeals adjourned their meeting at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED 8/7/19