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Staff Report to the Board of Trustees

Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion

Prepared: 5/19/2025

Project: 2024-0807 Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion

Petitioner: Dr. Daniel Callaghan, Superintendent, Kirby School District 140

Project Representative: Thomas Szurgot, TRIA Architecture

Location: 16600 88th Avenue, Orland Park

P.I.N.s: 27-22-403-011-0000, 27-22-403-012-0000

Parcel Size: 10 acres (9.47 after right-of-way dedication)

Requested Action: The petitioner is seeking approval of a Special Use Permit to continue operating an elementary school at 16600 S 88th Avenue. The request also includes approval of the revised Site Plan, Landscape Plan, and Building Elevations, along with a modification to reduce the required plantings within the southern landscape corridor of the site.

PLAN COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Present at the May 6 Plan Commission meeting were 7 Commissioners, the petitioner, Kirby School District 140, representatives from Manhard Consulting and TRIA Architecture, Village staff, and members of the public.

Following the staff presentation, several Commissioners and residents raised concerns regarding drainage impacts on neighboring Orland Hills properties, particularly near Dwight Court and Marilyn Court. Multiple residents expressed concern with past flooding events and asked if the proposed improvements would worsen the conditions in their backyards. It was also noted that of the drainage concerns in the area are due to outdated and undersized stormwater infrastructure within Orland Hills.

Staff responded that the scope of improvements is limited to the southeast side of the school property, and that no grading changes are proposed near the residential lots on the northwest side. The Petitioner explained that the new underground detention system will retain more water on-site and reduce runoff. The Village’s Engineering Department confirmed that the proposed drainage system will not negatively impact the surrounding properties, and that stormwater will be directed into the existing system that serves Fernway.

A Commissioner inquired whether officials from Orland Hills had reviewed the plans or been involved in the coordination process. Staff explained that although Orland Hills was notified of the project, they were not formally included in the review. Concerns were also raised regarding the lack of a mail notice received by Orland Hills residents. A resident stated that they received their letter the day of the meeting. According to the signed affidavit required by the Village prior to public hearings, the petitioner distributed the notification letters to the post office on April 17, 2025, which was 19 days before the May 6 meeting. One Commissioner noted that the issue likely stemmed from a postal service delay, rather than a failure to provide timely notice.

The Commissioners also raised questions about on-site vehicular circulation. The architect confirmed that student drop-off and pick-up operations will remain unchanged, continuing to be divided between the 88th Avenue and O'Brien Drive entrances. A traffic study conducted by KLOA, Inc., dated April 20, 2023, is on file with the Development Services Department and provides an overview of existing traffic volumes on the site.

The Commissioners also discussed pedestrian circulation, particularly the lack of a sidewalk connection at the northwest corner of O'Brien Drive and 88th Avenue. Staff explained that steep grades and existing stormwater infrastructure prevented a sidewalk in this area but noted that future sidewalk improvements could be evaluated in a later phase.

The Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval of the project by a vote of 7 ayes, 0 nays. This item is now before the Board for consideration.

PLAN COMMISSION ACTION

The Plan Commission Recommends the Village Board approves a **Site Plan and Building Elevations** titled "Kirby School District 2025 Additions at Fernway Park Elementary School," dated March 18, 2025.

And

The Plan Commission Recommends the Village Board approves a **Landscape Plan** titled "Final Landscape Plan for Fernway School Renovations," dated March 12, 2025.

And

The Plan Commission Recommends the Village Board approves a **Special Use Permit** for a school at 16600 88th Avenue, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall be in substantial conformance with the preliminary site plan and building elevations titled "Kirby School District 2025 Additions at Fernway Park Elementary School," dated March 18, 2025; the landscape plan titled "Final Landscape Plan for Fernway School Renovations," dated March 12, 2025; and the preliminary civil engineering plans titled "Final Civil Plan for Fernway School Renovations," dated February 13, 2025.
2. Meet all building code requirements and final engineering requirements, including any required permits from outside agencies.
3. All ground-based and roof-mounted mechanical equipment must be fully screened from view and shall meet the requirements listed in Section 6-308.J.
4. Submit a sign permit application to the Development Services Department for separate review. Signs are subject to additional review and approval via the sign permitting process and additional restrictions may apply.
5. Prior to the Board of Trustees hearing on this case, the petitioner shall work with Village staff to finalize the terms of an Intergovernmental Agreement, or other appropriate Hold Harmless Agreement, to allow the existing ground sign to remain in its current location.

And

The Plan Commission Recommends the Village Board approves a **Modification** from Section 6-305.D.3 for a reduction in the required landscaping amounts within the south landscape corridor along O'Brien Drive.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECOMMENDED MOTION

Regarding Case Number 2024-0807, also known as Fernway Park Elementary School Expansion Special Use Permit, I move to approve the Plan Commission Recommended Action as presented for this case.