



**Board of Zoning Appeals & City Planning Commission Minutes  
Tuesday, February 4, 2020  
7 P.M.  
Council Chambers**

Members Present: David E. Weiss, Mayor, Chair  
Sean P. Malone, Council Member  
Kevin Dreyfuss-Wells, Member

Others Present: Joyce G. Braverman, Director of Planning  
William M. Gruber, Director of Law  
Daniel Feinstein, Senior Planner

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Weiss at 7:00 p.m.

\* \* \* \*

Approval of the January 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Mr. Dreyfuss-Wells and seconded by Mayor Weiss to approve the minutes with corrections.

Roll Call: Ayes: Weiss, Malone, Dreyfuss-Wells  
Nays: None

Motion Carried

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**#2047. FERNWAY SCHOOL – 17420 FERNWAY ROAD:**

A Public Hearing was held on the request of Chris Dewey, Van Auken Akins Architects, on behalf of the Shaker Heights School District, Fernway School, 17420 Fernway Road, to the Board of Zoning Appeals and City Planning Commission for site plan review, subdivision of land and variances in order to expand the parking lot and consolidate the playground as part of the renovation of the school. Two building additions and subdivision of land were approved as part of renovation of the fire damaged school building last year. The site work includes expansion of the parking lot on the Dorchester Road side of the building and consolidation and relocation of the outdoor play area to the southern rear yard. The applicant proposes to consolidate two parcels of land. The proposed parking lot adds 18 spaces in the Dorchester Road side yard, set back 12 feet from the property line

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screened with shrubs. A variance is required as code requires a 50-foot setback from the street and a 25-foot landscape area for a parking lot. The dumpsters are proposed to be enclosed with a masonry wall and remain located in the Ardmore Road side yard. Code allows dumpsters only in the rear yard. The City Planning Commission reviews site plan and lot consolidation requests in the Institutional zoning district.

Mr. Feinstein showed slides of the site. He stated this is a request for site plan review, subdivision of land and variances in order to expand the parking lot and consolidate the playground. The City Planning Commission approved building additions in 2019. The applicant now proposes the site work, which includes combining the playground in the southern rear yard and expanding parking. Subdivision review is requested to re-combine lots 735-09-117 and 735-09-116. The parking request requires variances to: 1) parking in the 50 foot front yard setback; 2) parking with less than 20 feet of landscaping; 3) less than a 25 foot landscape perimeter; 4) less than 20 percent internal landscaping; and 5) no internal landscape islands. The parking lot is proposed 8 feet from Dorchester Road with a landscape bed with bushes planted at 2 feet tall. The dumpsters are located in the Ardmore Road side yard, but code restricts them to the rear yard. A brick wall and wood gate are proposed to screen the dumpsters. At the members' seat is a revised landscape plan with taller, 2 foot lilac bushes along Dorchester Road and a line of 6 foot tall arborvitae bushes on the south property line next to the Ardmore Road neighbor. The Architectural Board of Review approved the brick walls around the utility yard and dumpsters at their January 21, 2020 meeting. Staff supports this request. The second staff condition of a larger shrub being planted has been take care of due to the revised landscape plan.

Chris Dewey, Van Auken Akins Architects, said they have been working with the school district and the school community for goals for the exterior of Fernway School as part of the renovation after the fire damage. This renovated school will be a model school for the district. They hope to promote better use and operations on the site with some of the exterior improvements proposed. One of those improvements includes additional parking which will allow for handicap accessible parking close to the front entrance. All visitors will be coming through the new front entry with a security vestibule. This entrance will be handicap accessible. The school requires 50 spaces just for staff. They are increasing the available on-site parking from 25 to 39. It is closer to what they need for the building, but is still not enough. They propose to move the playground from the side yard on Dorchester Road to the rear yard of the site. The side yard location became problematic for the classrooms directly adjacent to the previous playground. From an operational standpoint, having a playground in the front and the play areas in the rear required twice as many staff members to monitor children during recess. Consolidating the play areas to the rear of the property allows for fencing to restrict children from making their way into the parking lot or into the street. This will improve safety for the children. There were a series of public meetings with a school district-led team and residents. There was a clear consensus for a more natural play area and play structures. One large play structure is proposed with several other more natural features. He described the play area in detail. They had two or three design sessions strictly regarding the playground. There was an open house with neighbors on January 30, 2020. They met with the adjacent neighbor from Ardmore Road and have added evergreen landscaping adjacent to their home to help buffer the playground from their property. He pointed out the location of the existing pine trees, which have been limbed up. They are proposing new evergreen landscaping to provide a buffer under the branches of the pine trees. They reached out to the Dorchester Road neighbor with a special flyer left at the house, but have not had additional contact with that property owner.

Ms. Braverman asked about additional landscaping adjacent to the Dorchester Road neighbor's fence along the edge of the playground.

Mr. Dreyfuss-Wells asked about additional landscaping adjacent to that Dorchester neighbor. Is there an opening from the playground to other areas of the site?

Mr. Dewey described the openings including the wall, fences and gates that allow access to and from all sides of the play area to both streets as well as the school.

Mayor Weiss asked about the large driveway gate. When would this be open and/or closed?

Mr. Dewey explained there is a walk gate adjacent to the driveway gate which will be open and accessible, but the driveway gate limits vehicular access to the school property.

Mr. Dreyfuss-Wells asked about access and landscaping. He said the High School has bike racks in front that are used which were installed after the fact in order to make for a convenient location for children who commute.

Mr. Dewey explained that the bike racks were purposely placed near the playground instead of the front of the school in order to be there for the neighborhood. The neighborhood will be using the play area after school hours. They could look into placing a few racks in front of the school for students as well.

Mr. Malone mentioned that the rear playground property that was subdivided previously to apply for a grant, which was not approved by the State. That parcel now needs to be transferred from the City back to the School District and then re-combined.

Ms. Braverman confirmed that the ownership needs to be returned to the School District. Then the property would be able to be consolidated.

Mayor Weiss opened the Public Hearing.

Brendan Daley, 3288 Ardmore Road, said he is anxious to see the construction finished. He knows it will be an intensely used site, very close to the edge of his property. He knows the neighborhood is looking forward to the work being complete. It will certainly be a hub for neighborhood activity. He knows noise will be an issue next to his house, but he is happy with the additional proposed landscaping. He hopes the access to the playground is limited and watched so late night activity is discouraged.

Mr. Grosse, Shaker Heights School District, said he understands the neighbors concerns. They do not close the playground officially, but the police do check in on it. They will keep watch if there are any concerns.

Mr. Malone asked about lighting in the area.

Mr. Dewey said most of the lights are actually on the building, shining in this direction.

Mr. Dreyfuss-Wells warned about not installing a bunch of glaring lights.

