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, September 1, 2026

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, Steve Kehr, Ronald Ward, Jon Gertsmeier, Danielle Edenfield, Jack Benton
Also Present: City Attorney James Hess, Planning Manager Richard Trent
Absent: None

Approval of Minutes – The regular meeting minutes of August 4, 2026, were previously distributed to Board members.

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

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

Chairman's Comments – There were no comments.

Action Items:

1. **CASE #PZV26-0004: Consideration of a Variance**
    a. To consider and recommend a Variance to increase the allowable height requirement for channel lettering/freestanding letters on an awning from 24 inches (24") to 36 inches (36") for the installation of a new awning sign in the B-2 Zoning District at the subject property of 1023 West 55th Street.

Ms. Edenfield moved to open the public hearing on this matter, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Mr. Trent confirmed that the required notices for the case were sent. The Petitioner, Stephen Coslik of Woodmont Countryside Academy LLC, is requesting a Variance to increase the allowable height requirement for channel letters/freestanding letters for the installation of a new awning sign. A similar request was submitted in 2022 and was subsequently approved, but it has since expired.

Mr. Trent shared elevations of the subject property, noting that the canopy was removed earlier in 2026. There are several trees along the north and west elevation of the property. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan, updated as of March 2024, identifies the subject property as "Community Corridor Commercial". Although not identified in any of the three (3) Subarea Plans, the subject property is referenced under Chapter 5, which outlines two (2) goals and three (3) recommendations for "Commercial and Industrial Areas", as noted in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated September 1, 2026. The subject property has also been identified as a location within one of the "*Commercial Areas of Change*" along 55th Street.

The sign in question would be approximately three feet (3') in height and approximately 33.916 feet (33.916') in length, for a total of approximately 102 square feet. The Petitioner believes that a sign at the required size would not be sufficiently visible, thereby impeding the academy's ability to advertise its future location. Several large trees would block visibility for eastbound drivers.

Mr. Trent shared an image of the north elevation, which included the existing awning. A wall sign of up to 428 square feet would be permitted for the subject building, given its size (width of the building).

Staff recommended approval of the Variance, subject to the three (3) conditions as presented in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated September 1, 2026.

Ms. Grotzke inquired how the letters would be attached to the awning. Mr. Trent responded that they would be attached to the steel awning, likely by welding with brackets.

Mr. Gutierrez inquired whether the sign would be illuminated. Mr. Trent responded that he believes it would not be illuminated; if it is, it would be internal and indirect.

Ms. Edenfield inquired regarding the trees. Mr. Trent responded that staff advised that trimming the trees on the west side (of the building) might assist with visibility; however, there are also trees in front of the building.

Nick Pecho, representing the Petitioner, was sworn in by Chairman Schwarz.

Mr. Gertsmeier inquired whether the Petitioner was aware that, if approved, the project would need to be completed within six (6) months. Mr. Pecho responded that they were.

Chairman Schwarz inquired regarding the opening time of the subject business. Mr. Pecho responded that the project had been delayed but is now expected to be completed by the end of October 2026, after which the building can be occupied. Once the building is occupied, Kiddie Academy will need to wait for a license from the State before opening. The awnings are up.

Ms. Grotzke requested confirmation that children would be unable to attend the academy for three (3) to six (6) months. Mr. Pecho responded that this is the case, as a license is needed from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Mr. Geraghty inquired whether the Petitioner was aware that the State had combined departments into one agency. Mr. Pecho responded that they were. One school was able to open after three (3) months, but another had to wait ten (10) months.

There were no members of the public present to comment on the case.

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. Pecho responded that he did not.

Mr. Gutierrez moved to close the evidentiary portion of the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Ward, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Benton, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, to approve CASE #PZV26-0004, Consideration of a Variance, subject to the three (3) conditions as presented in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated September 1, 2026. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Nay: 0

Chairman Schwarz noted that this recommendation will be presented to the City Council at its regular meeting on September 23, 2026.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

Other Business

Ticket Statistics (for August 2026) – In August, twenty three (23) tickets were issued in total, compared to six (6) in August 2025. Six (6) tickets were issued for parking and storing tractors and trailers, compared with four (4) in 2025; and seventeen (17) tickets were issued for trucks not registered to the business, compared to two (2) in 2025. The year-to-date total was 138 tickets, compared to 92 for the same time period in 2025.

Mr. Trent offered to investigate whether or not any of the trucks parked at business (in violation) were at Duckee's Travel Center.

2018-26 Zoning Cases – The list of past cases was updated.

Next Meeting – The next meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2026. The agenda will include a Special Use Amendment for the Texas Roadhouse at 9960 Joliet Road. The restaurant would like to add a small addition; however, this would require an Amendment to the current Special Use Variation.

Chairman Schwarz inquired whether metal shutters are permitted by Code, noting a recent burglary of a business with slot machines. He noted that metal shutters can be unsightly. Mr. Trent responded that the Building Commissioner concluded that a Building Permit was not required for installation of metal shutters. At this time, only one business has requested permission to install them. It may be possible to install internal shutters and shield them with curtains. He agreed to discuss the matter of aesthetically pleasing security measures with staff.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

Chairman Schwarz declared the meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,

ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

/ms