



Land Use Commission

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 @ 7:00 PM

Lorraine H. Morton City Hall, James C. Lytle City Council Chambers

**COMMITTEE MEMBER
PRESENT:**

Kiril Mirintchev, Committee Member
Jameika Mangum, Committee Member
Jeanne Lindwall, Vice-Chair
Brian Johnson, Committee Member
Darush Mabadi, Committee Member
Luke Harris-Ferree, Committee Member

**COMMITTEE MEMBER
ABSENT:**

Myrna Arevalo, Committee Member
Max Puchtel, Chair
Loren Berlin, Committee Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Meagan Jones, Staff Liaison
Jeremiah Bebo, Staff Liaison (3)
Sam Hubbard, Senior Planner

A. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM: JEANNE LINDWALL, CHAIR

B. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Minutes of September 24, 2025

For Action

Motion: Committee Member Harris-Ferree

Second: Committee Member Mirintchev

For Action

4-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Lindwall, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nays: None

Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

Abstained: Mangum and Johnson

B. Minutes of October 8, 2025

For Action

Motion: Committee Member Harris-Ferree

Second: Committee Member Mirintchev

For Action

5-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Mangum, Lindwall, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nays: None

Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

Abstained: Johnson

C. OLD BUSINESS

A. Land Use Commission Rules & Procedures - Update

The Land Use Commission should review the proposed amendments to their Rules & Procedures then either vote to adopt as proposed or make specific changes and then vote to adopt.

Department Services Supervisor Jeremiah Bebo presented the Land Use Commission's Rules and Procedures under Old Business. He recapped that the review began at the October 8, 2025 meeting, noting that the rules had not been updated in some time. At that meeting, staff highlighted areas needing correction or clarification. Feedback was incorporated into a redlined version presented at the November 12 meeting, where the commission adopted most proposed changes but requested additional guidance on some sections.

For the December 12 meeting, Mr. Bebo explained that the current packet showed changes from November 12 in red, with any subsequent corrections or additions in blue. He outlined the process for reviewing the document, suggesting that commissioners could read through the changes before opening discussion, and invited Chair Lindwall to guide how the review should proceed.

Chair Lindwall raised questions about two parts of the updated Land Use Commission Rules and Procedures:

1. Commission Liaison Roles (Article 3, page 8-9): Chair Lindwall noted that the rules identify liaisons, for example to the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance Subcommittee, which may no longer exist. She suggested that if the commission is updating the rules, they should confirm which liaison roles are still active or needed. Mr. Bebo responded that this was likely a holdover from previous years, but there is still interest in discussions about the inclusionary housing ordinance. He proposed leaving the language as-is for now but noted that the commission could clarify it by saying "liaison as applicable."
2. Prospective Proposals (Article 4, page 11 of 22 / page 37 of 110): Chair Lindwall questioned the intent of the rule about reviewing prospective proposals and whether it

allows consideration of multiple proposals simultaneously. She noted it seems like it's meant to "run ideas past" the commission but acknowledged there isn't a formal application type for that process. Mr. Bebo indicated this section may need clarification to reflect current practice.

Overall, Chair Lindwall is flagging these sections for review to ensure the rules reflect current operations and avoid outdated references.

Mr. Bebo recommended removing the section on prospective proposals entirely. He explained that since the process isn't included in the zoning ordinance, it isn't enforceable. There's no formal application type or process for it, so keeping it in the rules would be ineffective. He suggested it could be revisited later if a zoning rewrite creates a formal mechanism.

Remote Participation (Article 6): Chair Lindwall noted a small typo with the semicolon/"or" placement. She also sought clarification on the language that "communications made by the commissioner attending virtually are made concurrently available to the public," which Jeremiah confirmed aligns with OMA requirements and means that virtual communication must be accessible to the public.

Oath and Swearing-In (Section 4): Chair Lindwall asked about how to handle testimony from residents versus non-residents during public hearings. Jeremiah explained that the commission's practice has been to swear in anyone who wants to speak but acknowledged the potential for confusion between "testimony" (for agenda items) and general "public comment" (non-agenda items). He suggested clarifying the agenda or chair's script rather than changing the rules themselves.

Speaking on Text Amendments and Plans (Section 5): Chair Lindwall questioned whether the rules should limit testimony to residents only. Jeremiah noted that for things like text amendments or comprehensive plan updates, the impact is broader than just a local area, so allowing wider public participation is reasonable. He emphasized it's more a wording clarification than a critical procedural issue. In short, the discussion focused on clarifying language and practice for remote participation and public testimony, with the consensus that some clarifications could be handled in the agenda/script rather than amending the formal rules.

Commissioner Mabadi asked about expanding the reasons a commissioner could attend virtually to cover non-emergency family obligations, like caring for a parent. Assistant City Attorney Katherine Penrose clarified that the Open Meetings Act (state law) strictly limits allowable reasons for remote participation. These cannot be broadened beyond what the law prescribes, so the rules must reflect that.

Section 10 – Conditions and Voting: Commissioner Mabadi raised a concern about the current rule that a commissioner should only request conditions that they could support through a positive vote. He explained that in practice, there are situations where a commissioner might want to propose improvements to a project they ultimately wouldn't fully support. Under the strict reading of Section 10, that flexibility is lost they'd have to vote positive to propose a condition.

Mr. Bebo and Commissioner Mabadi discussed a possible clarification: a commissioner can propose a condition aimed at meeting a specific standard without being required to vote in favor of the overall project if other standards remain unmet. This allows commissioners to improve certain aspects of a project even if they intend to vote against it, preserving some influence over the outcome while staying within procedural limits.

Section 10 – Conditions and Voting: The discussion focused on allowing commissioners to propose conditions that improve a project even if they don't intend to vote in favor of it overall. The goal is to clarify that a commissioner can suggest changes to address specific standards without being required to support the entire project, while avoiding excessive layering of conditions. There was agreement that the current restrictive language should be revised to allow more flexibility and guidance on how conditions relate to standards of approval.

Section 12 – Commission Action: The rules about requesting additional information or continuing a hearing were unclear and seem to be in the wrong place. It was suggested this section be moved, revised, or deleted.

Section 9 – Recommending Votes: Clarification is needed on whether separate written findings of fact are required, or if including motions and conditions in the meeting minutes is sufficient.

It was agreed that staff will revise the rules to incorporate more flexible language on conditions and clarify other ambiguous sections, then return the updated rules for review in a comprehensive (omnibus) fashion rather than approving piecemeal.

Continuances – Section 6: The discussion focused on clarifying who can request a continuance and how the process should work. Three groups can request a continuance: property owners within the notice area, the applicant, and business owners or residents with legal interest in property within the notification area. Property owners have a by-right continuance, which should ideally be requested at the initial hearing to avoid multiple chained continuances. Applicants and other participants can also request continuances, but these may be subject to commission approval.

It was suggested that written requests be required to ensure proper contact information and verify eligibility. There was agreement that rules could be drafted to consolidate continuance requests at the start of a case while still allowing the commission some discretion for additional requests. Any changes to include residents or business owners alongside property owners would require a broader review or code amendment. The goal is to organize the process so that continuances are identified early, limit the number of continued meetings, and reduce repetition of testimony while maintaining public access and fairness.

The discussion focused on reorganizing the continuances section to make it clearer who can request them and under what circumstances. Flexibility was emphasized to allow property owners, applicants, and residents or business owners within the notice area to request continuances, while preventing excessive or repetitive delays. Written requests were recommended to track who has exercised their by-right continuance and to provide a clear record.

It was noted that "never-ending" continuances are rare, but the rules should allow the commission to manage requests fairly, balancing efficiency with public participation. The idea of striking or keeping language about additional continuances was debated, with agreement that some flexibility should remain.

Other procedural points included limiting applicant presentations to 20 minutes unless the chair grants extra time, providing additional guidance on cross-examination and designated speakers, and clarifying the rules for large group participation.

Commissioner Mangum moved to have staff and the chair continue refining the rules to bring back a polished version for the next meeting.

Motion: Committee Member Mangum
Second: Committee Member Mirintchev

For Action

Motion Passed 6-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Mangum, Lindwall, Johnson, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nayes: None

Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

D. NEW BUSINESS

A. A. & B. Item A: Zoning Text Amendment | Requirements for Child Residential Care Homes | #25PLND- 0049
Item B: Special Use | 824 Gaffield Place | #25ZMJV-0046

In conjunction with the requested special use in case no. 25-ZMJV-0046, Karen Croteau, applicant, requests a Text Amendment to Section 6-4-4-3 of the Zoning Ordinance, to modify the distance requirement for Child Residential Care Homes in the R4a zoning district, as well as approval of a Special Use to allow a Child Residential Care Home (Section 6-8-6-3) at 824 Gaffield Place. Approval of both requests would allow the establishment of an 8-girl residential care home on the subject property, which is located in the R4a zoning district. The requested Special Use was originally granted in 2020, but expired on January 1, 2025, since the use was not yet established. Per Section 6-3-4-8, whenever a petition for a text amendment is filed in conjunction with a petition for a Special Use, such applications may be combined and reviewed simultaneously. The Land Use Commission is the recommending body for this case and the City Council is the determining body in accordance with Section 6-3-54-6 of the Evanston Zoning Code.

Karen Croteau, President of Hope Ignites Chicago, provided an overview of the organization's mission, history in Evanston, and the proposed renovation and use of 824 Gaffield Place as part of its broader "More Hope" initiative. She explained that Hope Ignites is a long term residential scholarship program serving academically motivated youth with comprehensive educational, residential, and support services, and emphasized the organization's longstanding positive relationship with the Evanston community. She also outlined the need to renew the Special Use permit due to its expiration during a multi year fundraising, leasing, and renovation process, noting that the organization has completed its capital campaign and is prepared to move forward with renovations.

Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy, Vice President of Hope Ignites Chicago, explained that the organization purchased 824 Gaffield Place and launched its capital campaign based on the Special Use permit granted in 2020, noting that the property would not have been acquired without that approval in place. She stated that the permit expired during the renovation and fundraising period and that the organization was surprised by the adoption of new zoning regulations establishing distance requirements for child residential care facilities after the original approval.

She described the proposed use as low impact and comparable to a traditional family

household, with eight scholars and three adult staff, no resident vehicles, and minimal effects on traffic, parking, or utilities. Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy emphasized that the scholars are academically motivated, do not present public safety concerns, and rely on public transportation, and she requested renewal of the Special Use permit with a narrow exception reflecting the previously approved use.

Commissioner Johnson asked questions regarding student transportation, vehicle ownership, and daily travel to school. Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy explained that scholars are not permitted to own or bring cars, they rely on public transportation, and use a Pace bus route serving Loyola Academy and Regina Dominican, and the the Evanston location significantly reduces commute times compared to where many students previously lived. She added that scholars reside in the homes year round, participate in summer school, employment, and enrichment activities, and maintain ongoing connections with their families through regular home visits and holidays.

Commissioner Mabadi asked whether the scholars attend Evanston Township High School. Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy responded that, since the program's inception, the governing ordinance specified that residents would not attend Evanston public schools, and the organization has never sought to change that condition. She explained that scholars attend Loyola Academy, Regina Dominican, and St. Athanasius, with partner schools sharing tuition costs to make participation financially feasible.

Chair Lindwall asked whether the long-term goal was to serve 16 boys and 16 girls and whether the organization anticipated any future expansion beyond that scale.

Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy, Vice President of Hope Ignites Chicago, confirmed that the plan is to serve 32 scholars total and stated that no further expansion is anticipated. She explained that the program is fully privately funded, has significant annual operating costs per home, and that recent fundraising was intentionally structured to support renovations and partially endow ongoing operations rather than enable continued growth.

Commissioner Mabadi asked when Hope Ignites Chicago anticipates having all four homes fully renovated and operational.

Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy, Vice President of Hope Ignites Chicago, explained that building permits have recently been secured for 827 Gaffield Place and that interior demolition is imminent, while renovations at 823 Gaffield Place are complete pending final regulatory approvals. She noted that completing renovations at 824 and 827 concurrently could result in significant cost savings and emphasized that the timing is sensitive due to the recent discovery that the prior special use permit had expired during the construction planning process.

Karen Croteau, clarified the anticipated timeline, stating that renovations are expected to be completed in approximately one year, extending into 2027 due to typical construction delays. She added that the organization plans to begin placing girls in the renovated home in fall 2027, with full occupancy phased in over approximately three years to allow for a balanced mix of ages.

Chair Lindwall asked whether students would be moved into the home mid school year or aligned with the academic calendar.

Jennifer Downs O'Shaughnessy, Vice President of Hope Ignites Chicago, responded that students are only placed at the start of the school year and are never moved mid year. She explained that the organization uses a selective and intensive screening process to ensure students are academically prepared and personally committed, including interviews, overnight stays in the home, and school shadowing, with the goal of long term stability and success. She added that due to construction timing and phased placement, it would likely take approximately two years after initial occupancy for the home to be fully operational and functioning at full capacity.

Commissioner Johnson asked City staff how many organizations or properties would be affected by the proposed zoning text amendment beyond the current applicant.

Senior Planner Sam Hubbard responded that staff was not aware of other properties that would qualify under the amendment. Chair Lindwall stated that this was a unique situation and that the amendment would apply to the entire City, so it was conceivable that there may be other properties or organizations to which it may apply, however it was limited to residential child care homes and not all residential care homes. Senior Planner Sam Hubbard added that it would only apply in the R4a Zoning District. Chair Lindwall asked for clarification regarding department recommendations, noting that two conditions seemed to apply specifically to the special use rather than the text amendment.

Senior Planner Sam Hubbard confirmed that the conditions applied only to the special use, not the text amendment. Chair Lindwall then proceeded to review the standards for the text amendment, noting that the language appeared straightforward and that no questions had been raised.

Chair Lindwall reviewed the standards for the text amendment as follows:

1. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies – The proposed amendment supports a neighborhood organization that is improving residential housing stock and reinforces the residential character of the block, which includes former single-family homes and two-flats now partially converted to student housing. The amendment aligns with the city's goal of providing a variety of housing options.
2. Compatibility with the Character of Existing Development – The proposed rehabilitation maintains and reinforces the residential aspects of the neighborhood.
3. Effect on Adjacent Property Values – There is no evidence that the existing residential care properties on the block have negatively impacted property values. The amendment is expected to facilitate continued rehabilitation without adverse effects.
4. Adequacy of Public Facilities and Services – Staff confirmed there are no known deficiencies in public facilities or services, and the property has functioned for residential purposes for decades, meeting this standard.

Chair Lindwall concluded that all four standards are met and called for a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment.

Motion: Committee Member Harris-Ferree

Second: Committee Member Mabadi

For Action

Motion Passed 6-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Mangum, Lindwall, Johnson, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nays: None

Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

Chair Lindwall began review of the standards for Special Use approval.

Chair Lindwall reviewed the 6-3-5-10 Special Use Standards for the proposed Child Residential Care Home at 824 Gaffield Place and her findings were as follows:

1. Special Use Listed in Zoning Ordinance – The residential care home is an appropriate special use under the zoning ordinance given the recommendation for approval of the associated text amendment.
2. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance – The proposed use preserves the character of the block and advances Evanston’s housing goals by providing diverse residential options. Rehabilitation will support the long-term residential use.
3. No Negative Cumulative Effect – The facility has operated on the block for many years without complaints, and neighborhood support has been documented. No negative cumulative impacts are anticipated.
4. No Interference with Property Values – Three similar facilities already exist on the block, with no evidence of declining property values.
5. Adequate Public Facilities and Services – Staff identified no deficiencies, and existing infrastructure is sufficient to serve the use.
6. No Undue Traffic Congestion – Adequate on-site parking exists with four garage parking spaces, and students do not have cars, minimizing traffic impact.
7. Preserves Significant Historical and Architectural Resources – None of the properties are landmarked or in a historic district; the historic fabric of the neighborhood will be maintained.
8. Preserves Significant Natural and Environmental Features – Not specifically

applicable; landscaping and site improvements are included in the renovation.

9. Compliance with Applicable Regulations – The project will comply with city codes and DCFS licensing requirements.

Commissioner Harris-Ferree moved to recommend approval of the special use request for 824 Gaffield Place, subject to the two conditions as outlined in the staff report (and below).

Motion: Committee Member Harris-Ferree

Second: Committee Member Mabadi

Conditions:

1. The Applicant shall construct the associated improvements to the Subject Property as described herein, as authorized by the terms of this ordinance in substantial compliance with all applicable City Code requirements and the Applicant's testimony and representations to the Land Use Commission, the P&D Committee, and the City Council, and;
2. Applicant to record Ordinance amending the existing Special Use with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

For Action

Motion Passed 6-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Mangum, Lindwall, Johnson, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nays: None

Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

E. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Adoption of the 2026 Meeting Calendar

Staff confirmed the calendar accounts for major holidays and District 65 and 202 school breaks, including spring break. Chair Lindwall then asked for a motion to approve the calendar.

Commissioner Mangum moved to approve the 2026 meeting calendar

Motion: Committee Member Mangum

Second: Committee Member Johnson

For Action

Motion Passed 6-0-3

Ayes: Mirintchev, Mangum, Lindwall, Johnson, Mabadi, and Harris-Ferree

Nayes: None
Absent: Arevalo, Puchtel, and Berlin

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

G. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm