

MINUTES OF THE
CREST HILL PLAN COMMISSION

The April 11, 2024 Plan Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Thomas, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City Center, 20600 City Center Boulevard, Crest Hill, Will County, Illinois.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited in unison.

Roll call indicated the following present: Chairman Bill Thomas, Commissioner Ken Carroll, Commissioner Cheryl Slabozeski, Commissioner Jeff Peterson, Commissioner Jan Plettau.

Also present were: Interim Planner Maura Rigoni, City Attorney Mike Stiff, Administrative Clerk Samantha Tilley.

Absent were: Commissioner Angelo Deserio, Commissioner John Stanton, Interim Community Development Director Ron Mentzer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman Bill Thomas presented the minutes from the regular meeting held on March 14, 2024 for Commission approval.

(#1) Motion by Commissioner Plettau seconded by Commissioner Slabozeski, to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on March 14, 2024, as presented.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Plettau, Slabozeski, Peterson, Carroll, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Deserio, Stanton.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC HEARING: Chairman Bill Thomas presented case number SU-24-2-4-1, which is a request of Platinum Triple Play, Edith Murrillo, seeking approval of a M-2 Special Use, parking variation, and parking setback variation for an indoor recreational facility to operate a D-Bats, an indoor baseball and softball training academy at the property located at 425 Caton Farm Road, Crest Hill, Illinois. The necessary paperwork was in order.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to open the public hearing on case number SU-24-2-4-1.

(#2) Motion by Commissioner Carroll seconded by Commissioner Plettau, to open a public hearing on case number SU-24-2-4-1.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Carroll, Plettau, Peterson, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Stanton, Deserio.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The public hearing was opened at 7:04 p.m.

Chairman Thomas asked the Interim City Planner Maura Rigoni to present the specifics of this case.

Interim City Planner Maura Rigoni commented that this is a Special Use request for an indoor recreational facility with two variations relating to parking setbacks for the total number of parking spaces. This is located at 425 Caton Farm Road. The applicant is Platinum Triple Play, and they propose to establish a D-Bats operation, which is a baseball and softball facility for training with indoor bating cages. There is an existing warehouse building on the property that is 12,749 square feet. This building will be remodeled to accommodate the floor plan needed. There are interior modifications that will need to be done. There is parking on the north side of the building that is small and their parking will need to be expanded to add parallel parking on the east side of the building with a parking field on the south end of the building.

She commented that the ordinance establishes this as an indoor recreation club/gymnasium, which would require one parking space per 150 square feet but due to the nature of this the variation will reduce to thirty-nine parking spaces. There is also a parking setback variation for the east property line. The ordinance requires all parking lots maintain a five-foot setback from the property line and this will utilize a shared drive coming off of Caton Farm Road that already exists, therefore, with having a shared drive that straddles the parking lot makes the required setback not possible and this is why the applicant is seeking a variation for that five-foot setback requirement.

Interim Planner Rigoni commented that the properties that utilize the shared drive are under common ownership at this time and part of this consideration is asking for an easement to be granted to allow for crossing the different properties. Even though they are under common ownership you always want to do this in case one property is sold in the future.

She also commented that there are parking lot requirements and they have been working with the engineers in terms of what is required in terms of storm water and drainage to make sure they are meeting the city and county requirements.

Chairman Thomas asked if someone could approach the podium from D-Bats and be sworn in. Edith Murrillo from D-Bats approached the podium and was sworn in. She explained that D-Bats is a franchised baseball and softball sports academy with multiple locations throughout the United States and overseas. They render services that include membership, camps, clinics, parties, lessons, and more. They welcome all ages. D-Bats mission statement states that they believe in youth, empowerment, encouragement and as part of the mission statement their goal is to improve the physical and mental skills of young athletes on and off the field. D-BAT stands for developing beliefs, attitudes, and traditions.

D-Bat before becoming franchised was a stand-alone baseball facility named Dallas Baseball Academy of Texas that was founded in 1998 by brothers Caden and Kyle Griffis and had three locations eleven years later they decided to franchise and today there are 170 D-Bat locations

across thirty-four states, six locations in China, and twenty locations currently in progress including D-Bat Lockport.

It was mentioned that Ben Zobrist, former player with the Chicago Cubs, and Clayton Kershaw, current pitcher for the LA Dodgers are two members who trained at D-Bat.

Edith commented that they have been looking for a building since 2021 and have fallen in love with this location at 425 Caton Farm Road. She commented that it had three of their top requirements, which was:

- Standalone building
- Sufficient parking – which the D-bat requires twenty-five parking spaces and there will be thirty-seven regular parking spaces and two handicap parking spaces.
- At least four high schools and elementary schools in a ten-mile radius.

Edith commented that this facility will have state of the art equipment, including batting cages, pitching machines, instructors lounge, party room and a pro shop powered by Rawlings. The operating hours will vary depending on the season. In the summertime they will open earlier and stay open later, since children are out of school. In the winter and fall months the hours will be extended to accommodate school hours.

D-Bat looks for child safety and parent commodity which means every child is safe going in and out of the building and in a safe environment. Parking will have spaces on the north side (front) of the building, and on the east side of the building. The entry way will be on the east side of the building and when a parent is dropping off their child(ren), they will not be running across the parking lot, there will be access right in front of the door. In addition, if the parents want to park in the rear there will be an ‘S’ curve passageway where parents can navigate through the lanes and be able to exit the same way they entered.

Chairman Thomas asked if any Commissioners have any questions. There were none.

Chairman Thomas commented that he was concerned about the children during drop off and pick up times. He wondered if there was a way after the child(ren) are dropped off you can make a U-turn at the end of the building on the south end, so you do not have to drive through the parking lot. Edith commented that children’s safety has always been number one. She commented that her and her partners at separate times have visited all of the locations in the Illinois market and in Schererville, Indiana and noticed that all share parking with retail shops, which is alarming since we can control D-Bat traffic, but we cannot control traffic for the neighbors in the retail plaza. D-Bat Lockport is a standalone building and is exclusive to them and everyone coming into that facility is going to D-Bat and nowhere else.

Commissioner Plettau asked if speed bumps along the side of the building could be a consideration. Interim Planner Rigoni commented that her issue with speed bumps is not really stopping anyone, they just hit them and keep going. She also commented that this must go through final engineering, and we can talk about one-way signs, and speed bumps but the engineer needs to see if that would be functional for the property to the east.

Chairman Thomas asked if they are allowing patrons to park on the gravel if there is a need for overflow parking. Edith commented that the camps and clinics are run from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and that limits the cage use during that time. They do welcome walk-ins but they have an online reservation system so there is no double booking with overflow.

Commissioner Carroll asked if there will be lighting in the parking lot since they will be open until 9:00 p.m. Edith commented that there will be lighting in the parking lot and there are requirements from D-Bat for that. Interim Planner Rigoni would suggest that this be part of the conditions for final engineering requirements.

Chairman Thomas commented if on the east paved area (exit area) there could be a low curb which would prevent anyone from the east building crossing over. Edith commented that they would take that into consideration when discussing this with the landlord and engineering. Commissioner Carroll asked if they will be able to make a left turn out of the parking lot. Interim Planner Rigoni commented that this entrance and exit serves two properties so we do not want to put a curb since the property on the east will be utilizing this to exit and they can make a left turn if needed.

Chairman Thomas asked if anyone from the audience would like to make a comment.

Michael Buzzelli approached the podium and was sworn in. Michael commented that he does not have a partnership with D-Bat. He commented that his son is graduating college and has been a four-year starter in baseball while in college. He stated that his son did not go through D-Bat, but a similar program where he received so much education for baseball. Michael also commented that a program like this will keep these children off the street, teach them time management, hard work, and dedication. These children need a place to go that will help build character and they will make friends for life and possibly have a career in sports. This is a wonderful opportunity for Crest Hill.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to close the public hearing on case number SU-24-2-4-1.

(#3) Motion by Commissioner Plettau seconded by Commissioner Peterson, to close the public hearing on case number SU-24-2-4-1.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Plettau, Peterson, Carroll, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Stanton, Deserio.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:41 p.m.

Chairman Thomas commented that he does not think they could have found a better location for D-Bat when you consider four different cities can get to D-Bat with little trouble and he is excited about having D-Bat in Crest Hill.

Chairman Thomas commented that there will be conditions tied to the approval. Interim Planner Rigoni stated that she did share the report with the applicant and there are three conditions, which are:

- Finalization of the cross-access easement with the property to the east.
- Finalization of engineering, landscaping, photometrics, and compliance with all building and fire codes.
- The operations of the business should be in accordance with the business plan attached as Exhibit B.

Chairman Thomas asked for a motion to recommend approval of the request for case number SU-24-2-4-1, for Platinum Triple Play, Edith Murrillo, seeking approval of a M-2 Special Use, allowing for thirty-nine parking spaces, and parking setback variation for an indoor recreational facility to operate a D-Bats, an indoor baseball and softball training academy at the property located at 425 Caton Farm Road, Crest Hill, Illinois contingent on the above three (3) conditions previously summarized.

(#4) Motion by Commissioner Peterson seconded by Commissioner Plettau, to recommend approval of the request for case number SU-24-2-4-1, for Platinum Triple Play, Edith Murrillo, seeking approval of a M-2 Special Use, allowing for thirty-nine parking spaces, and parking setback variation for an indoor recreational facility to operate a D-Bats, an indoor baseball and softball training academy at the property located at 425 Caton Farm Road, Crest Hill, Illinois contingent on the above three (3) conditions previously summarized.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Peterson, Plettau, Slabozeski, Carroll, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Stanton, Deserio.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

Chairman Thomas informed the petitioner that the Plan Commission is a recommendation body only. The City Council will hear the case at a future meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Commissioner Plettau informed the Commission that May of 2024 will be his last Plan Commission meeting because he is officially retiring. He commented that he is moving out of state to enjoy his retirement. He stated that he has been doing this since 2015 and has loved every bit of it and every opportunity with the City of Crest Hill. All the commissioners wished him well on his retirement.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

There being no further business before the Commission a motion for adjournment was in order.

(#8) Motion by Commissioner Carroll, seconded by Commissioner Plettau, to adjourn the April 11, 2024 Plan Commission meeting.

On roll call, the vote was:

AYES: Commissioner Carroll, Plettau, Peterson, Slabozeski, Chairman Thomas.

NAYES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Stanton, Deserio.

There being five (5) affirmative votes, the MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47p.m.

As approved this 9th day of may, 2024
As presented _____
As amended ✓

Bill Thomas
BILL THOMAS, COMMISSION CHAIRMAN