

WHEATON PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL VOTE

Chair Weller called the August 25, 2020 Wheaton Planning and Zoning Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Upon roll call, the following were:

Roll Call Vote

Present: Nicole Aranas  
Christopher Dabovich  
Bob Gudmundson  
Mark Plunkett  
Dan Wanzung  
Scott Weller

Absent: Cecilia Horejs

City Staff Present: Tracy Jones, Staff Planner

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - AUGUST 11, 2020

The minutes were approved as presented.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

ZA #20-07/ REZONING & SPECIAL USE/ 303 E. FRONT STREET/ COLLEGE CHURCH

Pursuant to notice duly published on August 6, 2020 and letters mailed to neighboring property owners on August 4, 2020, Chair Weller called to order the August 25, 2020 public hearing requesting rezoning of the property located at 303 E. Front Street from the C-4 CBD Perimeter Commercial District to the I-1 Institutional District with a special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship. The existing building would be occupied by Clapham School (Pre-K to Grade 12), Stars Resale Shop, and would provide additional religious ministry space for College Church. The special use further requests that the required parking for the proposed uses on the subject property be provided on a separate zoning lot.

Jacob Been, 400 Helene Avenue, Naperville was sworn in. Mr. Been stated that he was the architect representing College Church. He stated that the church is requesting rezoning of the property located at 303 E. Front Street from the C-4 CBD Perimeter Commercial District to the I-1 Institutional District with a special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship. The existing building would be occupied by Clapham School (Pre-K to Grade 12), Stars Resale Shop, and would provide additional religious ministry space for College Church. The religious ministry space would include offices, conference rooms, storage spaces and several areas for larger group collaborations. The subject property is adjacent to other College Church property to the north and the subject property would function as an expansion of the existing church campus. College Church owns the entire block bounded by Seminary Avenue on the north, Washington Street on the east, Wesley Street on the south and Scott Street on the west. With the exception of the Chase Bank Drive-Up Facility which is zoned C-4 Commercial and the parking area immediately east of the Chase Bank Drive-Up Facility which is zoned O-R Office-Research, the remainder of the existing church campus is zoned I-1

Institutional and thus, the applicant believes the rezoning request of the subject property to I-1 Institutional is appropriate.

Mr. Been stated that Clapham School and Stars Resale shop are permitted in the I-1 Institutional District as accessory uses to the special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship being requested. Per Article 24.4.2 of the Wheaton Zoning Ordinance, "A building used primarily for religious worship may have accessory uses on the same lot, other buildings or other uses owned or operated by the religious institutions, including rectories, parsonages, offices, convents, schools, lunch rooms, recreational facilities, gift and resale shops for sales of used and/or handmade merchandise, providing all proceeds are to be utilized solely for the benefit of the religious institution."

Mr. Been stated that Wheaton's Comprehensive Plan recognizes that the city's institutions are a valuable asset to the community. The plan states that its churches, private schools and religious and philanthropic organizations, play a major role in the lives of many of the city's residents. The plan further states that these institutions contribute to the stability and character of the community and are intricately linked with the history of Wheaton and the lifestyle of its residents.

Mr. Been stated that the proposed site plan shows the existing building being repurposed. The existing parking lot on the east side of the subject property would be maintained. However, the number of on-site parking spaces in the parking lot would be reduced from 25 to 20 spaces to accommodate a new entrance. The existing loading dock on the north side of the building off Wesley would be maintained. A future fenced outdoor play area is proposed at the northwest corner of the existing building.

Mr. Been stated that the proposed floor plan shows the western 19,500 square feet of the existing building being occupied by Clapham School with an entrance off Scott Street. The school would occupy space on the first floor, second floor and basement. Clapham School is an existing use on the church campus in the main church building. The central 11,900 square feet of the existing building would be occupied by STARS Resale Shop with an entrance off Front Street. The resale shop would occupy space on the main and second floors. STARS Resale Shop is currently located at 1072 College Avenue in Wheaton. The eastern 18,000 square feet of the existing building would be occupied by College Church with an entrance off the parking lot. The church would occupy space on the first and second floors.

Mr. Been stated that the special use further requests that the required parking for the proposed uses on the subject property be provided on a separate zoning lot. As previously mentioned, College Church owns the adjacent property to the north and has existing parking facilities on the adjacent property. College Church is proposing to utilize this parking as well as additional parking available through existing shared parking agreements in addition to the 20 on-site parking spaces for the subject property.

Mr. Been stated that the original Special Use Permit granted for College Church (Ordinance No. E-3615) required 121 on-site parking spaces with access to a total of 354 parking spaces through shared parking agreements. Over the years, additional property was acquired, and the church campus was expanded through the construction of additional buildings and parking lots. The applicant has submitted a parking diagram showing that they currently have 288 on-site parking spaces with access to a total of 929 parking spaces through shared parking agreements, which exceeds the 354 parking spaces required by the Original Ordinance.

Staff Planner Jones stated that the Zoning Ordinance determines parking for Buildings Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship based on the seating capacity of the main sanctuary space. Accessory uses to a special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship do not require additional parking. Since College Church has full control over the scope of the accessory activities that occur on the subject property, staff does not foresee any parking problems occurring. It should be noted that most of the proposed uses on the subject

property are already occurring on the College Church property to the north (i.e. Clapham School and religious ministry space for the church), so staff believes that any additional parking demand would be minimal.

Mr. Been addressed the LaSalle Factors and the Special Use Standards as required by the Zoning Ordinance. He stated that the proposed rezoning and special use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the neighboring property owners.

Mr. Plunkett questioned the required number and location of accessible parking spaces.

Mr. Been stated that there was an existing accessible parking space on Scott Street and College Church was planning to have an additional two accessible parking spaces in the parking lot.

Staff Planner Jones stated that she would review the required number and location of accessible parking spaces with building staff.

Ms. Aranas questioned why the applicant didn't keep the zoning as C-4 Commercial and seek a combined text amendment and special use to allow a private school (Pre-K to Grade 12), since the resale shop and a meeting hall would be considered permitted uses.

David Bea, 225 W. Washington Street, Chicago was sworn in. Mr. Bea stated that he was the attorney representing College Church. He stated that their original application did keep the zoning as C-4 Commercial and seek a combined text amendment and special use to allow a private school (Pre-K to Grade 12), however based on conversations with planning staff they modified their request to rezone the subject property to I-1 Institutional District with a special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship.

Staff Planner Jones stated that planning staff wanted to avoid the text amendment component and recommended rezoning the subject property to I-1 Institutional District with a special use permit for a Building Primarily Devoted to Religious Worship instead. She added that the Zoning Ordinance did not include a definition of a meeting hall.

Mr. Dabovich questioned the queuing location at the existing Clapham School location.

Nancy Singer, 27 Landon Circle, Wheaton was sworn in. Ms. Singer stated that she was the Director of Administration and Finance for College Church. She stated that the existing queuing for Clapham School occurs on Union Avenue. She added that school staff manages morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up efficiently and they have not had any major queuing problems at the existing location.

Mr. Dabovich questioned the proposed queuing for afternoon pick-up on Wesley Street. He asked if the city would be amenable to school staff coning off the southern lane of Wesley Street next to the school during afternoon pick-up to improve safety.

Staff Planner Jones stated that she would review the proposed queuing for afternoon pick-up on Wesley Street with engineering staff.

Mr. Dabovich moved and then Mr. Gudmundson seconded the motion to continue the public hearing until September 9, 2020 to give staff time to provide additional information on the required number and location of accessible parking spaces and additional information on the queuing for afternoon pick-up on Wesley Street. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

V. MISCELLANEOUS

There was none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m. On a voice vote, all voted aye.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy L. Jones, Staff Planner