

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025

The North Chicago Planning & Zoning Commission met on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 6:07 P.M. at 1850 Lewis Avenue in the Council Chambers.

I. Call to Order/Attendance

Present: Angelica Douglass, Antonio Jackson (Chairman), GeanNell Jackson, Renee Jones, Virginia Gibbs

Absent:

Staff Present: Taylor Wegrzyn, Director Economic and Community Development; Ian Chenoweth, Associate Planner

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2025

Motion by A. Douglass, seconded by V. Gibbs, to approve Meeting Minutes for May 12, 2025

Ayes: A. Douglass, V. Gibbs, R. Jones, G. Jackson, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

III. Old Business

IV. New Business

Motion by V. Gibbs, seconded by G. Jackson to open the public hearing for PZC2025-01 – Special Use Permit for a Limited Commercial Residence at 601 10th Street – Trino Espinoza, LLC

Ayes: V. Gibbs, G. Jackson, R. Jones, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Trinidad (Trino) Espinoza, property owner and petitioner, and Paula Smith, daughter of Trinidad Espinoza, presented. Chairman Jackson asked about future plans for the two commercial units on the property. Director Wegrzyn clarified that the Special Use Permit was to allow residential uses in the rear ground-floor units and that the front commercial units must be used commercially. G. Jackson asked about rent and utilities for the commercial units. R. Jones asked for clarification on whether the previous owner obtained a Special Use Permit. Director Wegrzyn explained the history of the property and the non-transferability of the prior Special Use Permit.

Chairman Jackson asked for any public comments in favor of the petition. Stacy Wilcox spoke in favor of the petition, citing a need for residences and a lack of commercial opportunities on the block.

Chairman Jackson asked about future work the petitioner will do to the parking lot. Trinidad Espinoza provided a response. Director Wegrzyn gave additional information on the petitioner's future parking lot plans and handicap access.

Chairman Jackson asked for any public comments in opposition or neutral to the petition. There were none.

G. Jackson asked about entrances and access to the first-floor units. Trinidad Espinoza provided a response.

Motion by R. Jones, seconded by A. Douglass to approve PZC2025-01 – Special Use Permit for a Limited Commercial Residence at 601 10th Street – Trino Espinoza, LLC

Ayes: R. Jones, A. Douglass, V. Gibbs, G. Jackson, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Motion by A. Douglass, seconded by R. Jones to approve Findings of Fact for PZC2025-01 – Special Use Permit for a Limited Commercial Residence at 601 10th Street – Trino Espinoza, LLC

Ayes: A. Douglass, R. Jones, V. Gibbs, G. Jackson, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Motion by G. Jackson, seconded by V. Gibbs to close the public hearing for PZC2025-01 – Special Use Permit for a Limited Commercial Residence at 601 10th Street – Trino Espinoza, LLC

Ayes: G. Jackson, V. Gibbs, R. Jones, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Motion by G. Jackson, seconded by R. Jones to open the public hearing for PZC2025-08 – Special Use Permit for a Youth Community Residence at 816 18th Street – Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services

Ayes: G. Jackson, R. Jones, V. Gibbs, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Ponda Barnes, petitioner, presented, highlighting the organizational structure, history, and vision of Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services, and why they chose to open their first location in North Chicago.

V. Gibbs asked where the petitioner's clients would come from. Ponda Barnes responded that they would come from DCFS and other agencies. Chairman Jackson asked how many bedrooms were on the property and how many clients would be housed. Ponda Barnes responded that there were four bedrooms and that DCFS determines the allowable census and that it is capped at 8. Chairman Jackson asked about accommodations for staff. Ponda Barnes responded that staff work on shifts and do not sleep or reside on the property. Chairman Jackson asked why the organization has not started a location in Naperville. Ponda Barnes responded that DCFS referred them to the Lake County area. Chairman Jackson asked about security concerns. Ponda Barnes responded that clients are selected for best fit and that the state will pay for security. Chairman Jackson asked about children who age out of the program. Ponda

Barnes described DCFS resources for children who age out of group home living. Chairman Jackson asked about education of clients. Ponda Barnes responded that clients would be encouraged to participate in traditional schooling with homeschooling options available if needed. G. Jackson asked about other organizations Ponda Barnes is involved with. R. Jones commented on the staffing of the facility. Chairman Jackson asked about licensing. Ponda Barnes responded that they will receive DCFS licensing within six weeks.

Associate Planner Chenoweth presented additional information on standards required of similar uses in the zoning ordinances.

Chairman Jackson asked for any public comments in favor of the petition. Maria Sandoval spoke in favor of the petition, citing a need to support the city's children.

Chairman Jackson asked for any public comments in opposition or neutral to the petition. Stacy Wilcox spoke neutrally of the petition, citing support for the organization's mission and concerns about the burden placed on the school district and safety of the neighborhood.

Director Wegrzyn commented on staff's recommendation to approve the petition with five additional standards if the commissioners were to motion to approve. G. Jackson asked whether the petitioner would be purchasing the property. Ponda Barnes clarified Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services' current status as a lessee with options to buy the property in the future.

Motion by G. Jackson, seconded by R. Jones to approve PZC2025-08 – Special Use Permit for a Youth Community Residence at 816 18th Street – Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services with the following additional standards:

1. No more than 8 individuals may reside on the property.
2. The Special Use Permit is not transferable to another operator or to another location. In the event of a change in majority ownership, a new Special Use Permit shall be obtained.
3. Applicants/Operators must show licensing or certification required by the State of Illinois prior to beginning operations.
4. Property shall be inspected upon request by the Department of Economic and Community Development for building code and zoning compliance.
5. The Special Use Permit will become null and void upon the property being vacant (as defined in Section 12-12-2 of the North Chicago Code of Ordinances) or operations ceasing for a period of ninety (90) days.

Ayes: G. Jackson, R. Jones, V. Gibbs, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Motion by V. Gibbs, seconded by R. Jones to approve Findings of Fact for PZC2025-08 – Special Use Permit for a Youth Community Residence at 816 18th Street – Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services

Ayes: V. Gibbs, R. Jones, G. Jackson, A. Douglass, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

Motion by R. Jones, seconded by A. Douglass to close the public hearing for PZC2025-08 – Special Use Permit for a Youth Community Residence at 816 18th Street – Transforming Realities Children and Youth Services

Ayes: R. Jones, A. Douglass, V. Gibbs, G. Jackson, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent:

Motion passed (5-0)

V. Questions and Comments

None

VI. Public Commentary

None.

VII. Other Business

Director Wegrzyn gave updates on the Sheridan Crossing site and the Compass fuel center and introduced Ian Chenoweth, the new Associate Planner.

Commissioner Jones left (7:50 P.M.).

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by A. Douglass, seconded by V. Gibbs, to adjourn the PZC meeting.

Ayes: A. Douglass, V. Gibbs, G. Jackson, A. Jackson

Nays:

Abstain:

Absent: R. Jones

Motion Passed (4-0)

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 P.M.