

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE**  
**VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX PLAN COMMISSION**

**Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway**

**Tuesday, December 1, 2009 7:00 p.m.**

**#09-12-A**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Plan Commission was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, with a quorum present.

Chairman Muehlnickel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Joan Byerley, Annette Boyd, John Kuchler, Gary Berner and Rob Moss.

The following was absent: Commissioner Robert Lash.

Also present were: Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, and Secretary Lorrie Sowko.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR PLAN COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2009**

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009, Plan Commission meeting. Commissioner Boyd made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kuchler. Commissioner Byerley abstained. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

**REQUEST FOR SPECIAL USE FOR COLUMBARIUM (Public Hearing)**

**United Methodist Church**  
**339 West Haven Avenue**  
**Charles H. Baird - Petitioner**

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to open the public hearing at 7:03 p.m. Commissioner Berner made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Moss. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE**  
**VILLAGE OF NEW LENOX ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**Held in the New Lenox Village Hall, 1 Veterans Parkway**

**Tuesday, December 1, 2009 7:00 p.m.**

**#09-12-A ZBA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Village of New Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 7:18 p.m., by Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, with a quorum present.

**ROLL CALL**

Upon roll call, the following were present: Chairman Mark Muehlnickel, Commissioners Joan Byerley, Annette Boyd, John Kuchler, Gary Berner and Rob Moss.

The following was absent: Commissioner Robert Lash.

Also present were: Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis, Senior Planner Jeff Smith, and Secretary Lorrie Sowko.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A REGULAR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 17, 2009**

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2009, Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Commissioner Kuchler made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Berner. Commissioner Byerley abstained. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 p.m. Motion was made by Commissioner Boyd, seconded by Commissioner Byerley. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

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Lorrie M. Sowko – Secretary

Chairman Muehlnickel invited speakers for the public hearing to be sworn in before the public hearing was opened. The speakers stood, raised their right hands, and were sworn in by Secretary Lorrie Sowko.

Charles Baird of the United Methodist Church was present to request a Special Use for a columbarium.

Charles Baird explained that a columbarium is a structure to house ashes as a place of burial. There is a family from the United Methodist Church that came forward with a very generous donation to construct the unit and the surrounding landscaping and brick work.

A church committee spent many months reviewing the columbarium proposal, and developed guidelines with rules and regulations for general operation of the unit. The administrative counsel and trustees of the church have approved the columbarium. The State of Illinois has also given approval for the church. The church is an exempt cemetery organization and does not have some of the same rules and regulations as a cemetery.

Mr. Baird presented a picture of a columbarium unit on the overhead screen. The unit displayed is located at Peace Memorial Church and is identical to the unit proposed for the United Methodist Church. The columbarium will be located on the island in the middle of the church parking lot.

The unit is approximately 5-feet 5-inches in diameter and under 6 feet tall. There are 72 niches that would accommodate a maximum of 144 individuals, with 2 people in each unit.

Senior Planner Jeff Smith stated that the Zoning Ordinance was amended recently so that the columbarium requires a Special Use in a residential district. Staff finds that the proposed Special Use for the two columbariums meets the criteria in the Zoning Ordinance.

1. Staff finds that the proposed columbariums would provide an additional amenity for the United Methodist Church of New Lenox and the surrounding area.
2. Staff finds the proposed columbariums have no impact related to parking, traffic, safety and the general welfare of the area. It is located hundreds of feet from the homes located to the west and to the south.
3. The proposed columbariums would not limit the development of adjacent and nearby properties.
4. The Special Use request for the columbarium complies with the Comprehensive Plan which recommends Institutional use.
5. If authorized, the proposed columbariums would be completed and maintained in a timely manner.

Staff finds that this request meets the above criteria for the granting of a Special Use permit, and recommends approval of the Special Use, subject to the four conditions:

1. The two columbariums shall be located on the subject property as depicted on the site plan.
2. The property owner will obtain a building permit for each columbarium.
3. There must be adequate handicapped accessibility to the columbarium area.
4. Prior to issuance of a building permit, a landscape plan will be submitted and shall be reviewed and approved by Staff.

Chairman Muehlnickel invited public speakers for the public hearing. There were no public speakers.

Chairman Muehlnickel asked what materials will be used to construct the columbariums.

Chuck Baird responded that the exterior is granite, the inside core is concrete, and other materials such as copper are used for the niches. The panels can be removed to expose an interior panel which is the actual niche.

Commissioner Berner questioned the mobility of the columbariums.

Charles Baird explained that the columbariums have the option of being constructed inside buildings, against walls outside of buildings, and as freestanding units. Each 6,000-pound unit is transported by a large truck. A base is constructed according to the unit size and the unit is then set in place. The self-contained unit can be moved to a different location.

There are no plans to move the unit, but the church would like to have the flexibility if there are any changes in the future.

Commissioner Berner questioned the chances of vandalism to the columbarium.

Charles Baird commented that the unit weighs of 6,000 pounds and sits on a concrete base, and he doesn't foresee vandalism. Vandalism was a primary concern and dictated the location on the property. There are curbs that will protect vehicles from damaging the unit.

Commissioner Berner requested information regarding hours of visitation.

Charles Baird informed that there will be a columbarium committee that will be an adjunct of the memorial committee and will develop more specific rules and regulations, including visitation. Generally, visitation is limited from dawn to dusk. Due to the fact that the columbarium will be located in the parking lot, the entire area can be illuminated to create high visibility. The church is always open.

The columbarium will be available to members of the church and their families. If you are a member of the church, you can purchase a niche for any member of your family. If you are a family member of someone that is a member of the church, you can also buy a niche for the person who is a member of the church. The columbarium niches will be available for purchase to only members of the church.

Chairman Muehlnickel asked if the church relocates, does the Special Use for the columbarium dissolve.

Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis explained that the Special Use would dissolve if the columbarium relocated with the church and ceased to exist on the property for one year. If a new church wanted to install its own columbarium at the exact location and comply with the Village's conditions, it would be allowed without going through the Special Use process. The Special Use expires if the columbarium use is not on the property for twelve months.

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to close the public hearing at 7:15 p.m. Commissioner Boyd made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Moss. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried.

Commissioner Muehlnickel entertained a motion to recommend approval of the Special Use request to allow two columbariums for the United Methodist Church of New Lenox located at 339 West Haven Avenue, subject to the four conditions noted in Staff's Report and other conditions mentioned this evening. Commissioner Byerley made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kuchler. Roll call vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Planning and Development Administrator Robin Ellis informed that at the present time, there are no agenda items for the next regular scheduled Plan Commission meeting of December 15, 2009, but that is subject to change.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Muehlnickel entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. Motion was made by Commissioner Boyd, seconded by Commissioner Berner. Voice vote was taken. Motion carried unanimously.