

**VILLAGE OF LOMBARD**  
**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW GROUP REPORT**

TO: Lombard Plan Commission                      HEARING DATE: April 20, 2009

FROM: Department of                                      PREPARED BY: Christopher Stilling  
Community Development                                      Assistant Director

**TITLE**

**PC 09-07; 355 Eisenhower Lane South (Soaring Eagle Academy)**: The petitioner requests that the Village grant a conditional use, pursuant to Section 155.420 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance to allow a “Private School” within the I - Limited Industrial District:

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Petitioner:                                      Deanna Tyrpak  
    Soaring Eagle Academy  
    PO Box 63  
    Riverside, IL 60546

Property Owner:                                      Novogroder Companies, Inc  
    875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 3612  
    Chicago, IL 60611

**PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Existing Zoning:                                      I – Limited Industrial District

Existing Land Use:                                      Vacant Commercial Building

Size of Property:                                      Approximately 1.9 acres

Comprehensive Plan:                                      Planned Business Park

**SURROUNDING ZONING AND LAND USE**

North:                      I – Limited Industrial District; developed as a multi-tenant industrial building.

South:                      Property within Village of Downers Grove zoned M2 - Restricted Manufacturing; developed as office/warehousing.

East: I – Limited Industrial District; developed as an Orthopedic and Medical Appliance Manufacturer known as Orochem.

West: I – Limited Industrial District ; developed as Finley Business Center.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **SUBMITTALS**

This report is based on the following documents filed with the Department of Community Development on March 17, 2009:

1. Public Hearing Application.
2. Response to Standards for Conditional Uses.
3. Petitioner's narrative.
4. Site Plan, prepared by Warren Johnson Architects, dated March 11, 2009, last revised April 10, 2009.
5. Floor Plan, prepared by Warren Johnson Architects, dated March 10, 2009.

### **DESCRIPTION**

The petitioner is proposing to open a private school facility on the subject property formerly occupied by Pitney Bowes. The proposed school would be known as Soaring Eagle Academy. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, private schools require conditional use approval in the I - Limited Industrial District.

### **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW COMMENTS**

#### **PUBLIC WORKS**

As noted in PC 08-26, Public Utilities Division had the following comments:

- 1) The Cross Connection Survey was performed on April 24, 2008 when the building was vacant and it passed as is.
- 2) BIS should review plans to determine if proposed modifications require additional cross connection protection.

Any additional comments generated during the building permit review shall be addressed.

#### **PRIVATE ENGINEERING SERVICES**

The Private Engineering Services Division of Community Development has no comments.

## **BUILDING & FIRE**

The Fire Department/Bureau of Inspectional Services has the following comments regarding this petitioner's request;

1. The building must be equipped with an automatic sprinkler system.
2. A Fire Department Connection (FDC) must be within 75 feet of a hydrant.
3. Both fire detection and alarm systems are required.
4. The building must meet current ADA and Illinois Accessibility requirements.
5. Egress must be provided from enclosed/fenced area in the rear of the building.

## **PLANNING**

The petitioner proposes to operate a private educational facility at 355 Eisenhower Lane South. The proposed school would be known as Soaring Eagle Academy, a private school that is intended to meet the educational needs of grade, middle and high school students with autism and related disorders as an alternative to a traditional public or private school. The school is intended to educate up to sixty (60) students.

### *Intent of Facility*

The petitioner has submitted a narrative further describing their proposed use (see attached). They are a non-public special education school seeking approval from the Illinois State Board of Education. The proposed school is intended to provide a specialized educational model for students with autism or other related disabilities ranging in ages from 5-21 years old. The petitioner has indicated that there are currently no other private or public schools utilizing their educational model in the Midwest. According to their narrative, their educational model consists of some of the following:

- Focuses on the whole child and seeks to develop a foundation that builds flexible skills for higher-level thinking and learning and interaction with the world around them.
- Encourages children to engage in dynamic, meaningful learning through development of social interactions and relationships.
- Believes emotional development of the child and ability to relate and interact with others is the critical foundation for future learning.

They indicated that students diagnosed with autism and related disorders spend most of their school day on tasks related to functional/daily living skills rather than a balance of academics appropriate to their development level, social communication skills and functional skills.

Operations & Building Improvements

Based upon discussions with the petitioner, the facility will accommodate students aged between 5-21 years. Once they reach their projected capacity of 60 students, up to 72 employees including teachers, therapists, and aides will be onsite.

The petitioner plans to make significant changes to the existing floor plan of the building, which is 20,000 square feet in area. The proposed improvements include:

- 7 classrooms
- 2 sensory motor gyms
- Several floor time and therapy rooms
- Kitchen and daily living area
- Vocational work studio
- Library resource area
- Administrative and staff offices

They have indicated that some of the improvements would occur in phases as enrollment increases. Initially, they expect to accommodate 28 students and grow approximately 16 students per year until they reach 60 students.

Staff had provided Fire Department/Bureau of Inspectional Services comments to the petitioner with respect to fire sprinklers, ADA and Illinois Accessibility requirements. The petitioner indicated that they will meet all requirements.

The petitioner's proposed plans indicate improvements to the south side exterior of the building including widening the existing entrance and adding another entrance to the east. In addition, they would provide an outdoor play area on the existing green space located east and west of the existing entrance. The proposed play area to the east would be fully fenced with a 6' high chain link fence to ensure proper security for the children. The play area would include playground equipment with slides and climbing areas.

The petitioner has indicated that they would request a sign on the north elevation of the building facing Eisenhower Lane. As details of the proposed sign were not submitted, they would be obligated to meet the underlying provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

Loading/Unloading

Students attending the school would be transported via their parents or taxi cab only. No buses would be used. The school staff would arrive at the facility by 8:00 AM. Students would arrive in 15 minute intervals starting at 8:30 AM and ending at 9:30 AM. Students would be leaving the school and picked up in 15 minute intervals starting at 2:30 PM and ending at 3:30 PM. All drop off and pick up would occur on the south side of the building. Staff encourages the staggered drop off and pick up so as to eliminate any back up onto Eisenhower Lane. The petitioner's site plan does indicate a drop off and pick up area on the south side of the building. That area can accommodate up to 8 cars for stacking/queuing. Based on the representation by the petitioner and the layout of the site, the transporting function of the site should function well.

## **Existing Site Conditions**

### *Site Considerations*

Staff provides a series of photographs of the proposed site for reference purposes (see attached exhibits at the end of the report). The property is surrounded by light industrial uses on all sides. The southern portion of the subject property is located on a municipal boundary line shared with the Village of Downers Grove. That portion of Downers Grove abutting the subject property contains properties with light industrial uses as well. Thick vegetation is provided on the southern portion of the subject property whereas the adjacent property to the south is no longer visible from the subject property.

### *Parking*

The Zoning Ordinance requires one (1) space per employee plus eight (8) spaces for visitors for K-8<sup>th</sup> grades. High schools require one (1) space per employee plus eight spaces for eight (8) students. In review of these parking options and the nature of the operations, staff believes the K-8<sup>th</sup> grade option to be more appropriate in this instance. This is consistent with a similar request for a private school at 1110 N. Main (PC 04-02).

Based upon the school's proposed demand, they will require 80 total spaces for the school. In review of the plans, this demand can be accommodated by the existing spaces. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance and the Illinois Accessibility Code, a minimum of 4 handicap accessible spaces shall be provided. The site currently provides 2 handicap spaces. The petitioner's site plan does show them adding 2 additional handicap spaces. The total parking provided would be 84 parking spaces. As previously noted, the Code requires a minimum of 80 spaces be provided.

## **Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses**

The property is surrounded by light industrial uses on all sides. Other tenants occupying those surrounding uses include a variety of "light" industrial and office type uses. From a land use perspective, staff finds that the proposed private school use is compatible with the surrounding land uses. The fact that the school draws from a broader geographic area and given the layout of the existing site being able to accommodate the transportation and parking needs of the school, the proposed use at this location can be supported.

## **Compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan recommends Planned Business Park at this location. The York Brook Business Park is specifically described in the Comprehensive Plan as being one of the newer, established business park locations within the Village. The York Brook Business Park is also completely developed and generally well maintained. Although described in the Comprehensive Plan, there are no specific recommendations for the types of uses that should occur within the York Brook Business Park. Given this circumstance, the very nature of a business park can be generally summarized as providing light industrial, business and office land uses.

In 2004, the Village approved text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for private schools as conditional uses in the I – Limited Industrial District (PC 04-01) along with a companion request for a private school located at 1110 N. Main Street (PC 04-02). As noted in PC 04-01, private schools often have greater traffic generations and draw upon a larger than local area. Therefore, from a transportation standpoint, staff believes locating a school outside of a single-family residential area may be more appropriate. The petitioner’s specific site can be supported for the school as the building promotes good circulation, provides adequate parking and is not bordered by more heavily industrial uses. Therefore, staff believes the use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the petition as presented does meet the standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and recommends that Plan Commission make the following motion recommending **approval** of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the requested conditional use **complies** with the standards required by the Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission accept the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and I recommend to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 09-07; subject to the following conditions:

1. The subject property shall be developed in substantial compliance with the site plan prepared by Warren Johnson Architects, dated March 11, 2009, last revised April 10, 2009 and floor plan prepared by Warren Johnson Architects, dated March 10, 2009. Any expansion of the school activity shall require an amended conditional use.
2. The petitioner shall apply for and receive a building permit for the proposed improvements necessary to operate the school as proposed. Said permit shall satisfactorily address all IDRC comments.
3. That the petitioner shall apply for and receive a Certificate of Occupancy for the proposed facility. The petitioner shall supply the Village with documentation from Illinois State Board of Education and the State Fire Marshall stating that the facility is acceptable for occupancy.
4. All dumpsters located on the subject property shall be properly enclosed per Section 155.710 of the Lombard Zoning Ordinance.

Lombard Plan Commission

Re: PC 09-07

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Inter-Departmental Review Group Report Approved By:

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William Heniff, AICP  
Director of Community Development

**Photographs of Subject Property/Tenant Space**

Photo 1: Looking East (drop off/pick up area)



Photo 2: Entrance to the property looking south





Photo 3: Looking at the southwest corner of property



Photo 4: Front of the building along Eisenhower Lane

