

Approved

**Village of Gurnee  
Planning and Zoning Board Minutes  
May 15, 2024**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Planning and Zoning Board Members Present: Chairman James Sula, Dane Morgan, David Nordentoft, Edwin Paff, and Liliana Ware

Planning and Zoning Members Absent: R. Todd Campbell

Other Officials Present: David Ziegler, Community Development Director; Tracy Velkover, Planning Manager; Atrian Fard, Senior Planner; and Gretchen Neddenriep, Acting Village Attorney

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of the PZB's April 17, 2024 meeting minutes**

Mr. Sula asked if there was any discussion or corrections to the minutes, and stated that--if not--a motion would be in order.

Mr. Paff motioned, seconded by Ms. Ware, to approve the April 17, 2024 meeting minutes.

Voice Vote:

All "Ayes," no "Nays," none abstaining

Motion Carried: 5-0-0

**4. Public Hearing: 4015 Grove Avenue Zoning Map Amendment**

*Imports Unlimited, has requested a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone 4015 Grove from C-2 PUD to I-2 PUD. The subject property consists of approximately 0.8-acres and is zoned C-2 PUD, Community Commercial as Planned Unit Development.*

Ms. Velkover introduced the item by stating that the applicant, Imports Unlimited, is requesting a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone 4015 Grove Avenue from C-2 PUD, Community Commercial as a PUD, to I-2 PUD, General Industrial as a PUD. The applicant is interested in establishing a "Major Vehicle Repair/Service" facility on the property. The use is not allowed, as either a

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Permitted Use or a Special Use, under the underlying C-2 district, but is allowed by-right in the underlying I-2 zoning district, subject to five specific use standards, which were provided to the applicant. The subject property was originally zoned I-2 PUD as part of the Gurnee Center for Commerce and Industry in the 1970's. In 2017, the property was rezoned to C-2 PUD to accommodate a daycare center. The daycare center never materialized, and the property has been vacant and for sale ever since. Following are the surrounding land uses and zoning districts:

North: I-2 PUD, commercial parking lot

West: C-2 PUD, Associated Bank/office building

East: I-2 PUD, Elite Ambulance Service and Court Products (clothing wholesaler)

South: R-6, Multi-Family Residential (apartment buildings)

Ms. Velkover then stated that the Village's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Compass 2040) reflects an industrial land classification for this property. The requested I-2 PUD zoning is consistent with the original zoning classification (I-2 PUD), compatible with the surrounding zoning district and land uses, and the Village's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The site has infrastructure in place to accommodate industrial zoning, with a fully improved lot and access from Delany Road via a traffic signal. Finally, she noted that there was some discussion with the applicant about whether to request straight I-2 or I-2 PUD. Since there are covenants recorded for this property that mirror the PUD standards (setbacks, signs, etc.) and the applicant would be held to these standards, it was decided to keep the PUD attached for consistency. She then noted that the applicant is here to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. Sula asked that anyone who wished to speak on any of the three public hearings this evening stand and be sworn. Ms. Neddenriep conducted the swearing-in.

Mr. Sula then turned the floor over to the petitioner.

Mr. Adam Kingsley, attorney for the petitioner, introduced Mr. Dave Schaid as the contract purchaser of the subject property.

Mr. Schaid stated that he has owned and operated a high end auto repair facility in Highland Park for over 30 years and that he recently lost his lease. This site works perfectly for his business, as it has easy access from the highways (Route 41 and Delany). Many of his clients are from the North Shore, so this easy access from Route 41 is important. He explained that he works on high-end English cars, and—while clarifying that he only does engine work and not body work—explained that he also has a vintage shop in which he does mechanical work. The building will be approximately 7,000 square feet and meets all building and zoning codes requirements. He added that there will be 14 bay doors—11 on the back, and three on the front.

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Mr. Kingsley stated that in regards to the zoning request, the property was originally zoned I-2 PUD as part of the Gurnee Center for Commerce and Industry and the request is to return it to this classification. The surrounding zoning districts and land uses, as indicated by Ms. Velkover and as noted on the enclosed zoning/land use exhibit, are compatible with the proposed I-2 PUD zoning. The request is also consistent with the Village's Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the private CCRs recorded on the property.

Mr. Sula asked if the Board had any questions regarding the rezoning petition.

Mr. Nordentoft expressed concern about noise from the proposed business, specifically with the number of bay doors that are proposed to face south toward the multi-family residential.

Mr. Sula cautioned that the Board can't look at the specific use of the property and should be looking at whether the proposed zoning is appropriate.

Ms. Velkover also noted that the proposed condition, I-2 PUD directly north of the multi-family residential, exists for nearly the entire length of the street that is south of the industrial park.

Mr. Paff asked if the multi-family residential property owns the land abutting the subject property, as well as the existing I-2 PUD south of Grove Avenue.

Ms. Velkover responded by explaining that there is a road between the subject site and remaining I-2 PUD zoned property and the multi-family residential. Where the subject property is located, half of the right-of-way (ROW) has been vacated adjacent to the western portion of the subject property so that it only has a half ROW (30 feet) between it and the multi-family property, while the eastern portion of the subject property has a full ROW (60 feet) between it and the multi-family property.

Mr. Schaid stated that nearly all of the tools they use are electric now, and that these tools don't make the same noise that is associated with the traditional old school repair facilities.

At this time, Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there was no one wishing to speak on this matter, he then closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Sula asked if there were any more questions, and stated that--if not—a recommendation to the Village Board would be in order.

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Mr. Paff, to forward a favorable recommendation to the Village Board on the petition of Imports Unlimited, Inc. (Dave Schaid) for a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone 4015 Grove Avenue from C-2 PUD to I-2 PUD.

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Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion to be had on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 5-0-0

## **5. Public Hearing: Gurnee Community Church (4555 Old Grand Avenue) Special Use Permits**

*Matt Laska of North Shore Sign, representing Gurnee Community Church, is proposing to replace the existing sign along Grand Avenue (Sign 1) and install a new sign at the northeast corner of the site (Sign 2). The petitioner is requesting special use permits for the following:*

- 1. A freestanding sign with electronic message board – Sign 1*
- 2. The maximum sign area to exceed 15 square feet – Sign 1*
- 3. The maximum sign height to exceed 6 feet – Sign 1*
- 4. The maximum sign area to exceed 15 square feet – Sign 2*

Ms. Fard introduced this item by stating that the subject site is zoned C-4 District and is surrounded by the following uses:

North: Residential uses and Gurnee Fire Department

South: Residential uses and Vacant Village-Owned Properties

East: Residential, Bank, and Offices

West: Park

Ms. Fard then offered some background on the existing signs. She noted that there are currently re two freestanding signs on the site: 1) the first is an internally illuminated, double-post sign located in the southern parking lot along Grand Avenue. The sign structure predates the current Code and is approximately 14.75' tall and 50 square feet in area. Both height and area exceed the Code; and 2) the second is an externally illuminated, double-post sign located north of the church building along Old Grand Avenue. This sign also precedes the current Code and is nonconforming to the minimum setback of 10 feet and landscaping requirements.

Ms. Fard also noted that the current Code allows only one freestanding sign per lot. The subject site is comprised of eight parcels but, both of the existing signs are located within one same zoning parcel, therefore they are nonconforming with the maximum number of signs allowed per

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lot. Continuing, Ms. Fard stated that Matt Laska of North Shore Sign, representing Gurnee Community Church, is proposing to replace the existing sign along Grand Avenue with a new sign that is internally illuminated, two-sided, and is mounted on double-poles and a masonry stone base. The sign will be 14.75 feet in height and 76 square feet in area. The Sign Code allows for a maximum height of six feet and area of 15 square feet. Therefore, approval of two SUPs for the sign height and area will be required. The sign also includes a 36 square feet electronic message board that will require approval of the 3<sup>rd</sup> SUP for this sign. In order to minimize the electronic message board impacts on surrounding residents, the petitioner has committed to meeting the same standards as the past electronic message board signs approved in the Village. She noted that these standards are enclosed in Board members' packets. The second sign is a monument sign proposed at the northeast corner of the site. This sign will feature an internally illuminated, single-faced sign cabinet attached to a masonry stone base that would match the building. The sign will be 6 feet tall, which meets the Code, but 27 square feet in area, which exceeds the Code and requires approval of the fourth SUP. Both proposed signs include a manually changeable reader board at the bottom of the cabinet to reflect the church's website and operation time.

Ms. Fard offered the following considerations for the PZB:

1. For sign #1, the proposed height will be the same as the existing sign, which has been at this location for over 60 years. This sign will be located within the 100-year floodplain and additional height would help keep the electronic message board higher than the potential water levels.
2. The petitioner has offered to remove the existing double-post sign along Old Grand Avenue, which is approximately 15 square feet in size, to compensate for the additional sign areas requested. Removal of this sign will make the site conforming with respect to the maximum number of signs allowed.
3. For the PZB's reference, Gurnee Community Bank's sign across the street from the church, at the NEC of O'Plaine Road. and Grand Avenue is approximately 30 square feet in area that also exceeds the C-4 District's maximum sign area allowance. This sign was installed in 2006.
4. There are single-family and two-family residences to the south and east of the site that would have direct visibility to the electronic message board proposed along Grand Avenue.
5. Staff has received a letter in opposition to the requested SUPs from the property owner of the residential lots to the south (attached as part of the record).
6. For the PZB's reference, a church is a permitted use in all residentially zoned districts in the Village. If the church was located in a residential zoning district rather than C-4

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District, the church could have had one monument sign per street frontage up to 40 square feet in area and eight feet in height.

Lastly, Ms. Fard asked Board members to please note that the Planning and Zoning Board must make a recommendation on the requested SUPs—that the Village Board will make the final determination—and, that the applicant is in attendance to answer any questions they may have.

Mr. Sula then turned the floor over to the applicant.

Mr. Matt Laska, with North Shore Sign Company, introduced Gary Elsbury, Director of Building and Grounds for Gurnee Community Church, and Mr. Tom Wood, representative of the electronic message board sign company. He stated that Ms. Fard covered a lot of what he was going to say. He explained that the faces of both signs, not including the message board portion of the Grand Avenue sign, will be constructed of a metal cabinet from which the lettering and logo will be routed so that only the message illuminates. The background is opaque.

Mr. Elsbury Stated that the existing signs are too difficult to repair. The main sign along Grand Avenue, with the manual reader board, is difficult to repair and changing out the message in the winter has become nearly impossible. The wood sign along Old Grand Avenue is rotted and being held together with wire and other methods as best they can. He also noted that they recently changed their logo and wish for their signs to reflect this new logo. He stated that the Church is totally committed to being a part of the community and hosts a number of organizations including after school programs and AA.

Mr. Sula asked if the Board had any questions regarding the request.

Ms. Ware stated that she supports the Church's investment into new signs, which are attractive. She noted that her only disappointment is in the lack of funny messages being placed on their sign.

Mr. Elsbury stated that they fully intend to continue these messages on the new sign, as they have attracted visitors to the Church. The messages were halted on the existing sign because it became too difficult to change out the messages due to the sign's condition.

Mr. Nordentoft thanked the Church for its reinvestment into their site. He noted that although the Grand Avenue sign is slightly on the large side, Grand Avenue is a busy thoroughfare which justifies the size increase.

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Mr. Elsbury stated that the sign is also very close to the size of the existing sign, only slightly larger.

Mr. Paff stated that he doesn't like the address on the side of the Grand Avenue sign. He doesn't think it will be visible in this orientation (parallel to Grand Avenue).

Mr. Laska stated that the base of the sign is only two feet tall, and the sign sits slightly below the grade of Grand Avenue. He is concerned that if the address is placed on the base of the sign (even at the highest point at the base) that it will not be visible.

Mr. Sula stated that he's questioning whether the address number is even needed for the Grand Avenue sign. He believes that since the address number is reflecting the number of Old Grand Avenue (i.e., the Church is addressed with an Old Grand number), having the number on the Grand Avenue sign will lead to confusion.

Mr. Morgan stated that one of the conditions of the electronic message board sign is that it be turned off between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. He asked if it is possible for the sign to be turned off earlier and asked the Church to work with their neighbors on what time this should be.

Mr. Wood stated that the sign can be turned off at any time; it's merely programming this into the sign controls. Basically, the sign is controlled by a program and it can be programmed in any manner, including turning it to all black or just turning it off. He explained that the sign will have a photocell that senses the ambient light levels and constantly adjusts the brightness to just one lumen over ambient.

Mr. Morgan expressed some concern about the Old Grand Avenue sign being the only internally illuminated sign on this roadway.

At this time, Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there was no one wishing to speak on this matter, he then closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Sula also confirmed with Village staff that the restrictions placed on this electronic sign are no different than those placed on other such signs within the Village, and stressed that be reflected in the record.

Mr. Sula then asked if there were any more questions or comments.

Mr. Paff asked about the location of the wood sign that is proposed for removal.

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Mr. Elsbury answered that it is along Old Grand Avenue directly across from the Fire Station. He stated that it is rotted.

Ms. Fard confirmed that this sign needs to be removed because otherwise the applicant would have needed another Special Use Permit to allow an additional sign on the property. As this is not part of their request, the sign will need to be removed.

Mr. Elsbury confirmed that it is their intent to remove this sign as it is rotted.

Mr. Morgan asked about the bottom portion of each sign and whether it is a manually changeable reader board sign.

Mr. Laska stated that it is not the type of reader board sign that currently exists along Grand Avenue. It is a metal panel, just like the main body of the sign, which has a routed out message and that only the message will be illuminated. Should the Church wish to change this panel out they can reach out to the sign company, and they can make this change without impacting the main sign.

Mr. Sula asked if there was any other discussion on the request, and suggested that—if not—a recommendation to the Village Board would be in order.

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Nordentoft, to forward a favorable recommendation on the petition of Matt Laska, with North Shore Sign, on behalf of Gurnee Community Church located at 4555 Old Grand Avenue, for a Special Use Permit to allow an electronic message board sign in substantial conformance with the attached signage plan with the exception that the address number not be placed on this sign, subject to the following additional conditions:

1. No portion of the image may flash, scroll, twirl, change color, or in any manner imitate movement;
2. The electronic message board sign must have an automatic dimmer and photo cell which shall constantly monitor ambient light conditions and adjust sign brightness accordingly;
3. The use of bright, white backgrounds for electronic message displays is prohibited. The use of an amber color for the electronic message text on a dark background is encouraged;
4. All portions of the electronic image/message must have a minimum duration of 30 seconds;
5. The electronic message board must be turned off between midnight and 6:00 a.m.;
6. The message duration in condition #4 above will be reviewed by the Village Board in six months from the date of approval of the Special Use Permit to determine whether it should be adjusted;

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7. The minimum height of electronic letters/numbers shall be no less than six inches as to make the sign easier to read;
8. The transition time between messages will be instantaneous;
9. The entire message will be contained on one screen, there will not be any two-party messages or continuations; and
10. The electronic sign will have a resolution of 8mm.

Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 5-0-0

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Nordentoft, to forward a favorable recommendation on the petition of Matt Laska, with North Shore Sign, on behalf of Gurnee Community Church located at 4555 Old Grand Avenue, for a Special Use Permit to exceed the maximum freestanding sign height allowance of six feet by 8.75 feet for Sign #1.

Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion to be had on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 5-0-0

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Nordentoft, to forward a favorable recommendation on the petition of Matt Laska, with North Shore Sign, on behalf of Gurnee Community Church located at 4555 Old Grand Avenue, for a Special Use Permit to exceed the maximum sign area allowance of 15 square feet by 61 square feet for Sign #1, subject to the existing sign along Old Grand Avenue being removed.

Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion to be had on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Approved

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 5-0-0

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Nordentoft, to forward a favorable recommendation on the petition of Matt Laska, with North Shore Sign, on behalf of Gurnee Community Church located at 4555 Old Grand Avenue, for a Special Use Permit to exceed the maximum sign area allowance of 15 square feet by 12 square feet for Sign #2, subject to the existing sign along Old Grand Avenue being removed.

Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion to be had on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 5-0-0

## **6. Public Hearing: 3437 Cheyenne Road Variation**

*Mr. Scott Kranz, on behalf of Ms. Pamela Nilles Johnson, is requesting a variation from Section 4.2 Dimensional Standards of the Zoning Ordinance regarding the minimum lot area requirement for the property located at 3437 Cheyenne Road. The petitioner's ultimate plan is to subdivide the subject property into two lots. The property is zoned R-2 District.*

Ms. Fard introduced this item by stating that Mr. Scott Kranz, on behalf of Ms. Pamela Nilles Johnson, is requesting a variation from the district's Dimensional Standards regarding the minimum lot area requirement for the property located at 3437 Cheyenne Road. The petitioner's ultimate plan is to subdivide the subject property into two lots. The property is zoned R-2 District and shall comply with the minimum lot width of 100 feet, lot area of 15,000 square feet, and all building setbacks. She stated that the subject lot measures 245 feet wide and 125 feet deep for a total lot area of 30,618 square feet. The site is improved with a one-story residence with a detached two-car garage that meet all the R-2 District's dimensional standards. The current property owner also owns and resides at 3438 Cheyenne Road, which is across the street from the subject site. The owner purchased 3437 Cheyenne in March of 2024 with the intention to subdivide the lot, rent out the existing home on the eastern portion of the site, and keep the western portion vacant for the family's passive recreational uses, such as children's playing area

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or picnicking. The lot is part of the North Shore Highlands Subdivision that was originally platted in 1925. The house was built later in 1962. The size of the subject property allows for a two-lot split in compliance with the R-2's minimum lot area and width standards. The current owner intended to follow Zoning regulations; however, a plat of survey was not initially available to her. Around the closing time, the current owner obtained a plat of survey. Once staff reviewed the plat, it was found that the existing house is situated close to the center of the property, which precludes a Code-compliant subdivision of the lot. In order to meet the minimum required interior side setback for the existing house, the separation line, had to shift approximately 15.5 feet toward the west, leaving the western lot 1,625 square feet deficient in area. If the house had been built only a couple feet further to the east, the subdivision yielded two lots over 15,000 square feet, and a variation would not be necessary. In order to avoid a substandard lot, the owner was open to reconfiguring the separation line in a manner to meet all the R-2 dimensional standards. She noted that staff was not receptive to creating irregular-shaped lots and directed the petitioner to file for a variation.

Per the Zoning Ordinance, a variation is purposed "to provide a narrowly circumscribed means by which relief may be granted from unforeseen applications of this Ordinance that create practical difficulties or particular hardships." Accordingly, staff supports the variation request for the following reasons:

1. The subject site fits two conforming lots, and the location of the existing house has caused a hardship to subdivide the lot;
2. The hardship is not self-imposed as the house has been in existence since 62 years ago;
3. Using the property solely for one residence, which occupies less than 5% of the lot, is impractical and imposes a financial burden upon the owner;
4. The Village's Comprehensive Land Use Plan envisions medium density residential classification with three to eight dwelling units per acre for the northeast side of Gurnee. This land use classification supports smaller lots and higher density;
5. Smaller lots are consistent with the established and evolving character of the neighborhood; and,
6. The petitioner has made efforts to offer other alternatives to meet the Zoning regulations to avoid requesting a variation.

Lastly, Ms. Fard reminded that the PZB must make a recommendation on the requested variation, and the Village Board will make the final determination. She also noted that the applicant is in attendance to answer PZB's questions.

Mr. Sula then turned the floor over to the applicant.

Approved

Mr. Scott Kranz, 3438 Cheyenne Road, stated that he purchased the lot with the intention to rent the existing home and subdivide the western portion for passive recreation use by his family. He noted that the plat wasn't available at the time of the close and it wasn't until after that he found out that due to the location of the home on the property, subdivision of a second lot could not be achieved. He discussed this with Village staff and was informed that a variance would be required. He noted that he takes care of the property and it is park-like.

Mr. Sula asked who would like to begin the discussion.

Mr. Paff and Mr. Nordentoft stated that they do not have any opposition to this request.

Mr. Morgan asked if Mr. Kranz has any plans to fence the property.

Mr. Kranz answered that he does not plan to fence the property.

Mr. Sula asked about the advantages to rezoning the property to R-3.

Ms. Velkover responded that this was discussed with the petitioner and that the variance process was determined to provide less concern from the neighborhood as it would only impact this property. She noted that if R-3 zoning was closer to the subject property, instead of a block away at only several points, that it might have been more palatable for the neighborhood. There could have been concerns about changing the character of the area, even though based upon the existing homes and lot sizes, many lots would need to be assembled and existing homes torn down to increase the number of homes under the R-3 zoning. She did note that if the Village receives more requests like Mr. Kranz in this area, that R-3 zoning should be considered.

At this time, Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there was no one wishing to speak on this matter, he then closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Sula asked if there was any other discussion on the request, and suggested that--if not--a recommendation to the Village Board would be in order.

Mr. Morgan motioned, seconded by Paff, to forward a favorable recommendation on the petition of Mr. Scott Kranz, on behalf of Ms. Pamela Nilles Johnson, for a Variation to the R-3 District minimum lot area standard of 15,000 square feet to allow creation of a 13,375 square feet lot located at 3437 Cheyenne Road.

Mr. Sula then asked if there was any discussion to be had on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll call vote:

Ayes: Morgan, Nordentoft, Paff, Ware, and Sula

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Approved

Motion carried: 5-0-0

**7. Next Meeting Date: May 1, 2024**

Ms. Fard stated that there are no public hearings scheduled for the night of June 5<sup>th</sup>, but that there could be non-public hearing items (i.e., parking modification, subdivision plat, etc.).

**8. Public Comment**

Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there was no one in the audience, he then closed the floor to the public.

Before adjourning, Mr. Sula announced that Ms. Velkover was retiring and that this would be her last PZB meeting. All the Board members wished her well, as did Ms. Neddenriep. Acknowledging the three decades she has been with the Village, Mr. Sula characterized her as an “institution” here. Ms. Velkover responded with thanks, and offered that it was a pleasure to work with them all.

**9. Adjournment**

Mr. Nordentoft motioned, seconded by Mr. Paff, to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote:

All “ayes,” no “nays, and none abstaining

Motion carried: 5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann Metzger  
Recording Secretary