STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Plan Commission
Prepared By: Sam Hubbard, Development Planner
Meeting Date: April 27, 2016
Date Prepared: April 22, 2016
Project Title: Swaminarayan Gurukul – USA, Office Building
Address: 402 S. Arlington Heights Rd

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Petitioner: Popat Radadia
Address: 810 Windfal Dr.
Schaumburg, IL 60173

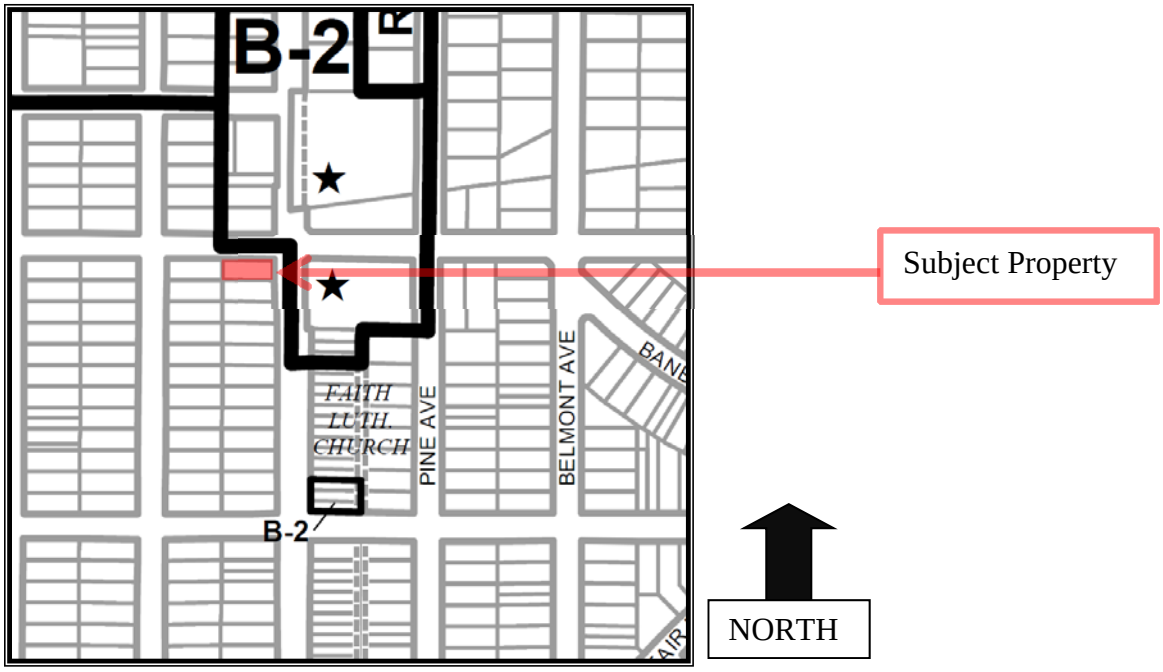
Existing Zoning: R-3, One Family Dwelling District

Requested Action:

- Land Use Variation to allow an unspecified "office" use within the R-3, One Family Dwelling Residential District.

Variations Identified:

- Variation from Section 11.4-2 to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces from three spaces to zero.



Surrounding Properties

Direction	Zoning	Existing Use	Comprehensive Plan
North	B-2, General Business District	Commercial (Arlington School of Music)	Commercial
South	R-3, One Family Dwelling District	Institutional (Swaminarayan Gurukul Church Parking Lot)	Single-Family Detached
East	B-2, General Business District	Commercial Strip Building	Commercial
West	R-3, One Family Dwelling District	Institutional (Swaminarayan Gurukul Church Building)	Institutional

Background:

The subject property, along with the neighboring church building and church parking lot, was purchased by the Swaminarayan Gurukul church in 2014. The single story building on the subject property has sat mostly vacant since being purchased by the aforementioned church. Previously, the subject property was owned by the Church of Christ Scientist, which also owned the neighboring church building and adjacent parking lot until they sold it to the Swaminarayan Gurukul church in 2014. While owned by the Church of Christ Scientist, the subject property was operated as a "reading room" (all Christ Scientist religious institutions are required by the church to provide a reading room). Since the subject property served as an auxiliary use to the Church of Christ Scientist, no special use or land use variation was required. However, the current owner would like to rent the building out as an office building to a third party, which requires a land use variation for an office use within a residential zoning district.

The subject property is 6,625 sq. ft. in size, and contains an approximately 1,000 sq. ft. single story building. There is no parking on the subject property, but the church parking lot abuts the property to the south, and there is a smaller church parking area located to the west as well (see Exhibit I). The surrounding neighborhood is a mix of institutional uses, commercial uses, and single-family residential uses. The subject property is located along S. Arlington Heights Rd, which is considered a "Major Arterial". In 1981, the reading room was granted a variation to allow a ground sign, which ground sign is still present on the site today.

Zoning and Comprehensive Plan

The structure on the subject property is currently vacant. The Petitioner is proposing an open ended "office" use within the building with no specific tenant identified, however, they have stated that their desired office tenant will be in either the real estate industry, legal industry, or financial industry. The Petitioner has explained that they would like to have the zoning entitlements in place to make it easier to find an office tenant for the space. Due to the location of the subject property within the R-3, One Family Dwelling Residential District, a land use variation is required to allow an office user to occupy the building.

The Village's Comprehensive Plan designates the future use of the subject property as "Institutional". As office uses are allowed within the I Institutional zoning district, the proposed use is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

The Petitioner has submitted responses to the criteria for land use variation approval (see attached) as required by Section 13.1-3 of the Chapter 28 of the Municipal Code. Staff has reviewed the Petitioners responses and concurs that the necessary criteria have been met. The approval criteria are included below:

- The property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations of that zone.
- The plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances.
- The variation, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality.

Plat and Subdivision Committee

On April 27, 2016, the Plat and Subdivision Committee met to discuss the project. The subcommittee did not take issue with the concept of a professional office on the subject property, but wanted to make sure that the neighboring church parking lot had the capacity to provide parking for an office tenant within the stand alone auxiliary building. The minutes from that meeting are attached.

Site Plan, Landscaping and Tree Preservation

There are no changes proposed for the site. Any improvements to the building will occur on the inside of the structure and will not alter the exterior appearance. Staff has not identified any recommended landscape improvements given the scope of the proposal. No trees will be removed as a result of the proposed land use variation.

Traffic & Parking

A detailed traffic study is not required due to the amount of floor area on the subject property (under 5,000 square feet). However, since the subject property does not contain any off street parking, a variation to reduce the parking requirement for

an office user, from three spaces to zero spaces, is required. The Petitioner has stated that the required parking can be provided by the landlord (the Swaminarayan Gurukul church) within the neighboring church parking lot. Because hours of operation for the church, which has peak parking demand during services that are held on Saturday evenings, do not coincide with the traditional hours of operation for an office user, staff believes that this shared parking arrangement can provide adequate parking to justify the proposed variation.

The Petitioner has surveyed the existing parking lot to determine if sufficient capacity exists to provide for the additional demand created by an office user within the vacant auxiliary building. The neighboring church property contains a total of 72 parking spaces, and parking was surveyed during the peak service times for the church over two Saturday evenings, as well as during traditional working hours over two weekdays. During the 8:00am to 6:00pm times during the week, a maximum of two cars were parked on the site, which translates to a 3% utilization of the 72 space parking lot. During religious services on Saturday evenings (4:00pm to 9:00pm), the maximum amount of cars parked onsite at any time was 35, which translates to a 49% utilization of the parking lot. Given the low rates of peak usage for the parking lot, staff believes that sufficient capacity exists to accommodate an office user on the subject property.

In order to ensure that the church will provide this shared parking in perpetuity, staff recommends a condition of approval that links the land use variation to allow office uses on the subject property to common ownership both of the subject property and neighboring parking lot by one entity. This will ensure that, should the church property be sold in the future to an owner who does not want to honor the shared parking arrangement, that the land use variation will no longer be valid.

Staff has received concern from a neighboring resident that when automobiles are parked along Grove Street near the intersection of Arlington Heights Road, if a car is trying to make a turn from Grove Street to Arlington Heights Road at the same time that a car is turning into Grove Street from Arlington Heights Road, the combination of parked cars and exiting and entering cars can create a constricted intersection. If additional parked cars are the result of the occupancy of the subject property by office uses, it is likely that this situation will occur more frequently. Therefore, staff recommends a condition of approval that requires all employees of the subject property to park within the church parking lot. Furthermore, staff recommends that medical and dental offices be prohibited on the subject property as these uses traditionally generate higher traffic volumes and would increase the likelihood of customers parking along Grove Street and not within the church parking lot.

Recommendation

The Staff Development Committee has reviewed the Petitioner's request and recommends approval of a Land Use Variation to allow "Offices: Business and Professional" on the subject property and a Variation to reduce the off street parking requirements of Section 11.4-2 from three parking space to zero parking spaces. This approval shall be subject to the following conditions:

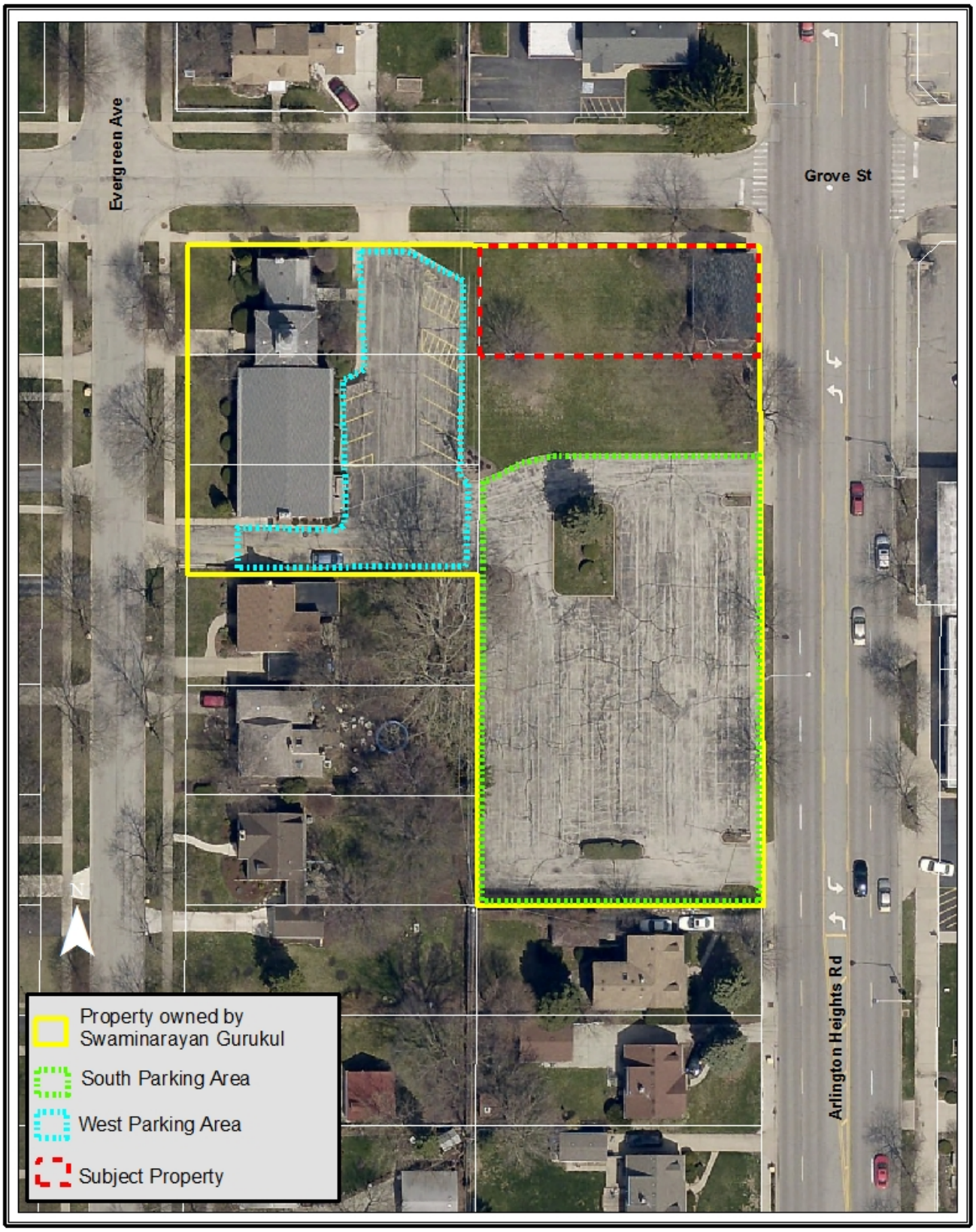
1. The Petitioner shall provide the required parking for the subject property within their south and west parking lots.
2. The Land Use Variation is only valid while the subject property and abutting parking areas to the west and south (as shown on Exhibit I) are under common ownership. Should the subject property and abutting parking areas come under separate ownership, the Land Use Variation is no longer valid.
3. All employees of any office tenant on the subject property must park in the parking lot owned by the Swaminarayan Gurukul Church located to the south and west of the subject property.
4. "Offices: Medical & Dental Clinics" shall not be allowed on the subject property.
5. The Petitioner shall comply with all applicable Federal, State, and Village Codes, Regulations, and Policies.

June 3, 2016

Bill Enright, Deputy Director of Planning and Community Development

C: Randy Recklaus, Village Manager
All Department Heads

Exhibit I


Evergreen Ave
Grove St
Arlington Heights Rd
Property owned by Swaminarayan Gurukul
South Parking Area
West Parking Area
Subject Property