

THE ZONING BOARD OF
APPEALS
OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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**FINDINGS OF FACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS TO THE
COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

July 1, 2026

**RE: MA 26-0001
Marcella Welch
Cook County Dist. #6**

APPLICATION: Applicant seeks a Map Amendment to rezone the subject property consisting of two parcels, from C-4 General Commercial District to R-4 Single Family Residence District. The Map Amendment is required to bring the existing single-family home into compliance with the current Zoning Ordinance, in Section 15 of Rich Township.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommendation of Approval

Pursuant to notice, the Cook County Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) conducted a public hearing on June 3, 2026, at 11:00 A.M. in Conference Room D, 22nd Floor, of the Cook County Administration Building, 69 West Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois 60602. On July 1, 2026, the ZBA, in its decision-making session, formally recommended that the Cook County Board of Commissioners approve the requested Map Amendment.

Background Summary: The subject property is .95 acres, where the existing single-family residence consisting of two adjacent lots and is currently approximately 2,841 square feet located at the northwest corner of Crawford Avenue and Blackstone Avenue in unincorporated Cook County. The commonly known address is 20120 S. Crawford Avenue, Matteson, Illinois 60443 in Rich Township, Unincorporated Cook County. The PIN#s are 31-15-206-012-0000 and 31-15-206-013-0000.

Present at the public hearing were the following ZBA Board Members and Staff: Acting Chairman Paul J. Montes; ZBA Member Judith E. Hamill; ZBA Member Henry Oszakiewski; ZBA Member Anthony A. Iosco; ZBA Member Barrett F. Pedersen; Sapho Sukru Erel, ZBA Assistant to the Secretary; Rubina Alam, Building and Zoning Administrator; James Wilson, ZBA Secretary; Dustin Calliari, representing the Bureau of Economic Development, Ryan Chapman, Land

planner, Zoning Board of Appeals and Will Bernstein, representing Commissioner Frank Aguilar, CCD #16;

Also present was the Owner/Applicant, Marcella Welch and Timothy Sprague of the firm Peraica & Associates, Ltd., 5130 South Archer Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60632 and providing testimony at the Hearing were James L. Ohle, architect, The Civic Architectural Group, Inc., 9119 151st St., Orland Park, Illinois 60462; Gary DeClark, MAI Appraiser and Broker with Standard Valuation Services, 621 Plainfield Rd., Suite 201, Willowbrook, Illinois 60527 and the Owner/Applicant, Marcella Welch, 20120 S. Crawford Ave., Matteson, Illinois 60443.

James L. Ohle, Architect, The Civic Architectural Group, Inc.

Mr. James L. Ohle was the first person to testify at the Public Hearing. He is an architect and owner of the Civic Architectural Group, Inc. and CV and qualifications were tendered and accepted by the ZBA as a qualified witness.

Mr. Ohle testified regarding the current zoning restrictions and the intent to build a two-story addition to the back of the house to accommodate the applicant's expanding family. Mr. Ohle went on to state that the applicant meets all the other provisions of the zoning ordinance with the exception of the current C-4 zoning classification which currently does not allow for said addition onto a commercial building. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 8-9). He went on to opine that the proposed addition to the property would be allowed under an R-4 classification. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 9).

Mr. Ohle testified that all the surrounding properties on three sides—the north side, south side and west side—are all residential. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 9-10). Mr. Ohle noted that the subject property has been a single-family residence for at least 30 years and it is (thus) consistent with the overall land use surrounding neighborhood properties and that it is consistent with the trends described in the Cook County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which establishes the R-4 Residential District zoning classification. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 11).

He noted that he is not sure why the property was ever zoned as C-4 as it's always been consistently an R-4 classification in terms of its use on compliance. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 11). At this point in the hearing, Rubina Alam, Building and Zoning Administrator, noted that in 1990 the property was changed from R-4 Residential District to C-4 General Commercial District to accommodate a mixed-use residence with a business also being operated on the property. It became inactive in 2002 but in 2005 the prior owner of the subject property applied for a childcare center, which was granted. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 13). Ms. Alam later clarified that the C-4 designation was for a residence and for a boutique; it was further explained that the boutique was called "The Straw Hat," that the prior owner operated at the property. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 43). It was further reiterated by Ms. Alam in response to questioning from ZBA Member Oszakiewski, that there were no variances sought in the past and none are being sought by the Applicant. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 15).

Mr. Ohle testified regarding the comprehensive land use plan and specifically, that the proposed addition would be consistent with the scale of the other homes around the area and that the materials and roof lines would be consistent. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 37). Furthermore, he explained that because of the large size of the lot, the addition should not have any visual impact on the surrounding community and there should be no problems with shading and casting

shadows or interference with light and ventilation of surrounding residences. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 37). Furthermore, while initially he did notice the garage was encroaching on the side yard corner lot facing the timber line, it has since been relocated, so it is no longer an encroachment into the side yard. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 37).

Mr. Ohle was clear that the expansion will not have a detriment, from an architectural standpoint or from a standpoint in adversely affecting other properties. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 38). According to him, it will sit fine on the property because the property is so large—it being a double lot. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 38).

In answering questions from ZBA Member Hamill, Mr. Ohle testified that the proposed addition would not involve removing trees or changing any of the flow on the water runoff on the property and that there would be no environmental issues and that it will not affect the basic contours of the property and should not adversely affect water flow onto adjacent properties. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 39-40). He also testified that he would not be creating swales with regard to the proposed addition. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 40).

Acting Chairman Montes asked if there are any problems with water on the property. Ms. Walsh answered “no”.

Owner Marcella Welch

Ms. Marcella Welch was the next individual to testify at the Public Hearing. She is the owner of the subject property. Ms. Welch testified that she bought the property in 2009 and since purchasing it, she has always used the property as a single-family residence, and she is looking to keep it as a single-family residence and it is not her intent to run a business out of the property. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 16-17). She testified that it is her intent to enlarge the residence by adding an addition to it and until the zoning classification is changed, she is prevented from doing so. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 17-18).

The planned addition will convert the property to six bedrooms and five bathrooms. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 32). In answering Acting Chairman Montes’ question regarding the number of people who will be residing at the property, Ms. Welch testified that that would not change, as it is already a multi-generational family and there are five people currently residing at the property and the addition would be able to better accommodate them and would not change or alter traffic patterns. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 34-35).

Acting Chairman Montes inquired if there will be any type of business conducted on the property. Ms. Welch responded there would not be any business conducted on the subject property. (June 2026 Transcript p.16)

Gary DeClark, Applicant, MAI Appraiser/Broker with Standard Valuation Services

Mr. Gary DeClark, MAI Appraiser and Broker with Standard Valuation Services was the next to testify. His CV and qualifications were tendered and accepted by ZBA as a qualified expert witness. Mr. DeClark prepared an Impact Study/Appraisal Report for the subject property that was tendered to and accepted by the ZBA he was qualified as an expert witness. He testified that he

conducted an impact study, as well as an appraisal of the property both before and after the project developed. He mentioned that the property is a single-family residence, currently 2,841 square feet above grade in the 1,900 square foot basement constructed in 1994 and that renovations are in plans for an additional 2,176 square feet above grade. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 21).

He went on to note that the project will involve the two-story home having six bedrooms, five and a half baths, comprising of 5,000 plus change in square feet. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 21-22). He mentioned that in his estimation, the most important matter to recognize is that everything around the subject property to the north, south and west is residential property and classified as R-4 Residential District. His conclusion is that there is no detrimental value to the subject property or the surrounding properties as a result of this change and the plans for development. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 22-23).

Furthermore, he testified that the health, safety, welfare and well-being of the property owners and property nearby will not be impeded. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 23). In the analysis of values and impact in the area, he looked at the activities that surround the property in a controlled area versus a targeted area, and his report shows that the control areas in the target areas for the various property and locations analyzed shows no material difference. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 24). He noted that, thus, the takeaway is that there is no detriment to value. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 24).

In coming to that conclusion, he testified to the methodology and noted that the first area looked at was 167th Street on Crawford Avenue in Markham. He explained that the commercial development along the west side of Crawford Avenue consists of a branch bank and a large shopping center developed south of it, which is the target area. He then noted comparing that area to a nearby residential area located to the south and to the east of the target area and the takeaway is that there is no detrimental influence—the target and control areas property value-wise over the course of time showed similarities that were not divergent—effectively, there is no observable detriment borne out on this comparison. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 25).

He testified that the second area he looked at was in Hazel Crest at 183rd St. and Pulaski Rd. The methodology was the same, with the target area compared to the control area. The target area consisted of residential properties near a commercial district along the west side of Pulaski consisting of a gas station and a free-standing retail shopping district. Comparing the target and control areas suggested there is not a detriment to value in any of these comparisons. There's no diminution implied from proximity to the commercial district. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 26).

The third area he reviewed was in Matteson at 207th St. and Cicero Ave. Mr. DeClark noted that the commercial district in this area was along the west side of Cicero Avenue consisting of an office building at the corner of Morning Glory Road and retail development further southeast of 107th Street. The control area is situated directly east of the target area. Roughly Ashford Drive to the north, Larkspur Lane to the south with a heavily wooded area east of that. Once again, looking at property valuations and pricing, the takeaway is that there is no negative impact; there's not a difference with the general trend of pricing over time. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 27-28).

Mr. DeClark, in answering Acting Chairman Montes' question, testified that based on his study, there is no diminution and this should continue to be the case because the use of the property is not changing. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 28). He answered Acting Chairman Montes' follow up question, by stating that the trend in the area is not for commercial properties but rather for

residential. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 29). In answering Member Hamill's question, Mr. DeClark affirmed that taking this property off the commercial rules has no adverse effect. (June 2026, 30).

POSITION OF VILLAGES AND OTHERS

The municipalities located within 1-1/2 mile of the subject property are Cities of County Club Hills Villages of Park Forest, Flossmoor, Olympia Fields and Matteson. There were no responses from the Villages.

**County Departmental Comments:
THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS WERE RECEIVED FROM THE VARIOUS COOK COUNTY
DEPARTMENTS AS SO INDICATED: (“)**

Planning & Development

Economic Impact: “Site was rezoned in 1990 from R4 to C4. Currently, there are no commercial uses on site and has been used as single family residential exclusively for 30 years. Highest and best use of property is residential, fitting with surrounding residences.”

Community Need: N/A

Trend of Development: ” Property is in an established R-4 residential neighborhood with Franciscan Hospital directly across the street. Commercial development on Crawford Ave is situated at signalized intersections, which Blackstone is not. Proposed addition would make this property significantly bigger than its neighboring residences, which are largely single-story homes, but neighboring areas are seeing this kind of development, as noted in the market study. ”

Demographics: ”Matteson grew significantly in the 2000's, growth has stabilized since. Established suburban community. ”

Property Values: ”Market study shows no negative impact to nearby property values. Proposed addition to property adds significant value to property. ”

Environmental Control

Noise and odor regulations: ”Chapter 30 does not specifically regulate or have jurisdiction on residential areas. Commercial and industrial facilities shall be operated in accordance with their permit issued by the Department of Environment and Sustainability. ”

Soil geology and composition: ”Chapter 30 does not specifically regulate or have jurisdiction on residential areas or soil geology. Commercial and industrial facilities shall be operated in accordance with their permit issued by the Department of Environment and Sustainability.

Wetland mitigation and compensation: Chapter 30 does not specifically regulate or have jurisdiction on residential areas or wetland mitigation. Commercial and industrial facilities shall be operated in accordance with their permit issued by the Department of Environment and Sustainability. ”

Discharge of effluent and particulates into the air, land and water: ”Chapter 30 does not specifically regulate or have jurisdiction on residential areas. Commercial and industrial facilities shall be operated in accordance with their permit issued by the Department of Environment and Sustainability. ”

Forest Preserve

Compatibility of the proposed use with Forest Preserve holdings: ”No anticipated conflicts with Forest Preserves holdings. ”

Impact on value of Forest Preserve holdings: ”No anticipated impacts on value of Forest Preserves holdings. ”

Future Forest Preserve acquisitions: "No anticipated impacts on future Forest Preserves acquisitions."

Highway

Wetland mitigation and compensation: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review. Impacts to wetlands may require permits from MWRD and/or USACE. From a cursory review of the submitted docs, wetlands are not present on the parcel."

Floodway and floodplain capacity and storage: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review for compliance with the Cook County Floodplain Ordinance. Impacts to floodways and floodplains may also require permits from IDNR-OWR and MWRD. From a cursory review of the submitted docs, floodplain is not present on the parcel."

Drainage detention requirements: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review. Detention may be required by outside agencies (e.g., MWRD, Township Road Districts)."

Roads, bridges, culverts, driveways, sidewalks, ingress, egress and access control: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review. From a cursory review of the submitted docs, roadway access does not appear to be proposed."

Subdivision regulations: " This amendment does not involve a subdivision"

Drainage, utilities, road easements and dedications: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review. From a cursory review of the submitted docs, it does not appear that any requirements in this area should affect the application."

Criteria from other regulatory agencies: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review. The need for approvals by other regulatory agencies will depend on the specifics of any development proposed."

Erosion and sediment control requirements: "The Department of Transportation and Highways does not have regulatory authority outside Cook County jurisdictional roads. If any development is proposed, a Cook County Building and Zoning permit shall be obtained. Site engineering plans, signed/sealed by a licensed Illinois P.E., shall be submitted to CCDBZ for review of erosion and sediment control measures. Erosion and sediment control

measures will also require approval from other regulatory agencies that may have jurisdiction over the development.”

Public Health

Lot sizes for private septic systems and wells: "Home currently is on a well and septic and is looking to renovate. We anticipate that the existing septic and water well will suffice or the septic can be modified to conform to sizing as part of the home renovation. This will be handled as part of the Building Permit review process."

Subdivision regulations: N/A

Swimming pools: N/A

Public community well and septic or sewage systems: "Incorp. Matteson does appear to be across the street, but we do not expect code conflict since the property is already existing."

Health and safety concerns: N/A

Building & Zoning

Site plan review: "The property has single family home with detached garage on it. The property was rezoned from R-4 to C-4 in 1990 and a proprietor's residence was approved as a Companion Special use."

Land use and permit review of properties in the vicinity of the proposed use: "The surrounding area is predominantly residential"

Lot size: "There are two lots with 20,600 sq. of lot area each with a total of 41,200 sq. ft. The house is located on both lots right on the middle lot line."

Subdivision regulations: N/A

Findings of Fact

Pursuant to 13.7.9 of the Cook County Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals makes the following findings of fact as to the zoning map amendment and determines the proposed use benefits public health, safety and welfare with respect to the following standards:

1.) Uses of Surrounding Property.

Mr. Ohle testified that all the surrounding properties on the north side, south side, and west side are residential properties (June 2026 Transcript, p. 9-10; 11). Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10, Z-11 and Z-13 of his report. The surrounding area is predominantly R-4 single-family residential, with homes of similar scale and adjoining lots. Within the corporate limits of the Village of Olympia Fields, east of Crawford Avenue, is the Franciscan Health Medical campus classified as a special use. Mr. DeClark discusses the property uses adjacent to the subject property on page 3 of his report, noting, the north, south and west sides consist of similar single family development.

2.) Zoning Classification of Surrounding Property.

Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10, Z-11 and Z-13 of his report. He states that the neighborhood parcels contiguous and surrounding the subject property are classified as R-4 residential. The subject site is the only C-4-zoned property in the area. Mr. DeClark noted on page 3 of his report and testified that everything around the subject property to the north, south and west is residential property, R-4. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 22).

3.) Suitability of the Subject Property for the Use Permitted under the Existing Zoning Classification.

Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10, Z-11 and Z-13 of his report. The existing structure has been continuously used as a single-family residence. The existing improvements, lot size and residential context make the property appropriate for R-4 zoning. Mr. Ohle testified that it has been a single-family residence for at least 30 years or more. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 11).

4.) Trend of Development in the Area.

Mr. Ohle testified that the entire area is developed as R-4 zoning classification (the only exception is across the street in Olympia Fields which has the hospital). (June Transcript, p. 10, 11). Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10 and Z-11 of his report. Development along this portion of Crawford Avenue has remained stable and residential. There is no trend toward expanding commercial uses into this neighborhood. Property owners are maintaining and reinvesting in their homes. Mr. DeClark testified that the trend in the area is not for commercial properties but rather for residential. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 29).

5.) Length of Time the Property has Been Vacant as Zoned Considered in the Context of Land Development in the Surrounding Area.

Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10, Z-11 and Z-13 of his report. He notes that the property is not vacant. The property is not used for C-4 commercial purposes and for more than 30 years the subject property has functioned as a single-family home. See also (June 2026 Transcript, p. 11).

6.) The Extent to Which Property Values are Diminished by Zoning Restrictions

Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10 of his report. He notes that aligning the zoning with the actual use removes the constraint of the property being “existing non-conforming” so that the property value is consistent with the property values of the surrounding area. Mr. DeClark discusses this standard on pages 5-35 of his report. Mr. DeClark testified that there is no negative impact when looking at prices in the area. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 27). There should not be any diminution in prices because the use is not changing. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 28).

7.) Need in the Community for the Proposed Use.

Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10, Z-11 and Z-13 of his report. He notes that the proposed use is consistent with the overall land use of the surrounding neighboring properties. The property for more than 30 years has not been used as a C-4 classification. All the surrounding properties on the north side, south side and west side are residential properties. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 9-10; 11).

8.) Consistency with the Cook County Comprehensive Land Use and Policies Plan.

Mr. Ohle testified that the proposed addition is consistent with the trends described in the Cook County Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which establishes the R-4 zoning classification. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 11). Mr. Ohle discusses this standard on Sheet No. Z-10 of his report. He notes that the request supports county goals for compatible land use, reinvestment in established neighborhoods. Rezoning from C-4 to R-4 aligns the property with surrounding existing residential developments and depicts orderly growth. When questioned specifically regarding the comprehensive land use plan, Mr. Ohle testified that the proposed addition would be consistent with the scale of the other homes around the area and that the materials and roof lines would be consistent. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 37). He also explained that because of the large size of the lot, the addition should not have any visual impact on the surrounding community and there should be no problems with shading or casting shadows or interference with light and ventilation of surrounding residences. (June 2026 Transcript, p. 37).



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
OF THE
COUNTY OF COOK

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Cook County Comprehensive Plan designates the Subject Property as Commercial.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the foregoing Findings, the Zoning Board of Appeal's unanimously 5-0 Aye vote, recommends to the Cook County Board of Commissioners that the Map Amendment (MA 260001) the subject property consisting of two parcels, from C-4 General Commercial District to be rezoned to R-4 Single Family Residence District. The Map Amendment is required to bring the existing single-family home into compliance with the current Zoning Ordinance, in Section 15 of Rich Township. If granted, all pertinent records, maps and the comprehensive plan shall be changed in accordance with this recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,
Zoning Board of Appeals

Paul J. Montes II, Acting Chairman

PM/SEASE