



Mayor James Hortsman called the City Council meeting to order at 7:31 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Roll Call as follows:

Present: Mayor Hortsman; Alderperson Keeler; Alderperson McCarthy; Alderperson Wolf; Alderperson Kunz; Alderperson Emmett; Alderperson Stuewe; Alderperson Vetter

Also Present: City Clerk Nicole Tormey; Treasurer JoAnn Kelly; City Administrator Moses Amidei; Assistant Director Economic & Community Development Paul Ruane; Community Planner Hunter Heyman; IT Director Tom Rieman

3. Announcements

Mayor Hortsman read the announcements.

- The City is seeking applications for the positions of pre-certified police officers and full-time firefighters. To apply, please visit our website at www.oak-forest.org
- City Hall will be closed on Monday, February 16th in observance of Presidents Day. Homewood Disposal will be open so there will be no change in garbage pickup.
- The City is hosting its third Community Meeting on February 18th at 5 pm at Oak Tree Community Church at 156th and Lamont to discuss how we can make Oak Forest a better place to live, work and grow. We hope to see you there.
- The Oak Forest Rotary Club will host a Pancake Breakfast Blood Drive on Saturday, February 21st at Oak Forest High School from 8 am until 1 pm.
- The February 26th Senior Lunch and Bingo will feature the musical talents of Edizon Dayao. Tickets are \$7 each and available at City Hall.
- Early voting for the gubernatorial primary election begins on March 2nd at City Hall.
- The Oak Forest Fleadh on Saturday, March 7th includes a neighborhood 5K race at 8:30 am and a family parade on Central Avenue at 11 am.

4. Citizen Participation

Richard Larson, 150th Place, questioned why the citizen participation was moved to the beginning of the meeting as opposed to the end of the meeting. The Mayor responded that it was moved to the beginning so people have an opportunity to talk about other things that are not on the agenda.

Alderperson Wolf asked that even though citizen participation is now at the start of the meeting, if there is a motion on the floor and people have thoughts or questions about a particular agenda item - that they are able to speak at that time, correct? The Mayor responded yes; we just need concurrence of the City Council.



5. **Motion to Establish Consent Agenda**

Aldersperson Emmett made the motion. Aldersperson Stuewe seconded.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
Alderman Keeler			
Alderman McCarthy			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Kunz			

The motion carried 7/0.

6. **Consent Agenda**

A. Consideration of the following list of bills dated:

- 1. Regular bills - FY 2025-2026
- 2. Supplemental bills - FY 2025-2026

B. Consideration of the following minutes:

- 1. City Council - 1/13/2026 & 1/27/2026
- 2. ETSB - 1/6/2026
- 3. Planning & Zoning Commission - 1/7/2026 & 1/21/2026
- 4. Civil Service Commission - 1/15/2026
- 5. Economic Advisory Council - 11/12/2025

C. Approval of Special Event Permit & Temporary Liquor License Request by Blarney Stone – 15400 South Cicero Avenue for 3/7/2026 Event.

Aldersperson Stuewe made the motion. Aldersperson McCarthy seconded.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
		Alderman Keeler	



Alderman McCarthy
Alderman Wolf
Alderman Kunz
Alderman Emmett

The motion carried 6/0, 1 abstain.

7. **IT**

A. Approval of AVI-SPL's Omnia Partners Government Contract Quote of \$153,675.81 for New Audio System for City Council

Aldersperson Emmett made the Motion. Aldersperson Vetter seconded.

IT Director Tom Rieman stated he is requesting approval for a new audio system for the City Council Chambers and the Blue Room which are consistently used for City Council meetings and staff meetings. This system would also help prepare meeting minutes, as AI will be able to transcribe the City Council minutes and save staff time and energy preparing City Council meeting minutes. Also, since we use both rooms for training purposes, we have zoned this room out so we will have ceiling microphones with better quality for people who walk around the room during training. The funding for this is covered by Social Services, not CIP.

Mayor Hortsman asked if this were to be approved when would this start? Tom stated it would take 3-4 months before they would start, but should only take a month to finish once it is started.

Aldersperson Emmett wanted confirmation that Tom would coordinate with Public Works to make sure everyone is on the same page once the work begins. Tom stated he would coordinate with Public Works.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
Alderman Keeler			
Alderman McCarthy			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Kunz			

The motion carried 7/0.



8. Community Development

A. Approval of Ordinance 2026-02-11380 Authorizing a Text Amendment to Remove Article VI, Section 9-206 and Amending Section 2-101, 2-102, 5-108, 10-101, 12-206, Appendix A and B for the Removal of the Office District from Zoning Code.

Aldersperson Kunz made the motion. Aldersperson Emmett seconded.

Community Planner Hunter Heyman stated the past Ordinance 2025-07-10990 updated the use table to align with the office uses within the commercial property uses that were allowed in the C1 Local Commercial District. We had Ordinance 2026-01-11310, which approved rezonings for the remaining Office District. Currently, there are no Office Districts. This text amendment will remove those office districts and make sure that the existing buildings are compliant with what is in our zoning code.

What is being proposed is to remove the commercial minimum setback and lot size requirements intending to contribute to a walkable commercial corridor. There are many different buildings that have zero setback in Oak Forest. Looking at our past history, the percentage of variances where setbacks were approved has been 6% of our total variances. In comparison, the highest past variances we have seen were around 15%. If a building is taller than 2 stories, the proposed building would require a 20-foot rear setback.

While we do already have zero front yard setbacks allowed on Cicero, we do not have zero setback on 159th Street and other commercial properties.

Oak Forest has a lot of smaller lots and as a result it can make building difficult. We are proposing zero-foot commercial front setbacks and zero foot the rear setbacks, except if the lot was neighboring a single-family home and taller than 2 stories.

Aldersperson McCarthy asked for confirmation with regard to the rear setbacks as it states zero from non-residential and multi-family that you can build a house? Hunter responded that it is our commercial and multi-family homes and that is looking at if they are abutting a single-family residential property.

Aldersperson Wolf stated he has been to the last couple of Planning & Zoning meetings where this was being discussed and we are still discussing lot setbacks and requirements. Aldersperson Wolf thought we did a vote to remove the office district and put it into commercial and thought we were still in the discussion stage. Aldersperson Wolf would like to push it back to Planning & Zoning. Hunter responded the setback for the rear would be 20 feet in the commercial district, if it was three stories or taller and in front of a single-family property. Aldersperson Wolf asked if it was shorter, where would it go? Hunter responded it would require design approval but



wouldn't require a variation.

Aldersperson Wolf pointed out much of these were built before the current code and asked if something happened such as a fire, could that building not be built? Hunter responded that some of the taller office buildings or even some of the buildings in the commercial district would require a variance or PUD to be built, given our code changes. We want to make sure it is reflected in our code.

Aldersperson Wolf wanted to know how many businesses came into Oak Forest and saw our code and our variances and decided to go elsewhere? Hunter responded if it is because of the zoning code exactly I cannot tell you for sure because we do not hear back from those no longer interested. In Oak Forest if they were really excited and wanted to make it work, they could go through the PUD process or apply for these things. Aldersperson Wolf stated based upon the conversations we did have about the comprehensive plan and there were changes to it, but we always envisioned that Cicero Avenue would be more of an entertainment area. Aldersperson Wolf would like others to speak out about this and see what questions they may have about this.

Mayor Hortsman asked Hunter if he could give us an idea of the benefits of this and what might be a problem with these setbacks? Hunter responded that the benefit to having more flexibility is that it allows a building to be more flexibly moved around the site and it opens up that amount of buildable area. Mayor Hortsman asked if the smaller lots that wanted to build in a certain spot would be allowed variations? Hunter responded we are trying to adjust this with our setback requirements. We have the design review process for new developments to make sure that the designs align with what we are hoping to see in Oak Forest.

Aldersperson Wolf wanted to follow up on variances. Hunter responded they come to Council for approval. City Clerk Nicole Tormey stated they come twice, they go to Planning & Zoning and then before Council and that is what we are trying to eliminate. It is still going to go through a plan review. Aldersperson Wolf asked if that is what the whole plan review is? Assistant Director Economic & Community Development Paul Ruane added this would also require lot coverage, so any type of engineering, just by removing these setbacks does not mean that someone could put a building from corner to corner, allowing no impervious surfaces.

Aldersperson Kunz wanted clarification that people will have more of an opportunity to put their building at a different position but will still need to abide by all of the other codes. Paul stated they can configure the site to their liking but there are still restrictions that they have to abide within the other parts of the code.

Aldersperson Emmett thanked Chuck for his expertise with Planning & Zoning, but noted he would like resident input because there could be something Planning & Zoning passes that those residents do not want. Aldersperson Emmett wants confirmation that City Council gets final say.



Alderperson McCarthy stated a design if it is part of the new code could just get it all set if it does have zero setback. In some situations, I think it would work because for some businesses there is no other way to put it in a small lot.

City Administrator Moses Amidei asked about the history of the setback requests and approvals, because the history goes back 10 years where the City has granted 100% of setback variances. When that starts happening consistently the City is tasked at looking at the code to see if we have an obsolete code that needs to be updated where we are continuously approving these setback variances. Paul Ruane stated this would be commercial in certain locations. Moses stated as long as what is being proposed here meets all other codes and we provide that code change to the setback, they don't have to go to a public hearing for a variance that is going to be approved.

Paul Ruane clarified the design approval is currently only a Planning & Zoning approval requirement.

Alderperson Wolf asked if in this timeframe how many businesses had variances and how much were the variances? Paul Ruane stated he does not have every case available in front of him. Alderperson Wolf asked what would be the best case to put it in? Paul stated that based on his knowledge, they are never consistent. Hunter Heyman has been looking at what already exists here, whether they are the ones that have been granted variances or ones that are already built in the ground today to bring those into compliance to say that can be built back as long as it meets all of the requirements of the site development as of today. Alderperson Wolf stated that people can still come and voice their concerns but that is a big concern where variances come into play. Paul responded that the main difference is between the rest of the commercial and the local commercial districts where we know that those are located in the neighboring residential community areas. Whereas, if we are looking at the rest of the commercial areas throughout 159th and Cicero Avenue, a 167th Street and Harlem where a majority of those are commercial in nature. It has always been the understanding that Cicero is to be an area where everyone can walk around and push the buildings up to the frontage, something that the City has continued to make that happen. It allows the flexibility for the businesses that are looking to utilize the site.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Alderman Kunz			
	Alderman Emmett		
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
Alderman Keeler			
Alderman McCarthy			
	Alderman Wolf		



The motion carried 5/2.

B. Approval of Resolution 2026-02-0516R Supporting and Consenting to a Renewal Application to the Cook County Assessor of a Class 8 Incentive Application for the Property Commonly Known as 15301 S. Harlem Avenue.

Aldersperson Emmett made the motion. Aldersperson McCarthy seconded.

Assistant Director Economic & Community Development Paul Ruane stated what is being requested is a renewal of existing Class 8 incentive through Cook County, as the City does not approve these. This was originally approved in 2013 as the previous gas station at that point in time was vacant and the new person taking over requested for a Class 8 for bringing back the gas station online. The incentive is a 12-year cycle whereas once you hit the 10th year it starts to transition you back into the regular tax cost for the increase with the incentive there. It starts at 10% on a normal basis and ends up at 25%. That is figured through the market value.

Aldersperson Emmett stated if we gave this gentleman a break, and they are leasing from the old miniature golf course, the State of Illinois tells them how much diesel fuel they could pump which we have no control over, but they have gaming. I would like to know if the County looks at the income of the gaming this place makes and if we are giving a break to the taxpayer. Aldersperson Emmett is concerned with land being labeled as a truck stop but has 24-hour gaming. Aldersperson Emmett does not want to give a tax break to a business making a lot of money from gaming.

The Mayor asked for questions. There were none.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
	Alderman Emmett		
Alderman Stuewe	Alderman Vetter		
	Alderman Keeler		
Alderman McCarthy	Alderman Wolf		
	Alderman Kunz		

The motion did not pass 2/5.

The motion to approve Resolution 2026-02-0516R Supporting and Consenting to a Renewal Application to the Cook County Assessor of a Class 8 Incentive Application did not pass.



C. Approval of Resolution 2026-02-0517R Supporting and Consenting to a Renewal Application to the Cook County Assessor of a Class 8 Incentive Application for the Property Commonly Known as 4375 Frontage Road.

Aldersperson Emmett made the motion. Aldersperson Kunz seconded.

Assistant Director Economic & Community Development Paul Ruane stated this is a Class 8 renewal sparked by Hilton at 4375 Frontage Road. In 2015-2016 this property was remodeled from a Ramada to a Best Western. In doing so, they approached the City about an incentive for the Class 8 incentive from Cook County. Since then, they have now opened a second hotel next door; the Holiday Inn Express and they do have a Class 8 incentive there. They are asking with the renovation in the last year to continue their Class 8 for an additional 12 years. Alternatively, this is one of the few hotels we have in town. One that has continued to expand and has done a recent renovation warranting their request.

Aldersperson Kunz wanted to know if we can adjust the amount? Paul responded this is a conversation we have had at our Economic Advisory Council meetings and quite often it is that the incentives are very attractive and they significantly lower the price and without it, it becomes very expensive. There is no in between.

Aldersperson Emmett wanted to know if they had gaming. Paul responded they do not.

Aldersperson Keeler asked if they both had incentives. Paul stated the new one has an incentive that was approved 2 or 3 years ago when they were in the process of the redevelopment agreement and this one is just coming up on its first renewal.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
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Alderman Emmett

Alderman Stuewe

Alderman Vetter

Alderman Keeler

Alderman McCarthy

Alderman Wolf

Alderman Kunz

The motion carried 6/1



D. Approval of Resolution 2026-02-0518R Authorizing a Contract for a Professional Tree Inventory and Management Plan.

Aldersperson Kunz made the motion. Aldersperson Emmett seconded.

Assistant Director Economic & Community Development Paul Ruane stated we have accepted a grant from Trees Forever for a tree inventory and a management plan. That is an inventory of the trees within Oak Forest to get Public Works the ability to map the trees and click on them with GPS locators to know what trees we have in town and what the management plan is for these trees. We put this out to bid and received two bidders. We picked not only the lower of the two bids but we also picked the bidder who is located in Illinois as opposed to the one located in Florida. I would like to move forward with the professional tree inventory as proposed in my packet.

Aldersperson Kunz requested to know the amount of this plan. Paul responded it is not to exceed \$60,000. It came in significantly less and our grant is for \$60,000. Aldersperson Kunz asked if the grant covers this plan. Paul responded yes; the grant covers this plan.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
Alderman Kunz			
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
Alderman Keeler			
Alderman McCarthy			
Alderman Wolf			

The motion carried 7/0

9. **Administration**

A. Consideration of the Approval of Resolution 2026-02-0515R Approving a Four-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement with State and Municipal Teamsters, Chauffeurs & Helpers Local 700, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen & Helpers of American (Telecommunicators).

Aldersperson Emmett made the motion. Aldersperson McCarthy seconded.

City Administrator Moses Amidei stated this is the negotiated successor Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Oak Forest and Teamsters Local 700, who represents our



telecommunicators. He gave a brief synopsis regarding the changes/updates to the agreement, including wages.

The Mayor asked for questions. There were none.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			
Alderman Keeler			
Alderman McCarthy			
Alderman Wolf			
Alderman Kunz			

The motion carried 7/0

B. Motion to Authorize Conditional Issuance of Class E Liquor License to P&K Beverages, Inc.

Alderman Emmett made the motion. Alderman Kunz seconded.

City Administrator Moses Amidei stated Messrs. Amir and Ramesh Patel have acquired the P&K Beverages, Inc. (DBA Oak Forest Tobacco & Liquor) business located at 6072 West 159th Street. The existing business currently has a Class E Liquor License. The current license does not automatically transfer to the two new business owners upon purchase. The City Council is being requested to create a new Class E Liquor License for this existing business. No changes to the business is proposed. Moses Amidei noted that an ordinance is not required this evening because there is going to be no change to the number of Class E Liquor Licenses. The creation of the license will require a motion from the Council to essentially authorize the creation of said liquor license. Moses Amidei noted that despite his memo stating that the results of their background investigation have not come back as of yet; staff did receive the results of today and they came back clean. The business owner came before Council to answer any questions.

The Mayor asked for questions. There were none.

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Alderman Emmett			
Alderman Stuewe			
Alderman Vetter			



Alderman Keeler
Alderman McCarthy
Alderman Wolf
Alderman Kunz

The motion carried 7/0

10. **Old Business**

Alderman Emmett asked Administrator Amidei to contact the Cook County Division of Transportation and ask them to sweep and pothole patch Central Avenue as said roadway will be used for the March 7 Fleadh Parade.

11. **New Business (None This Evening)**

12. **Adjournment Into Closed Session**

Alderman Emmett made a motion, which was seconded by Alderman Stuewe to adjourn the meeting into Closed Session to discuss the semi-annual review of closed session minutes as per 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21).

Roll call vote was taken as follows:

<u>AYES</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
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Alderman Emmett
Alderman Stuewe
Alderman Vetter
Alderman Keeler
Alderman McCarthy
Alderman Wolf
Alderman Kunz

The motion carried 7/0

Meeting adjourned at 8:44 pm

Minutes prepared by:

Kelly Oehrlein, Deputy City Clerk



Approved:

James Hortsman, Mayor

James Emmett, Mayor
PRO TEM