

**CITY OF OAK FOREST  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 4, 2026**

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The Planning & Zoning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Ziak.

Pledge of allegiance.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Ziak  
Commissioner Forbes  
Commissioner Guisinger  
Commissioner LaRoche  
Commissioner Larson  
Commissioner Runge  
Staff Member Paul Ruane  
Staff Member Hunter Heyman

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Ater  
Commissioner McGrath

1. ZC #26-06 – Tobacco Lounge – Text Amendment: **PUBLIC HEARING** – The applicant requests review and consideration to update the following provisions of the City of Oak Forest Zoning Code: Appendix A: Zoning Table of Uses and such other and further zoning relief that may be required to allow for tobacco lounges.

Community Planner Hunter Heyman provided a recap of previous discussions regarding tobacco lounges. The city has received multiple inquiries from applicants interested in establishing tobacco lounges, but the use is not currently permitted in the zoning code. The purpose of this item is to clarify whether the city wants to allow this use and provide guidance to applicants.

**Existing Regulations**

Illinois state law (Smoke Free Illinois) prohibits smoking in enclosed spaces but provides an exemption for retail tobacco stores

Retail tobacco stores are defined as establishments deriving more than 80% of gross income from tobacco product sales

Retail tobacco stores must be freestanding structures (cannot be connected to other buildings)

Tobacco lounges and hookah bars can meet the definition of retail tobacco stores if they comply with these requirements

These establishments cannot hold liquor or restaurant licenses

Chairman Ziak asked for any Public Comments. Seeing none public comment was closed.

Chairman Ziak asked for a motion for approval.

Commissioner Guisinger made a motion to approve. Commissioner LaRoche seconded.

Roll call.

AYES	NAYS	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
			Commissioner Ater
	Commissioner Forbes		
Commissioner Guisinger			
Commissioner Larson			
Commissioner LaRoche			
			Commissioner McGrath
Commissioner Runge			
Chairman Ziak			

Motion carried 5-1, 2 absent. The motion was approved. This will go to City Council with a positive recommendation on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

2. Preliminary Discussion on a Garage Size and Height Variation Request at 15537 Lamon Avenue  
**PUBLIC MEETING**

Community Planner Hunter Heyman gave an overview of the applicant's desire for a larger garage at 15537 Lamon Avenue.

- Existing garage: 16 feet by 34 feet
- Applicant proposes: 16-foot by 30-foot addition with 18-foot height
- Proposed total garage size: 1,024 square feet
- Proposed use: First floor for vehicle parking and table tennis/game room (10-foot ceiling); second floor for storage (8-foot ceiling)
- Actual total height with roof pitch: Approximately 25 feet

**Current Zoning Code Requirements for Garages**

The commission reviewed the existing garage allowances based on lot size:

- Less than 7,500 sq ft: 528 sq ft, no second garage
- 7,500 to 10,000 sq ft: 660 sq ft
- 10,000 to 21,000 sq ft: 800 sq ft
- 15,000 to 21,800 sq ft: 800 sq ft with option for second garage (one attached, one detached) requiring planning and zoning approval
- Greater than 21,800 sq ft: 1,000 sq ft with two garages (either attached or detached)
- Height limit: 15 feet (regardless of lot size)

**Applicant's Variance Request**

- Square footage variance: Applicant wants 1,024 sq ft but is limited to 800 sq ft under current code (200+ sq ft variance needed)
- Height variance: Applicant wants 25 feet but code limits to 15 feet (10-foot variance needed)

**Summary of Discussion**

Commissioners raised concerns that the proposed garage would be larger and possibly taller than the existing home (a ~900 sq ft, 1930s-era house about 15 feet tall). Current rules state accessory structures should not exceed the size or height of the primary structure, and some commissioners felt approving this could affect neighborhood character. Design solutions such as dormer-style roofs and matching materials were suggested to reduce the visual impact and improve compatibility with nearby homes.

The commission reviewed examples of large garages already in Oak Forest, including a two-story brick garage at 160th and Central, a gambrel-roof garage on Sunset, and a dormer-style garage near Beggars. Some examples were seen as blending well when materials matched the house, while others—such as garages with CMU block walls—were noted as standing out negatively.

Staff clarified the formal notification process, which includes mailed notices to all properties within 250 feet, a two-week notice period, a Planning & Zoning hearing, and final City Council approval. The applicant stated that immediate neighbors have no objections.

A key issue discussed was whether the request should be handled as a variance or through a zoning code amendment. Staff explained that variances require a legal hardship, and simply wanting a larger garage typically does not qualify. As a result, commissioners discussed updating the code instead. Staff also presented comparisons with nearby municipalities, where garage limits range from 700–800 sq ft in many towns, about 1,000 sq ft in Blue Island, and up to 3,000 sq ft (one story) in South Holland.

The commission provided direction for a potential text amendment, including allowing garages on lots over 10,000 sq ft up to 10% of lot size, permitting garages no taller than the primary structure by right, and requiring special review for taller structures. Commissioners also discussed allowing a second detached garage on lots over 10,000 sq ft with a special use permit, and increasing shed allowances to 2% of lot size with a 400 sq ft cap to prevent sheds from functioning as garages. Staff will also review code definitions distinguishing garages from sheds, typically based on door size and ability to store a vehicle.

The applicant may either apply for a variance now or wait for the proposed code amendment, which is expected to be reviewed at the April Planning & Zoning meeting and then sent to City Council. Staff will prepare the draft amendment and keep the applicant informed as it moves forward.

### 3. Discussion for an Update to the Subdivision Code to Allow Minor Subdivisions Through Administrative Approval **PUBLIC MEETING**

Community Planner Hunter explained why staff were interested in allowing for an administrative process for plat of condominium approval. At the previous meeting, the commission approved a plat of condominium for an existing structure. The applicant was dividing one unit in an existing structure into two units without making any structural changes essentially creating internal unit

designation lines. The city currently processes plats of condominium through the minor subdivision process, which requires approval from both the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

Staff reviewed practices in other municipalities and found mixed approaches. Some communities (such as Midlothian) treat condominium plats like minor subdivisions, requiring full review, while others (such as Mount Prospect) allow administrative approval only. Tinley Park appears to follow the subdivision process but also allows some condominium conversions to be approved administratively. The county itself does not require City Council approval or signatures for recording a condominium plat, though condominium declarations and HOA documents must still be recorded.

Commission discussion focused on whether condominium plats should continue to require full review. Mr. Forbes suggested removing Planning and Zoning review, allowing either administrative approval or direct City Council approval, noting council involvement may still make sense when new parcels or tax identification numbers are created. Staff clarified that administrative approval would bypass both Planning and Zoning and City Council, while direct council approval would skip the commission but still involve the council.

Commissioners expressed support for administrative approval when the condominium plat does not involve structural changes.

Based on the discussion, staff will prepare a text amendment allowing administrative approval of condominium plats. The draft amendment will be presented for public hearing at the next meeting, and staff will coordinate with City Council to ensure consistent approval procedures.

Chairman Ziak asked for a motion for approval of February 18th, 2026 minutes. Commissioner Forbes made a motion to approve. Commissioner Guisinger seconded.

Roll call.

<b>AYES</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
			Commissioner Ater
Commissioner Forbes			
Commissioner Guisinger			
Commissioner Larson			
Commissioner LaRoche			
			Commissioner McGrath
Commissioner Runge			
Chairman Ziak			

Motion carried 6-0, 2 absent. The motion was approved.

Chairman Ziak asked for any Public Comments. Seeing none public comment was closed.

Chairman Ziak asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Forbes made a motion, Commissioner Larson seconded.

All in attendance answered aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Hunter Heyman, Community Planner.

  
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CHAIRMAN ZIAK