

## Village of Forest Park Memorandum

**TO:** Planning and Zoning Commission

**FROM:** Steve Glinke, Director

**SUBJECT:** **PC 2023-07** 7321 Madison Street, Unit 100  
Petitioner: Donald Biggins

**DATE OF REPORT:** 11 September 2023  
**DATE OF PZC MEETING:** 18 September 2023

**PROJECT OVERVIEW:** The petitioner is requesting conditional use approval to open a live music venue at 7321 Madison Street, Unit 100.

### GENERAL PROPERTY INFORMATION

**Applicant's Name:** Donald Biggins dba Roberts Westside  
**Common Property Address:** 7321 Madison Street  
**Common Location:** On the north side of Madison Street between Circle Ave. and Marengo Ave.

**Neighboring Property Land Use(s):**  
North R3 High Density  
South DBD/Commercial  
West DBD/Commercial  
East DBD/Commercial

**Comprehensive Plan Designation:** Downtown Commercial  
**Existing Use of Property:** Mixed Use  
**Proposed Use of Property:** Mixed Use with ground floor Performance Venue  
**Existing Property Zoning:** DBD – Downtown Business District  
**Property Size:** Building: 10,000 sqft, Property Space: 2,800 sqft

**Bulk Area Regulations:**

Regulation	Requirement	Proposed
Front yard setback	0'	0'
Rear yard setback	25' or 20% of lot depth	65' existing – no change
Side/East setback	0 feet	0'
Side/West setback	0 feet	0'

Regulation	Requirement	Proposed
Min. Lot Area/Dwelling	n/a	n/a
Lot Coverage (with residential)	n/a	n/a
Minimum Dwelling Unit Size	n/a	n/a
Building height	2 stories 35'	22'
Off-street parking	None in DBD	No Change

venue. No significant changes to the subject location's interior is anticipated. There will be no food service at this location and licensing by the Village is dependent on securing the conditional use approval as well as the awarding of a liquor license from the local Liquor Commissioner. Besides live music the petitioner is proposing to make the space available to community events and non-profits for fundraisers.

**STANDARDS FOR CONDITIONAL USE:**

In reviewing and determining whether to approve or disapprove a conditional use permit, the Zoning and Planning Commission and Village Council shall consider the criteria established in 9-10-7 of the Village of Forest Park Zoning Code. The criteria and staff's evaluation of the applications compliance with those criteria are as follows:

1. That the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the conditional use will not be detrimental to, or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare;
2. That the conditional use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood;
3. That the establishment of the conditional use will not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district;
4. Those adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities have been or are being provided;
5. That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets;
6. That the proposed conditional use is not contrary to the objectives of the current comprehensive plan for the village of Forest Park; and
7. That the conditional use shall, in all other respects, conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified pursuant to the recommendations of the board.

**CONDITIONAL USE FINDINGS OF FACT:**

1. The proposed conditional use is complementary to existing uses along Madison Street, supports the intent of the DBD, and makes use of an existing building.
2. The proposed use with a hard (music) stop at 11p provides a tiered exit is in an existing building and will not have impacts on the surrounding area.
3. No site improvements are proposed and will not impede development or redevelopment.
4. As an existing building, the utilities and facilities needed are already in place.
5. The property does not have ingress or egress at the site level and contributes to the DBD as a destination.
6. The proposed conditional use supports the comprehensive plan's vision for the DBD.

**Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application**

---

**APPLICATION COVER SHEET**

**Date Received:** \_\_\_\_\_

*A Preapplication Conference with the planning staff is required prior to considering submitting an application for zoning action. The purpose of the Preapplication Conference is to provide the applicant(s) an opportunity to discuss the concept of the proposed subdivision prior to the preparation of detailed plans. The scheduling of a Preapplication Conference does not guarantee approval. Contact the Planning staff at 708-615-6276 to schedule a Preapplication Conference.*

**Subject Property Information:**

Street Address: 7321 Madison St., Unit 100, Forest Park, IL 60130

PIN(s): 15-12-434-053-1001, 1004-8

Current Zoning District (circle): R-1      R-2      R-3      B-1      B-2      DBD      I-1      I-2

Current Land Use: 1st Floor - Jimmy John's, Small Restaurant, Subject Use; 2nd Floor - Office Rental

Current Property Size: .28 acres

Building size: Approx 3800 sq. ft.

Parking stalls (total): None

**Proposed Development Information**

Proposed Development Name: Robert's Westside

Proposed Special Use: 1st Floor - Live Music Performance Venue & Community Space

Proposed Building Size: Approx 3800 Square Feet      \_\_\_\_\_ Acres

Number of building units: 4

Parking stalls (total): None

Proposed Zoning (circle): **(NOTE: If proposed zoning is different than existing zoning, additional approvals are required. Please see Planning staff.)**

R-1      R-2      R-3      B-1      B-2      DBD      I-1      I-2

Brief Description of Proposal: Provide details about the zoning action such proposed land use, hours of operation, number of parking spaces, etc. (use additional sheets if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

Please see attached documents

---

---

---

**Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application**

---

**APPLICATION COVER SHEET continued**

Character of surrounding area:

	Zoning	Jurisdiction	Existing Land Use
North			
South			
East			
West			

---

<b>For Office Use Only: Filing Fee: _____ Paid Date: _____ Public Hearing Date: _____</b>
---

**Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application**

---

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Applicant Information:**

Name: Donald Biggins  
Company: Robert's Westside, Inc.  
Address: 7321 Madison St. , Unit 100  
City, State, Zip Code: Forest Park, IL 60130  
Phone: 708-533-4095 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: donnie@harmonicadunn.com  
Applicant Relationship to Property (i.e. Owner, Surveyor, Architect, Attorney): Tenant for Unit 100

**Owner Information (if different from applicant):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Staff:**

Attorney Name: Paul W. Schroeder  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: 915 Bonnie Brae  
City, State, Zip Code: River Forest, IL 60305  
Phone: 708-302-4149 Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: pwschroeder44@gmail.com

Builder Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application**

---

**PETITIONER'S AFFIDAVIT**

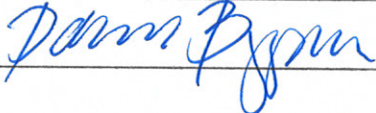
Petitioner acknowledges understanding of application requirements and certifies that application has been completed correctly.

I, Donald Biggins, hereby certify that on 24th Day of August, 2023, I have completely read and understand the submittal requirements for an appearance before the Village of Forest Zoning Board of Appeals, Plan Commission (if applicable), and Village Council, and that all the above statements and statements on any documents or drawings submitted herewith are true to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief.

Location of proposed zoning action: 7321 Madison St., Unit100, Forest Park IL 60130

Project name: Robert's Westside

Petitioner' Name: Donald Biggins

Signature: 

Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application

OWNER'S AFFIDAVIT

I (We) certify that he/she is the owner of legal representative of the subject property and that Donald Biggins (Name of petitioner – not the property owner) has been authorized to submit an application for the following action: Operating a Music Performance Venue & Community Space Upon the property at: 7321 Madison St., Unit 100, Forest Park IL 60130 and that the proposed work and all related inspections are hereby authorized.

Donald Biggins

Name of Petitioner (Applicant)

Donald Biggins 08/24/23

Signature of Applicant and Date

7321 Madison Circle, Inc., by Mark Hosty, President

Name of Property Owner/Legal Representative

[Signature]

Signature of Property Owner/Legal Representative and Date

NOTARY  
STATE OF Illinois )

COUNTY OF Cook ) ) SS.

I, the undersigned, a Notary Public, in and for said County, in the State aforesaid, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT

Donald Biggins  
(NAME OF APPLICANT)

is/are personally known to me, that said person(s) appeared before me this day in person and severally acknowledged that he/she/they signed and delivered the forgoing owners authorization above as his/her/their free and voluntary act for the uses and purposes herein set forth.

Given under my hand and Notary Seal, this 24 day of August, 2023.

Lynda Merrinette  
Signature of Notary Public



**Village of Forest Park  
Conditional Use Permit Application**

---

**RESPONSES TO CONDITIONAL USE STANDARDS**

The Forest Park Municipal Code requires that the Zoning Board of Appeals take into consideration the seven findings listed below when making its recommendation to the Village Council. Each factor must be addressed for approval of the proposed conditional use. "Yes" and "No" responses will not suffice. Please be as detailed as possible and explain why the proposed conditional use should be permitted in a district where it is not otherwise permitted. **If a question is not addressed, the application will be considered incomplete.** If additional space is required, please attach a separate sheet. For questions, please contact the Planning staff.

1. What measures have been or will be taken to prevent detrimental impact to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare? *(Explain in detail how the proposed conditional use has been designed, located, or proposed so that it will not disturb residents, the neighborhood, or the community-at-large. Explain how the proposed condition use at the particular location requested is necessary or desirable to provide a service or a facility that will benefit residents, the neighborhood or the community-at-large?)*

**Please see attached document for answer to Questions 1-7**

---

---

---

---

2. How will the proposed conditional use not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood? *(Consider existing uses near the subject property and explain how the proposed conditional use may or may not be compatible with surrounding existing uses.)*

---

---

---

---

3. How will the establishment of the proposed conditional use not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district? *(Explain how the proposed conditional use will allow the surrounding area to develop appropriately. Is the use too large for the site? Will it be in a location on the lot that will cause conflicts with adjacent properties? Does the use create noise, odor, smoke, or light that will affect other properties? Will the proposed use have a negative impact on existing adjacent land uses?)*

---

---

---

---



## **APPLICANT'S RESPONSES TO CONDITIONAL USE STANDARDS**

**1. What measures have been or will be taken to prevent detrimental impact to or endanger the public health, safety, morals, comfort, or general welfare? (Explain in detail how the proposed conditional use has been designed, located, or proposed so that it will not disturb residents, the neighborhood, or the community-at-large. Explain how the proposed conditional use at the particular location requested is necessary or desirable to provide a service or a facility that will benefit residents, the neighborhood or the community-at-large.)**

Effective with a Lease signed on August 20, 2023, Robert's Westside, Inc., a newly formed Illinois corporation, took over the long vacant first floor space (approximately 3800 square feet) in the existing Building at 7321 Madison St. (See Photo No.1). If this Application is approved (and the Lease is contingent upon Robert's Westside obtaining all necessary Village licenses, permits, and approvals), this site at the crossroads of Forest Park's Downtown Business District will be dramatically improved.

Robert's Westside will be Forest Park's very first high-end, live music performance venue and community space. Robert's Westside will host national touring musicians and regional talent. Though Robert's Westside will be primarily a live music venue, it will also serve as a welcoming neighborhood bar. It will be a home for families to gather for their milestone achievements and celebrations of life. A space offered to the community for non-profit fundraisers and mutual aid benefits. Robert's Westside will be a sponsor in both adult and youth sport teams and clubs. It will feature handmade cocktails, craft beers and premiere non-alcoholic drinks to provide all patrons with the freedom of choice to maximize their experience. Its space will not be used for video games, dart boards, pool tables, and the like.

The character and operation of this venture will depend largely on the person in charge, and that person is Donnie Biggins. He is the sole shareholder and director of Robert's Westside, as well as its President. He is a life-long Oak Park resident, and, since 2012, has been a community organizer for live music events in Forest Park, Oak Park, and Berwyn, including Oaktobefest and Food Aid. Donnie began helping FitzGerald's Nightclub book the American

Music Festival in 2011 and took over there as Talent Buyer in 2017, when Bill FitzGerald retired. Since leaving that venue in January, 2022, Donnie has dedicated his time to operating and booking the talent for his Lincoln Park music venue, Golden Dagger. Donnie has managed Golden Dagger, formerly known as Tonic Room, without incident, since 2012, and took over that venue as its sole owner in 2016. Donnie is also the Talent Buyer for The Acom, a non-profit performance art space in Three Oaks, MI. Donnie is now in the process of selling the Golden Dagger business, so he can devote his time and energy to Robert's Westside.

Below is the proposed weekly schedule for Robert's Westside, for when it hopefully opens around November 1, 2023, subject to change depending upon how circumstances evolve:

Monday: Generally Closed

Tuesday: 3PM - 12AM

Wednesday: 3PM - 12AM

Thursday: 3PM - 1AM

Friday: 3PM - 1AM

Saturday: 11AM - 1AM

Sunday: 11AM - 12AM

**2. How will the proposed conditional use not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish and impair property values within the neighborhood? (Consider existing uses near the subject property and explain how the proposed conditional use may or may not be compatible with surrounding existing uses.)**

Robert's Westside will increase the value of the Building in which it will reside, with some design upgrades but retention of its original architectural charm and its current furnishings. (See Photo No. 2). The venue's hours will benefit surrounding restaurants and small businesses, as patrons will have plenty of time to enjoy a dinner out and explore the diverse offerings on Madison Street. The leased space is in a Building, which has no residents on the second floor, and the other two tenants on the first floor are restaurants. The Building is immediately surrounded by a majority of businesses that only operate during daytime hours, Monday-Friday, while the programming for Robert's Westside will begin after normal business hours. Notably, each of the entrances to the premises has two doors (see Photo Nos. 3 & 4), so there is already

significant protection against sound leakage when customers enter or exit. Additionally, Robert's Westside will be working with expert audio engineers to utilize techniques to soundproof the space, while creating the best sound possible inside the venue and minimal effects outside the Building.

**3. How will the establishment of the proposed conditional use not impede the normal and orderly development and improvement of the surrounding property for uses permitted in the district? (Explain how the proposed conditional use will allow the surrounding area to develop appropriately. Is the use too large for the site? Will it be in a location on the lot that will cause conflicts with adjacent properties? Does the use create noise, odor, smoke, or light that will affect other properties? Will the proposed use have a negative impact on existing adjacent land uses?)**

The limited buildout for Robert's Westside will take place within an existing Building, and the only anticipated change to the exterior is the addition of signage to indicate the name and type of business. Because the space already has a foyer holding area inside the Building on both entrances, any chatty patrons waiting for entry will be indoors. Although the noise that comes from live music performances may be more than a typical bar, it will be largely confined to the interior of the premises, and the venue will adhere to Forest Park's noise ordinances for live performances, which is currently 11:00 pm.

**4. To what extent will the proposed conditional use be adequately served by essential public facilities and services, and by private utilities? (Explain the measures that have been or will be taken to provide adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and/or necessary facilities.)**

As a new tenant in the Building, Robert's Westside will immediately start making some improvements to the space, such as re-decorating, building an elevated stage area, upgrading the electrical service, and making any other modifications to the first floor that will facilitate the customers' listening experience. No new plumbing is

anticipated, as the bar service area and bathrooms are already adequately sized for the expected capacity.

**5. What measures have been or will be taken to provide ingress and egress so designed as to minimize traffic congestion in the public streets? (Explain how increases to traffic congestion and circulation problems will be addressed. Also, explain the ways that access issues will be improved due to the design, locations, or specific proposal of the conditional use.)**

The main entrance to Robert's Westside will be through the front door on Madison Street. This entrance is already set back at the end of a long, covered foyer, which does not protrude beyond other existing building entrances. In addition, the plan is to create a host stand for will-call and ticket purchases inside the venue itself, so customers waiting to get into performances will not only be off the sidewalk while they are waiting but they will also be in an enclosed space that will reduce any street noise. All performances will end by 11:00pm, which will allow patrons to exit the venue in a tiered fashion, and not all at once. The rear entrance to the premises is already adequate to provide wheelchair accessibility for any differently-abled guests.

**6. How is the proposed conditional use not contrary to the objectives of the current comprehensive plan for the Village of Forest Park? (Explain how the conditional use is harmonious and compatible with the goals and objectives of the Village's comprehensive planning documents.)**

The arts are clearly important to the Village, and Robert's Westside will bring a level of musical performances only seen within the City of Chicago. Donnie is looking to bring his combined experience of organizing at FitzGerald's and in Chicago to create a space that is inviting and representative of the entire community. Live music has been proven to be good for one's mind, body and soul – reducing anxiety and blood pressure, while improving mood, mental alertness, and memory. It is at the core of creating a community through shared in-person experiences and building memories that will last a lifetime, to be passed onto future generations.

**7. How does the proposed conditional use conform to the applicable regulations of the district in which it is located, except as such regulations may, in each instance, be modified pursuant to the recommendations of the ZBA? (Show how the proposed conditional use will comply with as many sections of the Zoning Regulations as possible. The proposed site plan may be a part of this response.)**

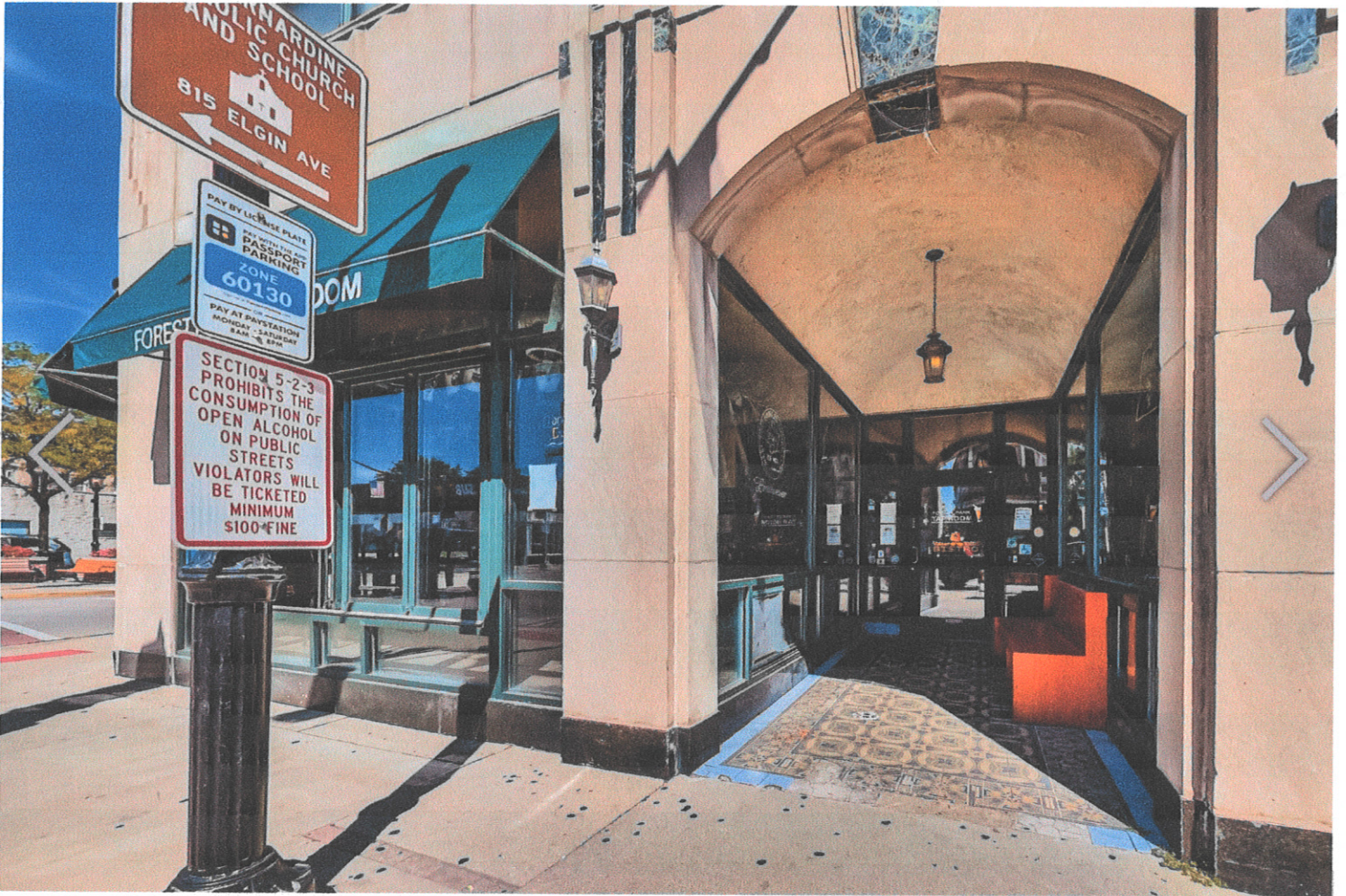
Robert's Westside's design and operation inside an existing Building is easily compatible with all the criteria outlined in Section 9-1-2 of the Forest Park Zoning Provisions. The Village's definition of "Business" in Section 9-1-5 is, "the engaging in the . . . sale . . . of goods, wares, merchandise or services, the maintenance or operation of . . . amusement enterprises for profit," which would appropriately encompasses the existence of a for-profit, live music venue, even without the Village's recently added definition of "Performance Venue" to be: "Any establishment that, as its primary use, offers live performance to the public. The performance may be for a fee or at no cost to the public". Of course, Section 9-4C-2, now lists "Performance Venue" as an allowable Conditional Use in the Downtown Business District. The main allowance that could deviate slightly from current plans for the DBD stretch of Madison Street is that alcohol will be served during the musical performances, but no food beyond small pre-packaged snacks.



- PHOTO NO. 1 -



- PHOTO NO. 2



Building Photo

- PHOTO NO. 3 -





PHOTO NO. 4