

**PLAN COMMISSION  
VILLAGE OF DEERFIELD  
Minutes**

The Plan Commission of the Village of Deerfield called to order a meeting at 7:30 P.M. on January 8, 2026, at Deerfield Village Hall.

Present were:           Al Bromberg, Chair  
                              Lisa Crist  
                              Bill Keefe  
                              Sara Lubezny  
                              David Rauen  
                              Blake Schulman  
                              Ken Stolman

Absent:                   None

Also present:           Jeff Ryckaert, Principal Planner  
                              Dan Nakahara, Planner II  
                              Benjamin Schuster, Village Attorney

Chairperson Bromberg swore in all who plan to testify before the Commission.

**Public Comment on a Non-Agenda Item**

There were no comments from the public on a non-agenda item.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

- 1) Public Hearing on the Request for a Text Amendment to Allow a Child Care Center as a Special Use in the C-1 Village center District and Approval of a N. Family Club Child Care Center as a Special Use to be Located at 833 Deerfield Road in the Deerfield Square Shopping Center

Chairperson Bromberg asked for proof of publication and certified mailing. Mr. Ryckaert reported that notice was published in the Deerfield Review on December 18, 2025, and certified mailing receipts were provided by the petitioner.

Chris Siavelis, with Kirby Limited Partnership, presented on the request. Meaghan O'Connor, Development Manager with EIG14T Commercial Real Estate on behalf of N. Family Club, as well as Luay Aboona, Traffic Engineer with KLOA, Inc., were present to answer questions on the proposal. N. Family Club, a U.K.-based child day care operator, seeks to occupy the 13,153

square foot building located at 833 Deerfield Road. The request includes a Special Use permit as well as a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Siavelis presented a slide show depicting the interior design of the business. He noted N. Family Club plans to offer quality finishes in their buildout to create a safe and inviting environment for customers. They plan to include a lounge for parents to boost involvement. N. Family Club will offer children breakfast, lunch, and dinner as well as snacks throughout the day. Proposed operating hours are Monday through Friday, from 6:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Total child capacity will be 153 children and peak operating hours are expected to be from 6:30 to 8:30 A.M. and from 4:30 to 6:00 P.M. The age range for children will be from six weeks old to pre-kindergarten. Mr. Siavelis noted N. family Club requires children to be accompanied into and out of the building for safety reasons. Mr. Siavelis presented a site plan and pointed out where the business would be located in the Deerfield Square Shopping Center in addition to some minor site plan changes. He noted the trash enclosure will be relocated to the south end of the service drive on the west side of the building. The service drive will be replaced with a 1,200 square foot at-grade play area. In addition, there will be an approximately 5,300 square foot play area located on the roof of the building. Both play areas will be surrounded by fencing. The rooftop play area will feature an 8-foot solid decorative fence and the at-grade play area will feature a 6-foot solid decorative fence, with both fence types being identical. Mr. Siavelis stated that, per the Commission's request at the pre-filing conference, a crosswalk was added from the parking field to the main entrance.

Mr. Siavelis noted the Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Protection District has reviewed the preliminary plans and has approved them pending ADA accessibility for the at-grade play area and compliance with state standards for child care facilities. Mr. Siavelis presented the floor plan for the business which will feature 10 play rooms, with a maximum capacity pursuant to IL State code. Also included in the floor plan is a kitchen, lounge, break room, director's office, restrooms and small storage areas. He noted the rooftop play area will be accessible via an interior stairwell and the existing elevator. To accommodate access to the elevator, a doorway from inside the facility to the elevator will be added. Mr. Siavelis presented a slide depicting the proposed rooftop area on the north half of the building with the south half of the roof being used for existing mechanicals. There will be some minor building elevation changes, with the main change being the installation of an 8-foot fence. The color of the fence will blend into the neutral colors of the building. Other changes include storefront openings along the western elevation to increase natural sunlight in the playrooms. Mr. Siavelis noted the new storefront systems will match the existing glazing and facades. Proposed signage changes include a wall sign on the south elevation. The north elevation will feature a single blade sign utilizing the existing framing from the previous tenant and the south elevation will feature a wall sign which will not require a variance. Awnings will be added to soften the facades.

The petitioners engaged KLOA, Inc., to conduct and prepare a parking and traffic study. The report concluded that the proposed use will require less parking and generate less traffic than the high turn-over restaurant uses. Mr. Siavelis stated the number of parking spaces exceeds

the Village Code parking requirements as well as industry standards. Mr. Siavelis presented a summary of the changes to the plan that have taken place since the pre-filing conference meeting.

N. Family Club completed a market demand analysis in early 2025, representing the most accurate information at the time. Chairperson Bromberg asked about the increase in the number of children (130 to 153) from the pre-filing conference. Mr. Siavelis stated it was a typo on his part. He discussed the level of service and amenities offered by the petitioner. He believes it is in the best interest of area residents to offer this service. He discussed the impact on pricing for child care services stating that more options lead to lower pricing, better serving the public interest. Mr. Siavelis reviewed the special use criteria and believes it is compatible with the existing development. He noted the lot size is sufficient and the parking and facilities are more than adequate for the proposed use. Mr. Siavelis does not believe the proposed business will be injurious to neighboring properties or the C-1 Village Center zoning district. He stated this is an ideal use due to the location and challenging leasing environment. Mr. Siavelis noted the destination-type use is ideal and the business fills a vacant building, providing a property tax benefit.

Commissioner Lubezny asked about the three child care centers included in the market analysis. She asked why other existing child care centers were not considered and why the radius for the analysis was limited to three miles. Ms. O'Connor discussed the process of conducting the market analysis and noted the comparisons were made between N. Family Club and similarly sized child care businesses. She stated the comparison did not include faith-based or home-based child care businesses. Commissioner Lubezny asked why only one Montessori school was included, but not others within the radius. Ms. O'Connor stated she was not part of the group that conducted the market analysis, but believes there may have been a threshold count that caused those schools to have been excluded, possibly based on student count. Commissioner Lubezny asked about the traffic count study and for specificity regarding the peak hours, noting the hours mentioned in the presentation were different than those included in the materials. Mr. Aboona noted the peak hour refers to the peak hour of traffic, not the peak hours of the business operation. He specified the peak hour referenced in the traffic study relates to the peak hour of the street system. He noted the morning peak hour of the street traffic for this location is from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. and the peak hour of the street traffic for the afternoon is 4:45 P.M. to 5:45 P.M. The conditions for the study are designed by overlaying the peak hours of the street traffic with the peak hour of trip generation for the proposed child care use. Commissioner Lubezny also asked about the traffic analysis regarding a restaurant use. Mr. Aboona noted that analysis used the same methodology to examine if a restaurant would generate more traffic. He stated the child care use has more concentrated peak hours with limited traffic outside of the peak times and no weekend traffic being generated. Commissioner Lubezny asked if the restaurant data came from a hypothetical restaurant use or one of the previous restaurants that occupied the site. Mr. Aboona stated the data was based on a hypothetical restaurant use which would include afternoon/evening, weekend and

delivery traffic. He noted a child care use typically has a rush in the morning and a rush in the late afternoon with peak times frequently more spread out than a school with a set start time.

Commissioner Schulman asked about the comparison between the child care and high-turnover restaurant uses. He asked if the prior restaurants that occupied the space would be considered high turnover restaurants. Mr. Aboona noted it is a hypothetical comparison and it is impossible to know the exact traffic generation between them. Other restaurant uses would be fine dining or fast food/quick casual. He noted the restaurant use was included as a reference point. He pointed out that a restaurant operated there previously, with adequate traffic. Commissioner Schulman asked if all the employees will be present at the time of opening. Ms. O'Connor noted the full staff will not be present at opening. She stated the full staff will be present from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. She does not expect the entire staff to be there at 6:30 A.M. for the business opening. Commissioner Schulman asked about the size of this facility compared to other child care facilities. Ms. O'Connor noted it is on the larger end of the spectrum, but there are others with larger student counts. Commissioner Schulman asked how the proposed number of 153 children compares to the other child care businesses included in the market study, specifically if that number is larger than the others. Ms. O'Connor stated she does not have that information. Commissioner Schulman asked if that information is made public. Ms. O'Connor stated that information may be available by filing a FOIA request with the state. Commissioner Schulman asked if there is any concern on the effect of vibrations from the train next door on children that may be on the rooftop play area or napping inside. Ms. O'Connor stated there has not been any discussion of adding soundproofing. Mr. Siavelis noted based on studies for a previously-approved residential use, the freight trains provide more vibration than passenger trains. He stated the freight trains are less frequent than the passenger trains. Mr. Siavelis noted in his time in the building he did not notice any significant vibration from the train. He also noted METRA has done some improvement to the tracks due to aging, and that information was included when the previously-approved residential use was being proposed.

Commissioner Keefe asked if sound levels of the trains have been measured in the proposed play areas. Mr. Siavelis stated he did not have that data. Commissioner Schulman asked about concerns regarding exhaust fumes from the trains. Mr. Siavelis stated that issue has not been raised before and he had no information to offer on the issue. Commissioner Rauen asked if the child care would be utilizing Jewett Park, possibly for field trips. Ms. O'Connor stated she does not anticipate using that particular park, as there are play areas on site. She noted N. Family Club does occasionally offer field trips for children to enhance their education, but there is no intent to use Jewett Park for that purpose. Commissioner Rauen asked, when considering the rooftop play area, if there are any safety concerns being as the play area is located above and along Deerfield Road. Ms. O'Connor noted the licensing department (State of IL) would intervene if there was a safety issue. She noted the requirement that fencing is solid and non-climbable are characteristics designed to avoid dangerous conditions. Commissioner Rauen asked if ball play will be allowed and how they will address the concerns about balls going over the fence onto Deerfield Road, potentially causing a traffic concern. Ms. O'Connor stated the

play areas are always supervised and a ball being thrown over the 8-foot fence is unlikely. She noted it will be the child care operator's purview to allow ball play in that area.

Commissioner Stolman expressed concerns about the number of parking spots being adequate for the number of children that could be dropped off on a given day combined with the need for parking for employees. Mr. Siavelis noted the staggered drop off and pickup of children over a roughly two-hour period should alleviate any traffic or parking concerns. Mr. Aboona noted drop offs and pickups will likely occur over a two-hour period and are estimated to last 3-5 minutes. He noted the turnover is quite high and studies conducted at other child care facilities suggest the number of spaces should be more than adequate. Chairperson Bromberg asked if all the staff members will also be parking in that lot. Mr. Siavelis stated it is unlikely all the employees drive and use the parking lot, and stated if it becomes an issue, they can be relocated to other employee parking lots in the shopping center. Commissioner Stolman asked about objects being thrown or falling from the rooftop play area and stated he does not believe the 8-foot fence will be adequate. Mr. Siavelis stated the fence height conforms with State regulations and stressed that the children in that play area will be continuously supervised. Ms. O'Connor noted the building is surrounded by sidewalks on the ground level and given the height, it would be unlikely for a child to be able to throw an object over the 8-foot fence and have it reach the roadway. She stated the petitioner is more than willing to address any safety issues that arise. Commissioner Stolman stated his concerns with groups of children crossing Deerfield Road to access Jewett Park. Ms. O'Connor noted that due to it being a high-traffic road, child care operators would view that as an insurance issue. She stated there will be no intent to take the children to an off-site playground. Chairperson Bromberg asked if parents will be allowed to drop off their children and leave their car parked in the lot before getting on the train. Mr. Siavelis stated no commuter parking is allowed in the lot. Commissioner Schulman asked if parents could park there and go to Whole Foods to shop. Mr. Siavelis stated yes, parking in the child care parking lot would be allowed as long as they are remaining in the shopping center.

### **Public Comment**

Jane Faynshteyn, co-owner of the Goddard School, has been with the school since it opened in 2019. She stated the Goddard School has a basketball court and balls frequently go over the fence. She is a parent, educator and community member who cares deeply about parents, teachers and the long-term health of the Village. She stated she is looking at this proposal through a lens of child development, staffing realities and quality of care. She does not oppose new businesses, but questions whether Deerfield needs additional large child care centers. She noted N. Family Club's proposal would require 40-45 teachers. She believes multiple large child care centers located next to each other creates instability. She stated that unlike retail or other businesses, early childhood education depends on stable staffing, consistent relationships and long-term trust between families, teachers and schools. Ms. Faynshteyn believes clusters of child care centers create higher teacher turnover, less continuity for children and lower overall quality creating a threat to the preschool environment. She noted the petitioner's market analysis stated that the Guidepost Montessori School is closing or may have already closed. Ms.

Faynshteyn stated she spoke with Sonia Lakhani, Head of School at Guidepost, earlier that day and they are open and operating with no plans to close the business. Ms. Faynshteyn noted the Primrose School in Deerfield and the Gardner School in Bannockburn are slated to open soon and will add nearly 450 seats requiring 130 educators. She believes the child care market is oversaturated.

Boris Kholyavsky, co-owner of the Goddard School, encouraged the Commission to deny approval of zoning for additional preschools for both N. Family Club and Primrose. He believes the Deerfield child care market is significantly over supplied and adding more supply will harm Deerfield families. Mr. Kholyavsky feels the core issue is Deerfield currently has more licensed child care seats than children. He pointed out that 2023 census data shows 1,249 children under the age of five years old reside in the 60015 ZIP code. Mr. Kholyavsky believes when the capacity exceeds the total number of preschool-aged children in the community, it will create an imbalance which is only going to get worse. He stated that approving two additional preschools will push Deerfield into a permanent oversupply position. Mr. Kholyavsky feels this is a community stability issue. When child care markets become oversaturated, longstanding community schools lose enrollment, teacher turnover increases and program quality declines. The result is that families lose stable, high-quality programs. Mr. Kholyavsky noted that he submitted supporting emails echoing his public comment. Chairperson Bromberg confirmed that the Commission received his email submission.

Doug Kambich is a lifelong resident who has also raised his children in Deerfield. He does not believe more child care providers are needed. Mr. Kambich feels a child care center is not a good use of the property and will not serve the community's interests. He expressed concerns regarding traffic and believes it will cause major congestion problems. Mr. Kambich believes there is a safety issue with the roof top play area, noting that it would be problematic to have children on the roof if there was a fire. He also believes it is not the Village's responsibility to fill the space with a business that does not help the community.

Lisa Kambich is the Director of the Deerfield Montessori School a non-profit organization that has been serving families in Deerfield for over 60 years. She believes her unique vantage point has allowed her to see the growth and changes in the community. Ms. Kambich noted she has no issue with the applicant or developers. She pointed out there are nine child care centers within the Village limits with different philosophies offering a wide variety of choices. She noted that figure does not include home-based child care options or the additional 11 providers within a three-mile radius. She noted there is publicly available data that can be used to examine the need for child care centers in Deerfield. Ms. Kambich noted the oversupply of space for children, pointing out there are 1,027 spaces for 824 children. Current providers have fully-equipped classrooms ready to accept children. While there are some small waitlists at child care centers, the students could be accommodated by existing providers. Ms. Kambich stated the larger issue is the national shortage of early childhood educators. She stated, in her work as Director, that she is recruiting and training educators all year long. She feels that

additional child care centers are not necessary and approving the petitioner's request will result in fewer high-quality options and more child care center closures.

Megan Tinsley, owner and operator of Montessori Kids Universe in Bannockburn, discussed availability and staffing of her business. She pointed out the Gardener School will be opening in Bannockburn further increasing the number of child care centers. Ms. Tinsley spoke about the economic factors and pricing changes from adding more child care centers and the negative effect on the business environment. She feels it is irresponsible to say adding more spaces will reduce costs. When child care centers compete for business workforce wages increase, resulting in reduced profits for providers. Ms. Tinsley feels that adding capacity simply shifts the problem and increases the likelihood of failure. She pointed out the licensed capacity of child care centers is publicly available information that can be obtained through the Department of Children and Family Services website without a FOIA request. She stressed her opposition to the proposal.

Judy Rundell, Director of Christian Beginnings, supports the previous public comments. She pointed out there are open spaces available right now, capacity exists. Ms. Rundell does not believe adding another school will reduce costs, rather, she feels it will only end up increasing competition for employees driving up salaries thereby hurting business owners. Those increased costs will end up being passed on to parents. She also expressed her safety concerns about objects coming off the roof.

John Vanrenterghem lives at 640 Robert York Avenue and is a member of his condo association. He compiled questions on behalf of the condo association for the buildings located at 610 and 640 Robert York Avenue. Mr. Vanrenterghem feels traffic will be intensified at the drop off/pickup point during the mornings and evenings. He asked if it will be necessary for staging of the employees and visitors to the business. He also asked if there will be any potential impacts to the safety of residents, specifically those who cross the intersection of Osterman and Robert York Avenues. He expressed his concern about increased traffic as more businesses have opened up at the shopping center. Mr. Vanrenterghem noted the outdoor play area is in close proximity to the train station. He pointed out studies have shown locomotive engines can produce noise levels as high as 95 decibels without the use of horns. He expressed concerns about the idling, braking and emissions from the trains on young children.

Krista Reed, Head of School at Montessori Universe, discussed staffing issues for child care centers. Since the pandemic, there has not been enough qualified early childhood educators to satisfy the market's need. Ms. Reed noted lead qualified teachers are leaving the field at a pace faster than their replacements are entering it. She believes a market study will show none of the area daycares are fully occupied, mainly due to staffing issues. Mr. Reed emphasized the difficult process of finding teachers and does not believe adding another child care center is in the best interest of the Village.

Yvette Olsen has been a Deerfield resident for more than 30 years. She has been an early childhood educator in town for more than 25 years. She feels children are the most important, and providing them with stability is also important. She is concerned that oversaturation in a field with businesses not at capacity will create more instability for families. Ms. Olsen believes that instability may result in families switching between child care providers looking for price advantages. She believes this is a poor choice for the Village.

Mr. Siavelis stated there are arguments both for and against the proposed use. Ms. O'Connor respects the neighboring child care offerings and pointed out that parents make their child care decisions based on a multitude of factors. She believes Deerfield would benefit from an additional option.

Chairperson Bromberg stated the Plan Commission has concluded public testimony and will deliberate on their recommendation on this matter. He stated this portion of the meeting is open to the public, but no new testimony will be taken unless requested by the Commission. He stated the Plan Commission is a recommending body, and a written recommendation will be forwarded to the Village Board of Trustees for final action on this matter.

Commissioner Keefe stated he is not in favor of the text amendment or granting a special use for a child care facility in the C-1 Village Center District. Commissioner Stolman stated he has concerns on the effect of this business on the neighborhood and has additional concerns related to parking and safety. He stated he does not believe it is the right fit for the C-1 Village Center District. Commissioner Crist asked Village Attorney Schuster for a reminder on the purpose and responsibility of the Commission. Village Attorney Schuster noted there are two issues to consider pertaining to the relief that is being sought. The first is the proposed Text Amendment to allow a child care facility in C-1 Village Center District. Mr. Schuster stated the question is not whether there should be more child care businesses in the Village, rather the focus should be on the zoning district. He noted nothing would preclude a child care from applying in another district where it is a permitted use. The second issue pertains to land use standards that are evaluated based on land use not about stifling or encouraging market competition. The Commission's responsibility when considering the text amendment is to determine if the proposed use is good for the community. Mr. Schuster noted there are implications regarding market need, not in terms of competition. There is also an element of being an appropriate use that should be part of the consideration.

Mr. Schuster pointed out the Special Use standards are set forth in Village Code and are limited to the property and issue, specifically the physical nature of the property, the effect on the neighborhood it is surrounded by, and the use itself (e.g., compatibility with existing development, lot of sufficient size, adequate parking and access, etc.). He noted competition and market need are not part of the Special Use standards. He stated the Commission should consider each component part of the request separately: whether the Text Amendment is desirable, and then evaluating the application to determine if it meets the standards of a Special Use. Commissioner Keefe asked if the Text Amendment would allow some other

petitioner to apply to open a child care elsewhere in the district. Mr. Schuster confirmed that the Text Amendment would allow other child care businesses to apply for a Special Use Permit in the C-1 Village Center District. Commissioner Schulman stated market competition is not in the purview of the Commission, but he does not believe the proposed use is appropriate for a Special Use at this location. Commissioner Lubezny asked if the Text Amendment is not approved, is there still a need to vote on the Special Use request. Mr. Schuster stated it is best to take two votes on the separate requests to provide a clear recommendation to the Village Board.

Chairperson Bromberg noted in his time on the Commission, various proposed uses have come through. He noted competing business owners frequently comment on the negative effect the proposal will have on their business. He pointed out it is not the Commission's role to protect existing business from marketplace competition. He noted that he expressed his lack of excitement about this proposal at the pre-filing conference. However, he would like to see a vacant building filled. Chairperson Bromberg noted he does not have concerns about the proximity to the train, as that does not have a negative effect on children playing at Jewett Park. He also pointed out the previously approved residential use for the property and the fact that other businesses that do not generate sales tax have been approved in the C-1 District. Chairperson Bromberg noted that, about one year ago, when the child care center (Bright Horizons) in Parkway North was going to shut down, the Commission received public comments about the need for more child care services. He is in support of the petition. Commissioner Crist added that every opinion is respected. She understands the competition issue and noted the Commission has to review an application based on its own value. Chairperson Bromberg noted he has been to a child care center with a smaller parking lot (picking up a grandchild) and does not feel that it will be a detriment. Commissioner Rauen asked Mr. Schuster if approving the Text Amendment would allow child care businesses everywhere in the C-1 District. Mr. Schuster stated that the Text Amendment would allow other petitioners to apply for a Special Use Permit for a child care elsewhere in the C-1 District. The application would then be reviewed to see if it met the Special Use standards. Mr. Ryckaert clarified that a Special Use is a site-specific inquiry that would be evaluated to determine if it is an appropriate for the proposed location. Mr. Schuster stated approval would mean finding the use to be allowed, appropriate and subject to site specific analysis. Chairperson Bromberg asked for a motion regarding the Text Amendment.

Commissioner Schulman made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Crist, to recommend approval of the request for a Text Amendment to allow a child care center in the C-1 Village Center District.

The motion failed on the following vote:

Ayes: Crist, Schulman, Bromberg (3)

Nays: Keefe, Lubezny, Rauen, Stolman (4)

Commissioner Keefe moved, seconded by Commissioner Lubezny, to recommend denial of the request for a Text Amendment to allow a child care center in the C-1 Village Center District.

Mr. Schuster noted the Commission has other options to consider when making a motion. For example, a commissioner could move to study the issue further and continue it to another meeting to hear additional public testimony or review additional information from the applicant. He stated taking a vote on another motion is the proper protocol.

The motion passed on the following vote:

Ayes: Keefe, Lubezny, Rauen, Stolman (4)

Nays: Crist, Schulman, Bromberg (3)

Mr. Schuster stated that a recommendation can be made on the request for a Special Use permit. The previous vote was to recommend denial of the Text Amendment request. The Commission can still make a recommendation on the request for a Special Use permit, as it is a separate request for relief.

Commissioner Schulman moved, seconded by Commissioner Stolman, to recommend denial of the request for a Special Use Permit for N. Family Club child care center to be located at 833 Deerfield Road in the Deerfield Square Shopping Center.

The motion passed on the following vote:

Ayes: Keefe, Lubezny, Rauen, Schulman, Stolman (5)

Nays: Crist, Bromberg (2)

Chairperson Bromberg stated that the recommendations from the Plan Commission will be forwarded to the Board of trustees. He noted the petitioner is still free to present to the Board of Trustees and seek the requested relief. Mr. Ryckaert stated this item will go before the Board of Trustees on Monday, February 2, 2026.

## **DOCUMENT APPROVAL**

1. December 11, 2025 Plan Commission Minutes

Chairperson Bromberg provided two corrections to the minutes. Commissioner Crist moved, seconded by Commissioner Stolman, to approve the minutes with the stated corrections. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

## **Items from the Commission**

There were no items from the Commission.

**Items from the Staff**

Mr. Ryckaert notified the Commission the next Plan Commission Meeting will be held on January 22, 2026.

**Designation of Representative for the next Board of Trustees Meeting**

Mr. Ryckaert reported that a representative from the Plan Commission will not be needed for the next Board of Trustees meeting.

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Stolman moved, seconded by Commissioner Rauen, to adjourn the meeting at 9:09 P.M. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted  
Daniel Van Dusen, Deputy Village Clerk