

**VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS  
ORDINANCE 2025-040**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX C, ZONING, OF THE VERNON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 3.2, DEFINITIONS, AND SECTION 13.3, SPECIAL USES IN THE B-1 DISTRICT, RELATED TO TASTING ROOMS**

**WHEREAS**, the Village of Vernon Hills is a municipal corporation existing under the laws of the State of Illinois, and

**WHEREAS**, Aged in Oak LLC filed a petition to amend the zoning code in order to establish definitions and regulations for Tasting Rooms; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing, duly noticed, on March 19, 2025, and has recommended approval of the proposed amendment as documented in Exhibit A, Findings of Fact and Recommendation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Committee of the Whole discussed the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission at its meeting on March 31, 2025, concurring with Planning and Zoning Commission and recommending approval of the requested amendment to the Zoning Code; and

**WHEREAS**, the President and Board of Trustees, having determined that the requested amendment is in the best interest of the Village of Vernon Hills and meets the relevant standards contained within the Zoning Code, hereby finds adopts this ordinance amending the Zoning Code of the Village of Vernon Hills pursuant to its duty to regulate the uses of land within the Village of Vernon Hills.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS, COUNTY OF LAKE AND STATE OF ILLINOIS:**

**SECTION I.** The above recitals are hereby incorporated into and made part of this Ordinance.

**SECTION II. Amendment to Section 3.2.** Appendix C, Zoning, of the Village of Vernon Hills Code of Ordinances, Article 3, Definitions, Section 3.2, Definitions, is hereby amended to insert the following definition:

...

***Tasting Room:*** A retail outlet with a customer facing area for persons to sample, consume for on-premises consumption, and purchase for off-premises consumption, liquor products. Such premises need not be attached to the manufacturing facility, nor owned by a manufacturer.

...

**SECTION III. Amendment to Section 13.2.** Appendix C, Zoning, of the Village of Vernon Hills Code of Ordinances, Article 13, B-1 General Business District, Section 13.3, Special Uses, to insert a reference to “Tasting Room” as 13.3.37, to read as follows:

...

**13.3.37 Tasting Room, subject to the following:**

1. Features such as on-site processing/production, entertainment, or liquor auctions shall be identified as part of the special use permit.
2. The establishment must obtain applicable liquor licenses from the Village and State to permit all activities conducted on the premises.
3. A tasting room offering servings above the State threshold for samples (1/4 oz spirits, 1 oz wine, 2 oz beer), may be accessory to a package liquor store, but must be identified as part of the package liquor store's liquor license.

...

**SECTION IV. SEVERABILITY.** In the event that any section, clause, provision, or part of this ordinance shall be found and determined to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, all valid parts that are severable from the invalid parts shall remain in full force and effect. If any part of this ordinance is found to be invalid in any one or more of its several applications, all valid applications that are severable from the invalid applications shall remain in effect.

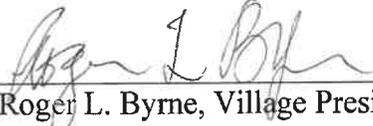
**SECTION V. REPEAL AND SAVINGS CLAUSE.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed; provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall affect any rights, actions or causes of action which shall have accrued to the Village of Vernon Hills prior to the effective date of this ordinance.

**SECTION VI. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

**SECTION VII. ORDINANCE NUMBER.** This ordinance shall be known as Ordinance Number 2025-040.

Adopted by roll call vote as follows:

AYES: 5 – Forster, Schenk, Oppenheim, Byrne, Koch  
NAYS: 0 – None  
ABSENT AND NOT VOTING: 2 – Marquardt, Takaoka

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Roger L. Byrne, Village President

PASSED: 04/15/2025  
APPROVED: 04/15/2025  
ATTEST: 04/15/2025

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Timony, Village Clerk



**EXHIBIT A**

**Planning and Zoning Commission**

Case 2025-04: Amendment to Appendix C, Zoning Code, Section 3.2, Definitions, and Section 13.3, Special Uses in the B-1 District, Related to Tasting Rooms

**Findings of Fact and Recommendation**

**Planning and Zoning Commission – Meeting Minutes**  
**March 19, 2025 - 7:30 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Attendance: Chairman Morris and Commissioners Fluno, Heidner, Lis, Nabat, and Smith. Commissioner Cotton had given prior notice of her absence.

Also attending: Andrew Jennings, Director of Community Development.

**II. General Public Comment**

No one from the public came forward to speak.

**III. Items for Review**

Chairman Morris called for the opening of the following public hearing:

1. Public Hearing for Case #2025-04. A petition filed by Aged In Oak, contract lessee, requesting the following actions to facilitate the operation of a bourbon tasting room offering live and online auctions, merchandise sales, and packaged liquor sales at 935 Lakeview Parkway: (1) Zoning Code Text Amendment, per section 21.7, establishing a definition of Tasting Room, and inserting Tasting Room as a Special Use in the B-1 General Business District; and (2) Special Use Permit with associated site plan and appearance approval per Section 13.3 and 18.3 of the Zoning Code.

**ALL PERSONS PROVIDING TESTIMONY WERE SWORN IN**

James Hall and Justin Pantle were present on behalf of the petition and sworn in.

Chairman Morris requested that the microphones be used and invited them to speak.

Mr. Hall introduced the project. He was one of the founding members of Aged in Oak. They proposed to locate their business within Suite 111. They would host bourbon tastings within the location and have a bar to serve specialty bourbons. The primary business would be an online auction with supplemental in-person auctions hosted every month. The location itself was reviewed with Director Jennings, and they understood there were concessions to be made to update the building. The business owner was willing to make all necessary adjustments, including doing a photometric survey of the parking lot to ensure that they were up to code. There were two entrances. One was located where there was a parking lot to the north.

Commissioner Heidner asked which entrance was the main one. Mr. Hall stated that the entrance by the parking lot on the south would not be the main entrance but would facilitate cars. Commissioner Heidner asked if the lot needed repaving. Mr. Hall stated that it was correct. If the north lot was the primary public entrance, that was more recently maintained. Director Jennings

said that if the Commission was in favor, staff would not have any issue with extending the timeframe for the lot. He noted there were dumpsters currently taking up space in the parking lot.

Commissioner Nabat requested clarification on the business. Mr. Hall stated that they would primarily have private events, mainly for auctions, but there would be public events. Commissioner Nabat asked if they needed a full kitchen. Mr. Hall stated that they would have catering and also provide snacks, such as popcorn, nuts, and chips.

Chairman Morris reported that there was an ordinance that required a full kitchen to help discourage businesses from only serving alcohol. Director Jennings noted each license class had its own description of how food service could be handled. Between the special use, the text amendment, and the liquor code amendment, they could describe the terms under which they operated.

Commissioner Heidner asked why they chose the location. Mr. Hall stated that since the primary function was the auction, they needed sufficient warehouse space to store the bottles. Commissioner Heidner asked if they were a distributor since they did not make the bourbon. Mr. Hall stated no and clarified that they did not make the bourbon.

Commissioner Nabat asked if individuals could auction their bourbon off. Mr. Hall stated that was correct. He noted that they also liked the location because of the security. The bottles of bourbon could vary between \$50 and \$50,000.

Commissioner Fluno commented on the floor plan. It seemed to show that the back entrance was the main entrance. Mr. Hall stated that they were proposing to change it. The floor plan showed the current layout of the space. When coming into the north entrance, people would not be directed into an office space as shown on the plan.

Commissioner Lis asked if it was a full bar. Mr. Hall confirmed it was. Commissioner Lis commented that it was close to another bar. Mr. Hall stated bourbon, a small amount of beer, and other items to cater to wives would be provided.

Commissioner Fluno asked for a tasting event to be explained. Mr. Hall stated that they took one to two hours. Guests sat at high-top tables to emphasize the experience of tasting bourbon. Each bourbon was graded on four aspects: color, taste, aroma, and finish. There were typically six glasses provided. The intent was to raise awareness of the sale of the bourbon. Private tastings would also be available, and the private individual's requests would be catered to. The goal was to promote something new and expand palates.

Commissioner Heidner asked if there would be signage on the building. Mr. Hall stated that they were currently receiving bids to put up signage on both doors.

Commissioner Lis asked if the back parking lot was for other businesses and if there were any other business doors. Mr. Hall stated that other businesses did have doors to that parking lot. It

was asked if it would be a pickup lane. Mr. Hall confirmed that there would be no pickup lane, and people would come in.

Chairman Morris asked if there were any businesses within the building where the primary purpose was to sell liquor. Director Jennings reported that there was one liquor auction business, but it closed. It was primarily an industrial type of use. The majority of liquor licenses had some type of service. There was a license that was the most comparable. The Liquor Barn allowed limited on-site service.

Chairman Morris noted that the tasting room was limited to liquor products and asked why. Director Jennings stated that the business use was specific to liquor. Tastings for other businesses, such as bakeries, were typical and would not require a special license.

Chairman Morris asked if the noted volumes were state volumes for samples versus tastings. Director Jennings reported that it was the state's requirements. Liquor Barn was above the sample limit.

Chairman Morris asked if there was an issue with the liquor license being so close to the park. Director Jennings stated that he believed it was a non-issue, but he would double-check.

Chairman Morris asked for clarification on the bar in the request. Mr. Hall stated that it would be an opportunity for customers to learn more about products and sit down and taste products before purchasing. They also hoped to have regular customers come by and enjoy a beverage. Chairman Morris asked why it was not just sampling and raised concerns that they were getting closer to the type of standalone bar usage. Mr. Hall explained that the bar was not the primary function of the business. The auction was the main purpose.

Commissioner Nabat asked if the business would be promoted to come for dinner. Mr. Hall stated that it was not the intended use.

Chairman Morris asked if there was an age limitation for entry. Mr. Hall stated that the minimum age was 21. Children would not be allowed, and people would be carded at the entrance.

Chairman Morris asked about security. Mr. Hall stated that the back door would be the access for people to come in. The door would be equipped with a key card or punch card.

Chairman Morris noted that there were two requests. The first was a text amendment to define a tasting room and make it a special use, and the second was a granting of a special use.

## **THE HEARING WAS OPENED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one from the public spoke. Chairman Morris closed the public comment at 7:52PM.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Chairman Morris stated that notice had been provided as described in the Staff report. Director Jennings confirmed that no written comments had been received.

## **DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATION**

Director Jennings reviewed the conditions for the special use request:

1. That the special use be subject to the approval of the zoning code text amendment.
2. A garbage corral was required within the southeast parking area prior to occupancy.
3. The southeast parking lot shall be repaired, seal-coated, and restriped in accordance with the Illinois Accessibility Code prior to occupancy.
4. Photometric study must be done to confirm that the southeast parking lot lighting was adequate, with additional wall-mounted lights to be installed as needed.
5. The floor plan may be adjusted, including but not limited to relabeling the north entrance as the primary public entrance and removal of the overhead door.

Director Jennings noted that the north lot was the primary lot, and if the Commission wanted to adjust the condition to repair the south lot within a year, they could request that.

Chairman Morris asked if there was a price associated with the tasting. Mr. Hall confirmed that there was. Chairman Morris asked if there would be any free alcohol over the sample limits. Mr. Hall stated that there would be none.

Commissioner Smith commented on the very limited lighting. Director Jennings stated that the pole was very tall, but the photometric study could explain how well the lot was lit. Mr. Hall stated that they also had an agreement with the owner to ensure that conditions were met.

Chairman Morris asked who the neighbor to the west was. Mr. Hall stated that he was unsure. The neighbor to the north was asked about. Mr. Hall stated that he believed it was an accounting firm. Director Jennings reported that there was a business that rented salon space.

Director Jennings noted that the signage was considered exempt from sign permitting as long as they were only doing window graphics. Mr. Hall stated that they were also getting a proposal for a larger sign, which would be presented. Director Jennings explained that they would be somewhat limited in their signage due to the frontage.

Chairman Morris asked if there was a monument sign. Director Jennings reported that there was a directory-style sign for each group of buildings.

Chairman Morris asked how customers would find out that the business existed. Mr. Hall stated it would be word of mouth. He was part of bourbon groups, and word spread quickly. They would also do some marketing. They were developing a website as well.

Commissioner Hediner asked if the Village collected sales tax on auction items. Director Jennings confirmed that they did.

Chairman Morris stated there is a standing motion by the Chair to approve and read the draft motion for approval of a text amendment in the staff report. He noted the standards for rezoning and text amendment were included in the packet.

Commissioner Nabat seconded the motion.

There being no additional discussion, the Commission voted on the motion, as follows:

**Make Findings of Fact and Recommend Approval of a Zoning Code Text Amendment**, in accordance with Section 21.7 (Amendments) of the Zoning Code, as described in the application by Aged in Oak LLC, dated February 11, 2025, to amend the zoning code as follows:

1. Insert definition of Catering Service in Section 3.2, Definitions, to read as follows:

*Tasting Room.* A retail outlet with a customer facing area for persons to sample, consume for on- premise consumption, and purchase for off-premise consumption, liquor products. Such premises need not be attached to the manufacturing facility, nor owned by a manufacturer.

2. Insert “Tasting Room” Section 13.3, Special Uses in the B-1 District, as subsection 13.3.37:

13.3.37 Tasting room, subject to the following:

1. Features such as on-site processing/production, entertainment, or liquor auctions shall be identified as part of the special use permit.
2. The establishment must obtain applicable liquor licenses from the Village and State to permit all activities conducted on the premises.
3. A tasting room accessory to a package liquor store, offering servings above the State threshold for samples (1/4 oz spirits, 1 oz wine, 2 oz beer), must be identified as part of the package liquor store.

AYES: Fluno, Heidner, Lis, Nabat, Smith, Morris

NAYS:

ABSENT: Cotton

Motion approved (6-0, 1 absent).

Chairman Morris stated there is a standing motion by the Chair to approve and read the draft motion for approval of a special use in the staff report.

Commissioner Lis asked for the parking lot to be repaired within six months.

The construction of the trash corral was asked about. Director Jennings reported that it had to be a certain height and made of durable materials, and it was recommended that gates be on separate supports. The standard was six feet, and they could go above that subject to staff review. The location of it would be worked on with the business.

Commissioner Heidner seconded the motion.

There being no additional discussion, the Commission voted on the motion, as follows:

**Make Findings of Fact and Recommend Approval of a Special Use for a Tasting Room**, for the property located at 935 Lakeview Parkway Suite 111 as required by Section 13.3 (Special Uses in the B-1 District), Article 18 (Special Use Standards), and Section 21.6 (Special Use Procedures) as described in the application by Aged in Oak LLC, dated February 11, 2025, and in substantial conformance with the following plans and exhibits:

- Project Narrative / Introduction Letter
- Floor Plan, Aged in Oak

And with the following conditions of approval:

1. The special use is subject to the approval of the associated Zoning Code Text Amendment;
2. A garbage corral constructed to standards listed in Section 13.7 is required within the southeast parking area prior to occupancy;
3. The southeast parking lot shall be repaired, seal coated and restriped in accordance with the Illinois Accessibility Code within six (6) months of occupancy;
4. A photometric study is required to confirm whether the parking lot lighting is adequate, with additional lighting to be installed if needed; and
5. The floor plan shall be adjusted to allow the north entrance to function as the primary customer entrance, and to remove the overhead door.

AYES: Fluno, Heidner, Lis, Nabat, Smith, Morris

NAYS:

ABSENT: Cotton

Motion approved (6-0, 1 absent).

Director Jennings reported that the item would go to the Committee of the Whole on March 31 for discussion and then advised to put together an ordinance if in agreement.

**THE PUBLIC HEARING WAS CLOSED AT 8:03 PM.**

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Chairman Morris called for the opening of the following public hearing:

VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-040

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX C, ZONING, OF THE VERNON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 3.2, DEFINITIONS, AND SECTION 13.3, SPECIAL USES IN THE B-1 DISTRICT, RELATED TO TASTING ROOMS

THE 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL 2025

Published in pamphlet form by the Authority of the President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Vernon Hills, Lake County, Illinois, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2025

STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 )  
COUNTY OF LAKE )

CERTIFICATE

I, KEVIN TIMONY, CERTIFY THAT I AM THE DULY APPOINTED AND ACTING VILLAGE CLERK OF THE VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS, LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS. I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT ON APRIL 15, 2025, THE CORPORATE AUTHORITIES OF SUCH MUNICIPALITY PASSED AND APPROVED ORDINANCE NO. 2025-040 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX C, ZONING, OF THE VERNON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 3.2, DEFINITIONS, AND SECTION 13.3, SPECIAL USES IN THE B-1 DISTRICT, RELATED TO TASTING ROOMS.

THE PAMPHLET FOR ORDINANCE NO. 2025-040 INCLUDING THE ORDINANCE AND A COVER SHEET THEREOF, WAS PREPARED, AND A COPY DATED APRIL 15, 2025 AND CONTINUING FOR AT LEAST TEN DAYS THEREAFTER. COPIES OF SUCH ORDINANCE WERE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION UPON REQUEST IN THE OFFICE OF THE VILLAGE CLERK.

DATED IN VERNON HILLS, ILLINOIS, THIS 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL 2025.

  
Kevin Timony, Village Clerk



AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS )  
 )  
COUNTY OF LAKE )

I, KEVIN TIMONY, BEING FIRST DULY APPOINTED, DEPOSES AND SAYS ON OATH THAT AS VILLAGE CLERK OF THE VILLAGE OF VERNON HILLS, HE DID CAUSE THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATE FOR ORDINANCE NO. 2025-040 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING APPENDIX C, ZONING, OF THE VERNON HILLS CODE OF ORDINANCES, SECTION 3.2, DEFINITIONS, AND SECTION 13.3, SPECIAL USES IN THE B-1 DISTRICT, RELATED TO TASTING ROOMS TO BE POSTED IN THE VILLAGE HALL AS REQUIRED BY LAW FROM APRIL 15, 2025 TO APRIL 29, 2025.

Kevin Timony  
Kevin Timony, Village Clerk

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME  
THIS 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2025

Elizabeth Koehl  
Notary Public

