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Second counseling business looking to move across from Elgin middle school

By James Fuller



Plans came forward this week to place another counseling business in an office building across the street from Kimball Middle School that will provide counseling for depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Rick West | Staff Photographer*

Elgin City Council members will be asked to double down on adding new mental health counselors and patients at an office building across the street from **Kimball Middle School**.

The new plan presented to the city's planning and zoning commission would place a second counseling business into the vacant first floor of a building at 452. S. McLean Boulevard. The new business provides counseling to people experiencing depression, anxiety, marital or family issues, grief and post-traumatic stress disorder.

It would be open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week.

If approved, Phoenix Family Center LLC would move from its current location on the east side of the city and share the first floor with the Community Crisis Center, which provides

counseling services to people convicted of domestic abuse. Both businesses serve people who must get assessed or counseling because of a court order.

Tracy Groesser, who represented the center during its presentation to the commission, said the business opened in 2014. Most of the counselors have worked in the Elgin community for more than 20 years.

"We are well-acquainted with the community," she said. "We felt moving to this new location would help us serve the community better."

Groesser cited the nearby public transportation and parking as reasons the business likes the McLean location. Planning and zoning commissioners noted the business would complement the pending application from the Community Crisis Center and the service agency that already occupies the second floor.

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services uses the second floor to work with people who have disabilities.

Commissioners unanimously recommended approval for the plan. The city council must still vote before the project can move ahead.

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North Central College's Andrew Kamienski didn't mince words. 'We can play anywhere,' the senior receiver from South Elgin said.
By Paul Johnson for the Naperville Sun



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski (11) celebrates with DeAngelo Hardy (6) after scoring a touchdown against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute during an NCAA Division III quarterfinal game in Naperville on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021. (Mike Mantucca / Naperville Sun)

Senior receiver Andrew Kamienski was in a celebratory mood Saturday.

His North Central College football teammates also were jubilant after a 55-6 victory over Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the NCAA Division III quarterfinals.

The dream of repeating as national champions was still alive, with powerhouse Mount Union (13-0) assumed to be coming to Naperville for the semifinals.

Then, the NCAA spoke. The Cardinals (12-0) would not be hosting that game. Instead, a Saturday trip to Alliance, Ohio was announced.

The reaction from Kamienski, a **South Elgin graduate**, was priceless.

“What more do we have to do to prove we should have a home game in the semifinals?” he said. “Then calming down in the next 20 minutes, it’s not upsetting for us.

“We can play anywhere. I was more upset for the fans and everybody that was planning on coming to the game.”



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski catches a pass with Wisconsin-La Crosse's Elijah Alt defending during an NCAA Division III second-round playoff game in Naperville, on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. (Mike Mantucca / Naperville Sun)

Once the shock of the NCAA announcement wore off, Kamienski and NCC started to prepare for the third national semifinal game in program history.

It's the second time the Cardinals have played in the semifinals at Mount Union. In 2013, they dropped a 41-40 heartbreaker in the snow in Ohio.

"We'll go about our business as if we're playing at home," Kamienski said. "Now, we have even more of a chip on our shoulders.

"We want to prove to the NCAA to stop looking over us and give us the respect we deserve."

If it's anything like the last time the Cardinals visited Mount Union, fans will be in for a treat.

Kamienski, who on Wednesday was named Division III all-region for the fourth time, had the biggest game of his storied career in the second round of the 2019 playoffs, a 59-52 win for NCC on the way to winning the Stagg Bowl.

In that game, Kamienski caught 12 passes for 256 yards and four touchdowns.

"That game two years ago was, hands down, the most fun, most intense football game I've ever been a part of," Kamienski said. "Watching or playing."

NCC coach Jeff Thorne cautioned, however, about comparing this year's game to that epic matchup.

“It really doesn’t matter what we did two years ago,” he said. “Greatest game I’ve ever been a part of — these two guys (Kamienski and DeAngelo Hardy) were amazing.

“But this is a new team. It’s a new team we’re going to face. We can look back on that and gain some confidence because that’s the program we’re playing again, but it really doesn’t weigh into this game at all.”



North Central College's Andrew Kamienski (11) picks up yards after the catch against Wisconsin-La Crosse during an NCAA Division III second-round playoff game in Naperville on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021. (Mike Mantucca / Naperville Sun)

The main difference for NCC is under center. Broc Rutter graduated in 2019. Freshman quarterback Luke Lehnert is now at the controls.

“Just keeping him calm, that’s my biggest concern,” Kamienski said. “We’ll be fine. I’ll make sure he’s ready.

“That’s my brother over there. I watch film with him every day. I’m on the phone with him every day. It’s been really fun, and I can’t wait to see how he handles it.”

Several Cardinals, including Kamienski, put their lives on hold during the pandemic to make sure they could come back to try to repeat as champions.

They have one more step to go before getting a chance to accomplish that goal.

“If you aspire to be the best, you have to beat the best,” Thorne said. “It’s a great opportunity for our program and for these guys. It’s why they came back. We can’t wait.”

Kamienski also looks at the big picture of what a win would mean to the program.

“This game is a pivotal moment for North Central College football,” Kamienski said. “If we win this one, this will change the program forever. This solidifies everything we worked for. It proves that we’re not a one-time deal.”