

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER
Sept. 11, 2014
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Jeremy Burton (arrived at 7:45 p.m.) Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert, Greg Marsey

EXCUSED: Commissioner Steven Rouse

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Lance Malina, Attorney; Mr. Michael Glazier, Lake and Forest Development; Mr. Stephen Miller, Gensler; Bill McKenna, Acting Village Engineer

Roll Call

Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll was called.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes from July 31, 2014. Commissioner Gilbert seconded. Chair Mann noted one change on page two, first paragraph. The minutes were approved with the correction.

Other Business

Designs and Material Reviews: Lake and Forest Development (Lake Street and Forest Avenue)

Mr. Failor briefed commissioners on the information in the packet. He explained that the final approval would be made by staff, but he was bringing it to the Plan Commission in order to make an informed decision. Mr. Michael Glazier, from the Lake and Forest Development, explained they were asking to make a substitution on a portion of the façade in the tower area. He said they were asking to do so for a variety of reasons including the LEED Silver requirements and economic reasons. He explained they were asking to eliminate an aluminum cap element on the windows on that façade.

Mr. Stephen Miller, from Gensler, showed commissioners the material sample and went over the technical information on the material. Commissioner Gilbert confirmed that the changes would be to the entire glass part of the tower. Mr. Miller agreed. Commissioner Gilbert said it made sense to have one manufacturer for the entire glazed envelope system, but he asked if there were companies outside of the Chicagoland area that could do the original design. Mr. Miller said they had inquired with other manufacturers but they found the others were tapped out and that would impact the project timeline.

Chair Mann clarified that the developers were asking for the option to do either the submitted design or the aluminum cap. Mr. Miller agreed. Chair Mann said he was concerned with the way the building massing would be broken down as the shadow lines and the reflection of the metals would be a lot different than just all glass. Mr. Miller said the glass would remain the same but the main difference would be the shadow lines and the fenestration between floors would be seen. Mr. Miller said the slab-edged covers would remain the same.

Mr. Glazier said they'd like the system to perform from an energy standpoint to ensure the building attains LEED Silver and also from a resident's standpoint- the system has to be warm and dry.

Commissioner Gilbert said he understood the pressures to ensure the system would perform properly, but he also thinks the design intent of having the mullion system with protruding caps was critical to the overall design, and having those caps versus not having those caps would make a significant visual difference. He said personally, he would not want to see the change and if it had to be changed then that design intent should be made in another way, either through glass color or something else to be determined by their architects.

Chair Mann said he was happy about the developer's concern regarding the thermal system, but he also shared some of Commissioner Gilbert's concerns regarding mass differentiation. He said the architectural firm should be able to suggest a differentiation without added cost or delay to the project.

Mr. Failor said he would have a conversation with the developer and their architects to address some of the raised issues. A short discussion ensued regarding the developer moving forward with the possibility of testing the manufacturer's product that ensured the original design but would still allow for flexibility should the product not be viable for economic or manufacturing reasons. Commissioner Burton suggested allowing for the change should the developer provide documentation that the product was not viable. Commissioner Marsey agreed. Commissioner Gilbert agreed, and said the community should get the building that was approved from an aesthetic standpoint and if changes were allowed the corner would still be accentuated from the rest of the envelope in some other way. The remaining commissioners agreed.

Public Hearing(s)

PC 14-05: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment; Permeable Pavers; The Applicant (Village of Oak Park) seeks approval of an amendment to the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance to allow permeable pavers to be installed within required open space areas within various zoning districts.

Mr. Failor said the text amendment came about through a discussion with a local landscaping firm that wanted to install permeable pavers in zoning areas of the village that had open space requirements. He said permeable pavers were allowed per code but in certain zone districts there are open space requirements that are required to absorb moisture. He said commissioners would need to determine if permeable pavers should be allowed within those open requirements and also if the absorption rate should be equal to or better than what was required now, functioning the same as the ground does now. He said in conversations between staff and the landscape business owner the outcome was a range of what would be a good coverage allowance was between 10%-50%.

Mr. McKenna said permeable pavers were a good way to help relieve some of the burden on the combined sewer system. He said with an allowance of a large percentage of coverage, however, questions would come up with installation, what type of soil would be under the installation, would it be affected by the freeze/thaw cycle, among other issues. He said keeping the allowance percentage smaller would alleviate some of those concerns.

Commissioner Marsey asked about the soil prep under the installation. Mr. McKenna said you'd want a soil that could be impacted but not too compacted, like a sandy soil, but it depended on the intended function of the paver. He said a sandy soil would have a better absorption rate than a clay soil so pavers installed with sand would improve the absorption rate of an area. Chair Mann noted that staff suggested having applications approved by a registered landscape architect or equivalent registered professional. Commissioner Marsey suggested having a standard set based on the soil so that it would make it as easy as possible for applicants. Mr. Failor clarified the Village Code currently does not contain standards on soil absorption so having a landscape architect or equivalent professional sign off would ensure the installation was appropriate while still keeping the permit process easy for applicants. Commissioner Gilbert suggested if the area were kept to a small percentage, then perhaps having a landscape architect sign off on it would not be necessary at all since the impact was negligible.

Mr. Scott McAdam, from McAdam Landscape, said he has been installing permeable pavers since 2002. He said he has a permeable paver parking lot at his company location in Forest Park and has never had any standing water even with the large rain storms. He said he approached the Village with this issue because he has had to turn down business due to the open space requirements in some of the zoning areas. He said he worked with River Forest to get a standard application in place that was approved by that village's engineering firm. He said for the small lots in Oak Park, having only a 10% allowance for permeable pavers would only give a very small space to put in a patio, for example. He said if a proper base was installed then water was stored through the system and it was an amazing system for managing water runoff.

Commissioner Marsey suggested the approved application standards from River Forest could serve as the base for Oak Park's standards as well. Mr. McKenna said he believed that would be fine for the majority of applications, but for a very large area they would want to require a bit more before going forward. Commissioner Burton asked about the percentage allowed in River Forest, Mr. McAdam said there was no restriction but he believed a large patio would be questioned. Commissioner Burton asked about upkeep. Mr. McAdam said it was a great system and he didn't have any issues in his parking lot in 12 years. Commissioner Marsey asked what percentage Mr. McAdam would like to see allowed. Mr. McAdam said 10% would be very small for some of the smaller lots but 20-25% would be a better size for a patio.

Chair Mann asked about heat island effect with the paving for large areas. Mr. McKenna said potentially that could be an issue, depending on the color of the paving, as darker colors hold more heat.

Commissioner Benson said he was having a hard time determining what would be a reasonable percentage amount. Mr. Failor suggested considering what the intended use for the permeable pavers as a guide. Commissioner Burton said he thought 15-20% was reasonable and anything above that an applicant would need to come in for approval. Commissioner Gartland said he was comfortable with 20-25%. Commissioner Marsey asked for a typical size for a patio. Mr. McAdam said 15 feet by 20 feet at the most. He said he thought a 20% allowance would be adequate.

A short discussion ensued regarding whether to allow a percentage of the open space requirement or a set amount by right. Commissioner Gilbert suggested allowing a set amount of square footage as an allowance or a percentage of the open space requirement, whatever is larger. Commissioner Burton suggested finding an appropriate amount on the smallest lot size and then going forward.

Ms. Monica Sanders, a resident of Oak Park, asked if a maximum amount could be set. Commissioner Marsey responded that they were hoping to keep the numbers simple and with each lot size different in the Village that could be difficult.

Commissioners discussed percentages again and concluded a 20% allowance would be a good standard. Mr. Failor asked about certification of the drawings, if they should be signed off by registered landscape architects. Chair Mann agreed. Commissioners discussed how that process would be administered; Mr. Failor said it would be through the building department.

Commissioner Gilbert asked if they could limit the permeable paver allowance to side and rear yards. Commissioner Marsey said he wasn't in favor of that restriction as some walkways in the front could be permeable pavers and wouldn't allow for flexibility. Commissioner Benson said someone with a large front yard could have a patio in the front and still have more greenery than some of the smaller houses with short front yards.

Commissioner Benson moved to approve the text amendment with a 20% allowance for permeable pavers to be in the open space requirements for every zoning district. Commissioner Burton seconded. A roll call

vote was taken:

Benson- yes
Burton –yes
Gilbert – yes
Gartland – yes
Marsey – yes
Mann – yes

The motion passed 6-0.

Other Business

Mr. Failor said the Comprehensive Plan was accepted by the Village Board and an ordinance to officially adopt it would be coming forth shortly. He said the application for the Oak Park Oasis and the design for the Chicago and Maple development were expected for the October Plan Commission meeting on Oct. 2, 2014.

Adjournment

Commissioner Marsey moved to adjourn. Commissioner Gilbert seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary