

MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION  
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER  
October 2, 2014  
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Jeremy Burton, Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert, Greg Marsey, Steven Rouse

EXCUSED: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Plan Commission Attorney; John Schiess from JCSD, LLC; Phillip Jimenez from West Cook YMCA

**Roll Call**

Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. and roll was called.

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes from September 11, 2014. Commissioner Gilbert seconded. The minutes were approved with no changes.

**Public Hearing(s)**

**PC 14-04: Oak Park Oasis (317 Home Avenue and 1025 Randolph Street Rear); REMANDED.** This application was reviewed by the Village Board and remanded to the Plan Commission for further consideration. The Applicant seeks approval of a residential Planned Development for one single family residence, twenty-two townhome dwelling units and twenty-four additional private parking spaces located on 317 Home Avenue and the parking lot adjacently west across the public alley with allowances from the Zoning Ordinance. **REVISED SITE PLAN**

Chair Mann explained that the hearing was limited to the revisions of the site plan. Mr. Failor went over the application and explained the changes to the site plan, which included adding 22 parking spaces to be owned by the YMCA, "Y". He said the Y was also now a co-applicant to the process. He referenced the staff report and noted there were additional allowances due to the revisions, but the prior lot coverage allowance was eliminated as there was more green space. The four additional allowances were: parking location- the four parking areas were over 250 feet from Y property and the zoning code requires any accessory use must be within 250 feet from the primary site; parking in the front yard- the zoning code does not allow parking in the front yard and a portion of the parking spaces were within the front yard on the east side of the development; fencing and landscaping- the zoning code requires parking areas must be fenced and landscape if abutting homes; the applicant provided fences on the inner portion but not the outer as they need to access the spaces from the alley; the zoning code requires landscaping for lots of five or more spaces, the applicant has six spaces in each corner lot.

Commissioner Rouse asked if there was a practical reason for landscaping relief or was it only monetary. Mr. Failor said it was practical as there was no room for landscaping.

Mr. Failor noted the fire department had reviewed the revisions and indicated they had no issues with the revised site plan.

Commissioner Gilbert asked if the Y parking was for staff or for customers. Mr. Failor replied it was for staff and residents of the Y.

Mr. John Schiess, from JCSD, LLC, gave a brief presentation of the application. He said the green space was increased by removing the townhomes on the perimeter and redistributing them. He said the setbacks remain the same on the east and west but increased on the north and south by two feet. He said the walkway had been removed from the prior application and guests and visitors will walk along the alley. He said the light canopy and swags remained and the alley vacation remains the same.

He said the variance to park within 250 feet of the Y was more of a request to grandfather in the current function of the lot, as it was used now in the same fashion. He said the allowance for parking in the front was a technical rather than a contextual one as the zoning code measures the front yard from certain setback requirements. The fence allowance was technical as well, as the zoning code asks for fencing all the way around but it was not practical to surround the spaces. The same was true for landscaping.

Commissioner Rouse asked if the application was a downscale version of what was approved, how the budget could be the same. Mr. Schiess replied that the budget was within the level of error so it was essentially the same.

Mr. Schiess reviewed the compensating benefits and said they would remain the same as the prior application. He noted that the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation still supported the development. Commissioner Rouse asked about losing the larger units. Mr. Schiess said the east and west townhomes would remain larger at 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths.

Mr. Schiess said they believed the development has gotten better as it lessened the impact onto the neighborhood by increasing the parking spaces in the area.

Commissioner Gilbert noted the green area between the parking spaces and side walls of the units and asked why not have the walls off the end units be the buffer of the parking. Mr. Schiess said it appeared small but it was actually four feet wide and allowed for soft scape between the hard surfaces. Commissioner Gilbert said he was concerned that people will have to walk down the middle of the alley to get to units whereas before there was walkway. Mr. Schiess said the walking experience was essentially the same with or without a walkway.

Chair Mann noted the west side had a stamped concrete walkway and asked why not the same on the north and south sides. Mr. Schiess said that was because the west alley was going to be replaced entirely whereas the other alleys were on the village repaving timetable and should they add the stamped concrete now, it would be replaced when those alleys were repaved. Chair Mann asked if the Y parking spaces were asphalt, Mr. Schiess agreed and said the townhome aprons were concrete. Chair Mann asked what purpose the fence around the parking lot served. Mr. Schiess said it would shield headlights coming in as it was a cedar fence with board on board; also dog owners could use the green space as a dog run. Chair Mann suggested landscaping would be a softer and a prettier look. Mr. Schiess agreed, but said the maintenance could be arduous and difficult with snow removal so the fence was a compromise.

Commissioner Gartland asked who would maintain the parking spots. Mr. Schiess said the Y. Commissioner Gartland asked how snow would be removed. Mr. Schiess said they would move the snow out. Chair Mann noted in the previous application the applicants were required to plow the alleys, Mr. Schiess said that would remain the same.

Chair Mann opened public testimony. Attorney Karaca reminded speakers that the hearing was sent back to the plan commission in a specific way, and asked that testimony be limited to the revisions presented. He swore in those wishing to testify.

Mr. Matt Panfill asked if restricting testimony would be violating the open meetings act as it did not say so in the public notice. Attorney Karaca said as the notice said it was a remanded hearing that was adequate in terms of notice. Mr. Panfill said the project would not be feasible without the village selling off the right-of-way to a developer and that the village would not benefit in any way from the project.

Ms. Leslie Lauderdale said in the newly adopted comprehensive plan, Envision Oak Park, there were 20 areas identified as prime development areas and this spot was not one of them.

Mr. Walter Drexler, 320 Wisconsin Ave., said he rented parking from the Y and if there was an emergency the fire department would not go through the alley. He asked where the snow would go, and said service for his building in the alley would be affected. Commissioner Gilbert asked if anyone from the village's parking department had reached out regarding parking solutions. Mr. Drexler replied no.

Mr. Bill Steffen requested a copy of the application from the planning division. Mr. Failor agreed.

Chair Mann closed public testimony and opened deliberations. Commissioner Marsey asked staff if parking services was involved in finding parking spaces for displaced parkers. Mr. Failor said the parking department has held meetings on it. Commissioner Marsey said he'd like to make a recommendation that it was a requirement that the village be involved in finding parking solutions, so that parking services can be proactive. Mr. Failor said the Plan Commission can send that message to the Village Board that the issue is important, but it could not be a recommendation to the application.

Commissioner Gartland addressed the concern that fire trucks would not go through the alleys and noted that the fire department said they would go through the alleys. Commissioner Burton agreed that in the prior hearing the fire department addressed safety issues. Chair Mann also noted that the applicants would plow the alleys in winter.

Chair Mann asked about the arrangements with the Y as co-applicants. Mr. Schiess said the Y would construct and maintain the parking spaces. Mr. Philip Jimenez, from West Cook YMCA, agreed. Chair Mann asked if construction would be done simultaneously. Mr. Jimenez agreed. Chair Mann asked about the different materials between the parking spots and townhome aprons. Mr. Jim Lencioni, facilities director at the Y, said the parking spots would be made of concrete. Mr. Schiess said they would amend the site plan to reflect the materials change.

Chair Mann asked if the newly adopted comprehensive plan standards would apply to the application. Mr. Failor said the application was filed prior to the plan being adopted so the prior standards apply.

Chair Mann read through the standards. There was a short discussion with commissioners agreeing the revisions met each standard. Commissioner Gilbert said the changes improved the impact on the neighborhood as the increase in parking spots would reduce some of the parking burden; the development now had better setbacks and green space.

Commissioner Rouse noted his concern continued to be the timeliness of the developers getting into the ground and building in a timely manner but he was hopeful they would do so.

Chair Mann opened commissioner deliberations.

Commissioner Gilbert said he'd like to reiterate to the Village Board that solutions needed to be considered for the parking situation and the Village needed to be proactive in regards to this. Commissioner Gartland agreed and said it should be at the top of their recommendation to the Board. Chair Mann added a condition that the four corner lots should be constructed of concrete and not asphalt.

Commissioner Burton agreed. Chair Mann added that maintenance and snow removal should be provided by the Y or one of its contractors for the corner lots. A short discussion ensued regarding who would maintain the fence and how permeable it should be. Commissioners agreed that the townhome owners would act as watchdogs for the maintenance of the lots and any extra conditions would be unnecessary.

Commissioner Rouse moved to approve the application with the conditions that the parking lots be made of concrete and the maintenance and snow plowing be done by the YMCA. Commissioner Gartland seconded. Attorney Karaca explained that he had been asked to do a quick draft of the findings of fact to circulate to the chair and staff to go to the board agenda packet on Friday. Mr. Failor explained it was an attempt to get it to the board expeditiously as there were only a few meetings left before the end of the year. Some discussion ensued regarding whether to hold a special meeting to approve the findings of fact or allow staff and the chair to fine-tune the draft. Commissioners agreed a special meeting was unnecessary.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion:

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

The motion passed 7-0.

**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. **FINDINGS OF FACT**

Commissioner Rouse asked if there was a definition of permeable pavers in the statute and said he thought providing a definition made sense. Commissioner Benson said his interpretation of the definition was based on the pavers having an equal or greater absorption as the ground. Commissioner Gilbert agreed and referenced item 10 on page 3 of the findings of fact report. Mr. Failor said there will be a diagram created that the building department will use to show how the system should be installed. Chair Mann said it was also necessary to get a registered landscape architect to sign off on applications until those details became standard.

Chair Mann asked for comments on the findings of fact. As there were none, Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the findings of fact. Commissioner Gartland seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

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

The motion passed with Commissioner Rouse abstaining as he was not at the previous Plan Commission meeting when the findings were discussed.

#### **Other Business**

**Designs and Material Reviews - Maple Place (Chicago and Maple)**

Mr. Failor explained this was pulled from the agenda as it was not ready yet and should come back for the November Plan Commission meeting.

### **Rules of Procedure**

Attorney Karaca explained the State Attorney General has determined that requiring people who would like to testify to give their address violated the open meetings act. Mr. Karaca recommended changing the rules of procedure to say no one is required to give their address, but often in matters of zoning and planning commissioners find your location to be relevant to the conversation. A short discussion ensued regarding wording to those wishing to testify. Commissioner Burton suggested saying you are not required but you are free to give your address. Commissioner Gartland clarified that names were required. Attorney Karaca agreed.

Staff suggested voting on that change and coming back at a later date to update other issues within the rules of procedure.

Commissioner Burton moved to change the rules of procedure by telling those wishing to testify, "You are not required to, but you are free to give your address." Commissioner Marsey seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Failor said the comprehensive plan was finalized on September 15, 2014 and would be on the website next week and all commissioners would get a paper copy.

Mr. Failor told commissioners if they'd like to do a bike tour for Divvy bikes, they should notify the bike plan consultant to be included.

Commissioner Gartland asked for an update on the Lake and Forest window changes. Mr. Failor said he was awaiting the final design from the developers who were waiting on their manufacturer.

Commissioner Gilbert noted the Marion Street underpass lighting issues were still not fixed. Mr. Failor said public works continues to look into a solution.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Rouse moved to adjourn. Commissioner Marsey seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Angela Schell,  
Recording Secretary