

MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION  
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER  
February 5, 2015  
7:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Mark Benson, Garret Eakin, Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert (arrived at 7:32 pm) and Greg Marsey

EXCUSED: Commissioners Jeremy Burton and Steven Rouse

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Plan Commission Attorney; Bill McKenna, Village Engineer; Heather Schady and Ron Burke, Active Transportation Alliance

**Roll Call**

Chair Mann called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. and roll was called. A quorum was present.

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes as submitted from January 8, 2015. Commissioner Benson seconded. A voice vote was taken:

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

The motion was approved 6-0.

**Public Hearing(s)**

**PC 14-07: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment; Craft Brew Lounge;** The Applicant seeks approval of an amendment to the Village of Oak Park Zoning Ordinance to allow Craft Brew Lounges as a special use in the B1/B2 General Business District, B-3 General Business District, B-4 Downtown Business District, and the C Commercial District. FINDINGS OF FACT

Commissioner Benson moved to approve the Findings of Fact. Commissioner Marsey seconded. No comments or revisions were added. A roll call vote was taken:

Benson- yes  
Marsey- yes  
Gartland- yes  
Eakin- yes  
Gilbert- yes  
Mann- yes

The motion was approved 6-0.

**PC 14-10: Special Use Application- Craft Brew Lounge (1026 North Boulevard);** The Applicant seeks approval of a craft brew lounge on North Boulevard within the B-4 Downtown Business District subject to the text amendment approval. FINDINGS OF FACT

Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the Findings of Fact as submitted. Commissioner Benson seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Gilbert -yes  
Benson -yes  
Eakin -yes  
Gartland -yes  
Marsey- yes  
Mann- yes

The motion was approved 6-0.

### **Other Business**

#### **Presentation by Active Transportation Alliance on Draft Bicycle Plan Update:**

Ms. Heather Schady, a transportation planner from the Active Transportation Alliance, reviewed the draft plan via an overhead presentation. She said the plan was an update of the Village's 2008 Bicycle Plan that would also include a bike sharing program. There were two components to the study: bicycle boulevards (now called neighborhood greenways) and a bike share program. She said the goals were first to increase cycling; also to increase safety, develop an efficient bike network, reduce congestion, maximize transit service and improve health.

Ms. Schady reviewed the community outreach efforts to craft the plan, which included an online survey, tabling at Earth Fest, talking with village staff and outreach to citizen commissions, among other forms of outreach.

She said there was a lot of analysis that went into which streets were safe for cycling and thus designated as a neighborhood greenway. Two examples were community input and analyzing regional network.

She reviewed the various tools that could be used to establish neighborhood greenways such as standard methods like marking and signage, intersection tools, traffic calming tools, prioritizing bike travel in select areas of the village, and vehicle volume reduction like refuge islands with bike cut-throughs.

Commissioner Marsey asked if bikes would be in the same lanes as cars as opposed to side lanes and how to mitigate for cars that get impatient. Ms. Schady replied that an education campaign was necessary to educate drivers and also traffic calming mechanisms would slow drivers down. Commissioner Gartland asked how many roundabouts were anticipated. Ms. Schady explained roundabouts were midterm recommendation so for the first phase none were planned, but in the future roundabouts would be where two greenways intersect. Commissioner Gartland asked if speed limit reduction would be enforced. Ms. Schady said they needed to further clarify that with the Police Department. Commissioner Gartland asked about establishing neighborhood greenways and how it would impact vehicle traffic. Ms. Schady replied it should have minimal impact as the streets they picked have lower traffic volumes.

Chair Mann asked for examples of greenways in this region. Ms. Schady said in Chicago, there was Berteau Avenue from Lincoln to Clark and also a smaller installation on Wood Street. She explained Chicago was building out more greenways in the next few years.

Commissioner Eakin said the draft was very well done, very comprehensive and the fewer cars we have

the better. Chair Mann said he noticed that the draft guidance committee did not have representation from the schools and how were they considered in the plan. Ms. Schady replied they did look at school locations and most of the schools fall along the network. Chair Mann suggested it could be more refined, as it worried him that some were located a block or two away from a school and that could cause problems. Chair Mann also asked how the greenway system tied in with our neighbors. Ms. Schady replied that Chicago's network was really focused on arterial streets and as this plan does not, it was a challenge to tie in with Chicago's future plans as the streets are not yet established. They did tie in with Berwyn's plan. Chair Mann suggested adding something about connecting with Chicago's plan in the future. Commissioner Gilbert suggested adding signage to direct cyclists to the other networks. Commissioner Eakin agreed. Ms. Schady agreed, and said they could do the same for the Prairie Path as well.

Commissioner Marsey asked about chicanes and if they serve another purpose besides slowing down traffic. Ms. Schady said often they are used to beautify a neighborhood through plantings and are channelized for better drainage. Commissioner Marsey asked if they'd be located where parking was typically available. Mr. McKenna explained that currently the 1200 block of Woodbine has chicanes as a traffic slowing mechanism and the width was used to restrict driving lanes 9-10 feet, which was a little wider than the parking lanes on a residential street. Commissioner Marsey asked if they prevented cyclists from riding on the side of a road. Mr. McKenna agreed.

Commissioner Marsey said his main concern was conflict between vehicles and bikes, would it increase accidents and citations, and would there be legal ramifications for the Village. Ms. Schady said it was too soon to know crash or citation rates in Chicago but greenways have been very successful in other cities like Berkley and Seattle. Commissioner Marsey suggested reaching out to police and the legal department to see if there were concerns and possible legal ramifications.

Ms. Schady reviewed the bike share section of the plan – explaining that Oak Park received grant funding to establish Divvy stations and the plan presented the methodology used to establish the station locations. She said they analyzed variables like work and housing density, transit stations, tourism destinations, community input, etc. She said downtown Oak Park weighted higher in most of the variables. She said equity variables like income and race were also included and concentrations near the Blue Line were higher. The plan also gives options for future locations should the program expand.

She said additionally, there were a number of criteria that also needed to be included like not being on an arterial roadway, no accessibility barriers, not in front of a residence, not requiring the removal of trees, etc. The station locations chosen were: Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio; Oak Park River Forest High School; West Suburban Medical Center; Lake Street Theatre; Harlem Green Line and Metra stations; Oak Park Green Line station; Ridgeland Green Line station; Home and Madison; Fenwick High School; Village Hall; Oak Park Blue Line east side; Oak Park Blue Line west side; and Austin Blue Line.

Commissioner Gilbert asked what was the role of the Plan Commission in suggesting specific locations. Mr. Failor explained the draft would go to the Transportation Commission where the draft will be discussed further. Mr. McKenna said there were requirements within the grant that must be met and once general locations were determined, then the engineers would do the final siting. Ms. Schady added that the locations were moveable if a location should not work out. Commissioner Marsey asked if the grant was for the build out of the locations. Mr. McKenna replied it was for the physical installation of the stations. Commissioner Marsey asked if the stations would be the property of the state or Divvy. Mr. McKenna said Divvy would own them.

A short discussion ensued about the Village's commitments should the program not be successful. Mr. Ron Burke, Executive Director of Active Transportation Alliance, gave an overview of Divvy and the operating expenses anticipated.

Chair Mann asked about station locations on parkways versus on the street. Ms. Schady said they tried to keep stations off-street where possible but typically it was not possible because of street trees, utilities, etc. Commissioner Gilbert asked if not doing tree removal was an absolute or just a guide. Ms. Schady explained that was an Active Transportation Alliance guide. Mr. McKenna said they would look at tree removal, in consultation with the Village Forester. Mr. Burke said they've found in other cities initial pushback and concerns have been allayed and more people have asked for stations. He said it was not uncommon to have people ask for installations after the fact as it generates foot traffic for businesses. Ms. Schady noted they did reach out to the Oak Park business community and there was excitement for the locations.

Chair Mann said it was a big step forward for allowing people to use bikes instead of cars. Commissioner Marsey asked if the budget numbers would be available for the Transportation Commission on costs. Mr. McKenna said they would compile numbers for them. Chair Mann suggested looking into alternative sources for funding. Ms. Schady and Mr. McKenna agreed.

**Design Review Committee Discussion:**

Chair Mann explained that the Plan Commission wanted to establish a Design Review Committee to provide design feedback to applicants before submitting applications.

Mr. Failor noted that he provided a draft of some guidelines for this discussion- mainly, that the purpose of the committee would provide feedback to applicants on a voluntary basis, something an applicant could initiate on their own terms. The committee would be called only when something comes up, it would not be a regularly scheduled meeting. He said the committee would be composed of two members of the Plan Commission, one member of the Historic Preservation Commission, and one member from the Community Design Commission so that it would be a comprehensive group. He said certain professions like architects, landscape designers, or people with design backgrounds would provide the best feedback to the applicant.

A short discussion ensued regarding formal guidelines. Attorney Karaca said he was concerned with providing applicants guidelines that they would feel compelled to follow, but there would be no authority for the committee to enforce them.

Mr. Failor said the committee would only be advisory, there would be no voting or formal decisions decided. He suggested applicants should provide notes from the committee meeting to the Plan Commission to show the discussion.

Chair Mann said the overall goal was to let applicants know the Village wants to work with them and hopefully move people through the process expediently by getting input at the right time of the process. He said protecting the Village's legacy of design was also an important goal.

Mr. Failor went over the timing of applications and suggested staff could alert applicants to this advisory committee after the staff review meeting. Commissioner Benson asked if staff was already giving advisory information, would this be making applicants go through issues twice. Mr. Failor said staff does not get into details or specific advice, only more general directions. Commissioner Benson asked if there was an issue of it being a public hearing. Attorney Karaca said it would not be a meeting like a public hearing; it would be only advisory and completely voluntary. A short discussion ensued regarding note taking versus a verbal record. It was agreed that a verbal account of the committee discussion was sufficient for the Plan Commission public hearing record.

Commissioner Gilbert suggested a staff person should be present. Mr. Failor agreed. Commissioner Gartland asked if the public would be allowed to attend. Mr. Failor said no. Commissioner Marsey asked

when the committee meeting would take place in the process. Mr. Failor said somewhere between conceptual phase and application submittal. Commissioner Marsey asked if it would be linked to guidelines or just to the experience of individuals. Mr. Failor said it would be linked to the business districts and zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Eakin suggested it was important to keep the team very small because it would be more productive and less intimidating to applicants. Commissioner Gilbert asked if the chair of the Plan Commission should be on the committee even if he/she was not a design professional. Chair Mann said it could be a designee. Attorney Karaca clarified that it would be ad hoc for each application and said the language would be written to say clearly that the committee would guide applicants pre-final application and with no formal recommendation, and that the applicant had no right to a meeting or a meeting within a specified time frame.

Commissioner Gilbert suggested the applicant should be informed that the committee would be working through design issues and not traffic and density and other planning issues. Mr. Failor said staff would emphasize that the entire application will not be looked at.

Attorney Karaca reviewed suggestions discussed and said he would circulate a new description that would be brought back to the Plan Commission for final thoughts.

Commissioner Gilbert recommended in general having design professionals on the committee with the exception of the chair of the Plan Commission to help keep commissioners on track. Mr. Failor said they would also need to determine when to have meetings- based on work schedules, etc.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Failor said the Colt Site planned development application was expected at the next Plan Commission meeting on March 5, 2015 and also on March 19, 2015. April meeting dates for the Plan Commission public hearing would be April 2, 2015 and April 16, 2015 if necessary.

Mr. Failor said the Village Board had reconstituted the Lake Street Streetscape Committee. Meetings were scheduled for February 10, 2015 and one in March to look at the streetscape design on Lake Street from Euclid to Harlem. The group would make a recommendation to the Board after the second meeting.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Marsey moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Angela Schell,  
Recording Secretary