

MINUTES  
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION  
VILLAGE HALL- ROOM 101  
November 19, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Acting Chair Douglas Gilbert; Commissioners Garret Eakin, Mark Gartland, JoBeth Halpin, Greg Marsey, Kristin Nordman, and Monica Sanders (arrived at 7:13 p.m.)

EXCUSED: Chair David Mann and Commissioner Jeremy Burton

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Tammie Grossman, Director Development Customer Services; Jacob Karaca, Attorney

Applicants: Steven Rouse, Attorney for applicants; Mr. Mark Angelini and Mr. David Lyon, Mercy Housing; Mr. David Doig, Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives; Mr. George Halik, Booth Hansen

**Roll Call**

Acting Chair Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Roll was called. A quorum was present.

**Non-Agenda Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Gilbert asked for comments on the minutes from November 5, 2015. Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Marsey seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Public Hearing**

**PC 15-05: Highland Place Planned Development (231-307 Madison Street); Continued from November 5, 2015** The Applicants, Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives and Mercy Housing Lakefront, seek approval of a planned development for a mixed use project consisting of approximately 10,500 square feet of first floor commercial space, 55 workforce rental apartments, and 75 surface parking spaces. The applicant is requesting an allowance to increase the building height from 50 feet as required in Section 3.8.4 A(2) of the Zoning Ordinance to 55 feet (as measured at the highest point of the flat roof), an allowance to reduce open space from 25% as required in Section 3.8.4 C(2) of the Zoning Ordinance to 2.5%, and an allowance from the Madison Street Overlay District Section 3.9.6 (G) to allow surface parking to front on Madison Street and side street.

Chair Gilbert explained he was presiding as the interim chair as Chair David Mann recused himself due to a conflict of interest.

Chair Gilbert asked Commissioners Halpin and Eakin if they reviewed the recording of the last public meeting. They indicated that they did.

Mr. Failor said two residents contacted the village to say they received a late receipt of the public hearing notification letter. Mr. Failor contacted the post master and determined the postmarks were the same as all the other letters, however, there was a delay through the postal service in the routing. According to state statute, the applicant complied with the law on notification. Mr. Failor told the residents they could forward any testimony through him to give tonight to the commission; they did not send any.

Chair Gilbert reviewed the new documents provided related to parking, a statement from the Public Art Advisory Commission (PAAC) chair, a report from the village's consultant on architectural design, and additional renderings from the applicant.

Mr. Failor explained that a set of standard conditions were sent to commissioners to review as a template for conditions that might be given to applicants. He also included some of the conditions that were included for the Grove Avenue Apartment application.

Mr. George Halik, architect for the applicant, reviewed the elevations with a few new renderings requested from the last meeting: the view south on Harvey, the view south on Highland, and the view north on Harvey and Highland. He showed the picture of the existing fencing on the parking lot west of the building site. He reviewed the wooden fencing on the south parking lot site- it would be four feet high and six feet high around the trash area. Mr. Halik said the goal was to screen car lights from the alley but still allow the ability to look over the fence. Commissioner Eakin asked about the material, Mr. Halik said it would be natural cedar. Mr. Halik showed a "no idling" sign example, and a light photometric study. Commissioner Eakin asked about the material for light fixtures. Mr. Halik said it would be dark metal with a modern look to match the modern building.

Chair Gilbert asked for more questions from commissioners and cross examiners. As there was none, he moved onto deliberations.

Commissioner Eakin asked about the materials on the building. Mr. Halik reviewed: composite cement board, dry with a rain screen system, the waterproofing will be behind the panel so water will drain out. He said it will allow for good maintenance because you won't see the sealant and it was a simple construction that worked very well. Commissioner Eakin asked about the color scheme of the development. Mr. Halik said there was a tight budget but they wanted to have a simple façade with visual depth without actual depth. The colors were chosen from other buildings in Oak Park. Commissioner Eakin asked if stainless steel screws would hold panels in place. Mr. Halik said yes. Commissioner Eakin said the building projected a happy and playful image; but was a strong form that he liked very much. Mr. Halik said massing needs to be strong on Madison Street.

Commissioner Gartland complimented the applicants on targeting the Envision Oak Park tenants including those related to diversity, land use, and neighborhoods. He said he appreciated that after the initial meeting with neighbors, the applicant listened to their concerns and made changes. He asked about financing and construction timing.

Mr. Mark Angelini, Mercy Housing, said the majority of the project will be financed by federal housing dollars— they would apply for first round in February 2016; they should know by June 2016, then they could assemble private capital through tax credits and debt. Their goal would be to have capital by the third quarter of next year and start construction shortly after. Commissioner Gartland asked if they could reapply should they not make the first application. Mr. Angelini agreed, but said they have gone through a self-scoring process and feel this development will score very highly and they are confident it will be approved.

Chair Gilbert asked if the housing money would be affected by the state budget crisis. Mr. Angelini said the money is separate from the general appropriations budget.

Mr. Failor explained that if a planned development was approved there was nine months to get building permits in and start construction; an extension could be requested after this, if necessary, but if a wider timeframe was anticipated, more time could be included as part of the conditions of the application.

Commissioner Marsey suggested allowing for additional time in the conditions. Chair Gilbert suggested giving the applicant 18 months should they need to apply for another round of funding.

Chair Gilbert commended the applicants in reaching out and meeting with property owners and neighbors and then making real adjustments to the plan to make less of an impact to the neighborhood. He noted an issue that remained was the loss of a village rental parking lot. He said the parking services staff had provided information on other parking available in the neighborhood and there were some spaces for rent but few 24 hour spaces. He said the Village needs to do everything they can to work with folks that need parking to find locations rather than say just indicate available spaces. Perhaps shifting some lots or spaces to 24 hour; it was worth the Village looking into those lots and seeing what adjustments could be made to help the neighborhood. Chair Gilbert said the possibility to do a shared parking arrangement with the developer was still open, after things were established. He encouraged the applicant to be a good neighbor and seriously consider it to alleviate the parking issues.

Commissioner Sanders asked about parking spots, if tenants didn't own cars could they be leased. Mr. Angelini explained as it was rental there would not be dedicated spots like a condo building, but Mercy would manage spots and if there was availability they would consider leasing some, working with the village if necessary. Commissioner Sanders noted it would need to be on an annual or semi-annual renewal.

Chair Gilbert noted an issue that arose from the last meeting- concerns about existing morning traffic from Dunkin Donuts overlapping with trucks loading in alley. A short discussion ensued and the consensus was that keeping the traffic pattern open was best; Chair Gilbert urged the applicants to work with retailers on loading issues, especially in the morning.

Chair Gilbert said neighbors wanted construction traffic limited to Madison Street. Mr. Steve Rouse, attorney for the applicant, agreed. Chair Gilbert said neighbors wanted no idling trucks in the alley; Mr. Rouse agreed and said signs would be posted.

Chair Gilbert noted the PAAC memo that the applicant would work closely with the commission to determine the public art component.

Chair Gilbert reviewed the standard condition document provided by staff. Mr. Rouse said they had an issue with the traffic study follow up, mainly due to cost. Commissioner Sanders said she would like to see a study as she doesn't believe there will be a minimal impact to the area and it would give neighbors the chance to monitor it. Attorney Karaca suggested instead of a formal study to require the applicant to provide village staff with any outstanding issues arising from parking/traffic. Chair Gilbert suggested a compromise to require the applicant to meet with the Village to go over traffic issues and also meet with neighbors 6-12 months post-construction. Mr. Rouse suggested the meeting 6-12 months after 75% occupancy. Commissioner Sanders asked if the Village would have established standards they could analyze to determine if the situation was acceptable or not. Mr. Failor said there are standards set for level of service at intersections and traffic lights as well as capacity along Madison Street. He said they could also look at accidents caused by entering and exiting sites. Commissioner Sanders said she'd like to specify the meeting should include that data. A short discussion ensued with commissioners and the applicant in agreement on this condition.

Commissioners further discussed the standard conditions and agreed that the following would apply: the developer shall provide and maintain unified window treatments for all apartment units; construction traffic shall be limited to Madison Street and the construction schedule shall be approved by the Village Engineer; a sign shall be posted listing the construction manager and contact information; a construction communication plan will be part of permitting; construction debris will be removed on a regular basis; one car sharing parking space; an additional 18 months will be added to the timing requirements of the

planned development; a list of materials shall be provided to the Village Board; and if the applicant fails to comply with the conditions after 90 days written notice by the Village, the Village Board may revoke the planned development.

Mr. Failor noted a few conditions that went with the Grove Avenue Apartment application: leasing preference first to those residing and working in Oak Park, then those working or living in Oak Park. Mr. Angelini explained there would be a process to qualify incomes for residents; this would take three months to do so. He said they would do marketing through Village Hall or the Chamber of Commerce and get information out through local channels, but fair housing laws say they could not turn away a qualified applicant who doesn't live in Oak Park. Mr. Failor suggested changing the verbiage to encourage finding applicants from Oak Park. Mr. Angelini agreed.

A discussion ensued regarding Mercy's planned outreach efforts and the ability to provide preference to Oak Park residents. Development Customer Services Director Tammie Grossman indicated the applicants can check with the Illinois Housing Development Agency to see if a preference is allowed and then proceed accordingly. The applicants agreed.

Chair Gilbert asked for any other conditions to the application. There was none.

Commissioner Halpin moved to approve the application including the conditions discussed and agreed to. Commissioner Marsey seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Halpin – yes  
Marsey –yes  
Nordman – yes  
Eakin – yes  
Gartland – yes  
Sanders – yes  
Gilbert – yes

The motion was approved 7-0.

Commissioner Marsey moved to close the public hearing. Commissioner Gartland seconded. A voice vote was taken and approved unanimously.

Chair Gilbert said the findings of fact will be at the regular December 3, 2015 plan commission meeting.

Mr. Failor said it would then be tentatively scheduled for the Village Board for the first Monday in January, depending on the Board's schedule.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Failor said on December 3, 2015, there will be findings of fact then the beginning of the Lincoln Properties planned development application. December 10, 2015 would be a public hearing on the zoning code revision for Madison Street. The plan commission will meet again on December 17 to finish up the Lincoln Properties public hearing.

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Eakin moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Angela Schell,  
Recording Secretary