

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION
VILLAGE HALL- COUNCIL CHAMBER
December 3, 2015
7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair David Mann; Commissioners Jeremy Burton, Mark Gartland, Douglas Gilbert, Garret Eakin, JoBeth Halpin, and Monica Sanders (arrived at 7:17 p.m.)

EXCUSED: Commissioners Greg Marsey and Kristin Nordman

ALSO PRESENT: Craig Failor, Village Planner; Jacob Karaca, Attorney

Applicants: Joe Segobiano, Lincoln Properties; Demetrios Stavrianos, architect, CallisonRTKL

Roll Call

Chair Mann 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

Commissioner Gilbert moved to approve the minutes from November 12, 2015. Commissioner Eakin seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the minutes from November 19, 2015. Commissioner Halpin seconded. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Mr. Failor said a resident, Ms. Charlotte Newman, emailed that she'd like a correction to the minutes from November 5, 2015 regarding her testimony. Commissioner Halpin moved to amend the minutes to reflect the changes to her comments. Commissioner Gilbert seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Mann excused himself for the Highland Place Findings of Fact. Commissioner Gilbert became Acting Chair.

Public Hearing(s)

PC 15-05: Highland Place Planned Development (231-307 Madison Street); 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. **CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER 19, 2015 PUBLIC HEARING – FINDINGS OF FACT REVIEW**

Chair Gilbert asked Commissioner Burton if he was able to vote on the Findings of Fact. Commissioner Burton indicated he had reviewed all the materials on the hearing.

Commissioner Gartland moved to approve the Findings of Fact. Commissioner Halpin seconded. Chair Gilbert asked for any changes and corrections. There was none. A roll call vote was taken:

Gartland- yes

Halpin – yes

Gilbert – yes

Eakin – yes

Burton – yes

The motion was approved 5-0.

Chair Mann returned to the meeting.

PC 15-06: Lincoln- OP South Boulevard LLC (325-331 North Harlem Avenue & 100-107 South

Maple Avenue) The Applicant seeks approval of a planned development for a mixed use project consisting of 10,000 square feet of first floor commercial space, 263 rental apartments, and 398 parking spaces. The applicant is requesting an allowance to increase the building height from 45 feet as required in Section 3.8.1 A(2) of the Zoning Ordinance to 135 feet (as measured at the highest point of the flat roof), an allowance to reduce open space from 25% as required in Section 3.8.1 C(2) of the Zoning Ordinance to 12%, an allowance to increase density from the allowed 76 dwelling units as regulated in Section 3.8.1 A(1)b of the Zoning Ordinance to 263 dwelling units, and an allowance for setbacks and landscaping along the south-most property line from a required 15 foot setback to zero feet and along the west property line from a required 5 foot setback to zero feet. The Applicant is also requesting the vacation of a portion of Maple Avenue – an area approximately 115 feet by 66 feet. **OPEN PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Failor gave the staff overview of the application. He reviewed the four allowances requested: height, an allowance request of 90 additional feet; open space, an allowance request for 12% and noted that the vegetative roof would be the bulk of the green space; density, an allowance for 187 additional dwelling units; and setbacks, an allowance of zero feet on the west and south.

He said four chapters relate to this development in the Envision Oak Park Comprehensive Plan- Land Use& Built Environment, Neighborhoods, Housing & Diversity, Economic Health & Vitality and Environmental Sustainability. The development would fulfill the plan's goals of a mixed use development, a transportation-oriented development and a LEED standard building, albeit with a third-party verification process.

Mr. Failor reviewed the application in compliance with the Greater Downtown Master Plan. He said the plan forecasts possible buildout and capacity by 2020 for the downtown corridor. The forecasts indicated were anticipated but not definite numbers with a cap. With the addition of this application, retail capacity would be at 75% and dwelling units would be at 96% after factoring in the other major developments in like Vantage Oak Park and Oak Park Station.

Mr. Failor said the Greater Downtown Master Plan calls for new parking at this site, with a mixed use building of residential on the upper floors, supporting primarily retail use near the transit lines. The plan's recommendation was for office and commercial on the site, but the proposed development would still work in the area as a mixed use building.

Mr. Failor noted the staff parking study regarding the two Village lots in the development site- the lot at Harlem and South Boulevard has 59 spaces, 4 were for taxi use and 9 for night use. The lot was generally for public, short-term parking. The east lot on Maple Avenue has 81 spaces that were all sold out for 24

hour parking. There are 13 public lots in the vicinity; the largest available lot was Holley Court Garage, which has 553 of 600 spaces available. Of those, 47 spaces are for 24 hour parking. For street parking zones Y2 and Y3, there were 19 spaces and 45 spaces. He said the Transportation Commission was looking at that area to provide for more on-street parking. The staff traffic report concluded the development would not increase traffic at intersections in the area. Mr. Failor said the Village Engineer would be present at the next meeting to answer any questions from commissioners.

Mr. Failor noted the street would be improved along South Boulevard with the same palate as Marion Street. The improvements would be funded through federal money and from a donation from the applicant. The Village Engineer provided a memo outlining the improvements and detailing the two phases of construction. The Village anticipated starting in spring 2016 with utility work first. The memo also noted the placement of CTA bus shelters; the developer and the Village were set to meet next week with PACE regarding the placement of its bus shelter.

Mr. Failor noted the applicant would donate approximately \$700,000 towards the Village's affordable housing efforts and provide 5 affordable housing units in the development.

Mr. Failor said Mr. Floyd Anderson, the village's architectural consultant, would review his memo on the design. Mr. Anderson outlined the four stages of the design. He said he felt the design had too many things going on with the façade: there were too many materials and approaches to what was going on with the building. He said he had met with the architectural team and they made good attempts to simplify it, but he thought the earlier concepts had more simplicity and elegance to it. He said the design was too busy, it needed to be simplified, he urged the architects to reconsider what was being presented. He said currently he could not support the design.

Commissioner Gilbert asked staff if any discussion had been done by the Village Board about making this an architectural statement development. Mr. Failor said he didn't believe the Board had discussed anything particular in terms of architecture; the Request for Proposal (RFP) was required to have a sketch or diagram and that was part of the decision process. Commissioner Burton asked Mr. Anderson for his opinion on the south facing façade. Mr. Anderson said it was a more difficult façade, but again, too many things going on with the design.

Chair Mann reviewed the public hearing process. Attorney Karaca swore in the applicants.

Mr. Demetrios Stavrianos, architect for the applicant, gave an overview of the application reviewing the elevations. He said there will be a private service road that will function as a private alley accessing Maple Avenue for emergency vehicle access. He reviewed the north to south pedestrian link, saying it will be brightly lit and may feature decorative art. He reviewed the parking garage, saying 148 spaces would be available for public parking in addition to the spaces for the residential portion.

Mr. Stavrianos said they took Mr. Anderson's comments to heart, but the elevations project what they want in the project. He said the composition was a horizontal expression with a window wall and views of Chicago; with a vertical expression on the lower part of the building. He said Prairie style architecture was about anchor and slippage; verticality and anchoring into context. He said the middle part of the building was a buffer that unites the systems. He said the design was a dynamic form that corresponded to the dynamic qualities of the L train. The multiple gestures were to break down the massing of the building along South Boulevard.

Mr. Stavrianos reviewed the lighting plan, noting the pedway would be brightly lit for use any time of day. He reviewed the allowances requested and how the development would meet standards in the Envision plan. He said design was subjective and they have tried to be collaborative and transparent throughout the process.

Commissioner Eakin asked about color and materials of the building. Chair Mann asked for samples at the next meeting. Mr. Stavrianos said the materials would be a modular masonry veneer, but they were still considering what to use and how to apply it. The top floors would be a metal panel. There would be a mixture of spandrel glass and louvers for the parking garage.

Commissioner Gilbert said he had a lot of issues with the design and wondered about reviewing what was presented in the time frame given. Commissioner Eakin said he was disappointed in the project; he couldn't see how it related to the site, how the color related to the community and the context was left out of the drawings.

Mr. Joe Segobiano, from Lincoln Properties, said they would take the time to get it right and were looking for feedback from commissioners. Chair Mann said it would be important to not to try to do this in one or two meetings as it was a big design, a gateway building to Oak Park. Chair Mann said the general design looked very institutional and the massing was questionable.

Chair Mann asked the architect to talk about the massing. Mr. Stavrianos said they studied the site quite a bit, but the lot was bound by the Redevelopment Agreement (RDA) submittal. Mr. Segobiano said the RDA process dictated certain things like parking and that was what drove the massing. Commissioner Eakin said the white grid overpowers the building and there was no delicacy. Mr. Stavrianos disagreed, saying the grid was part of a composition intended to be idiosyncratic.

Commissioner Gilbert said on the north elevation his first impression was of an office building. He said the Harlem Avenue entryway will be a major viewpoint – and that view will be blank wall. He said there was a request for setback variance and yet building to the lot line allows does not allow for windows on the south elevation. Mr. Stavrianos said if a setback was required they would need to ask for more height.

Commissioner Gilbert asked staff what drove the height requirement in the RDA. Mr. Failor said the Greater Downtown Plan calls for the height to be no taller than the Marshall Field's building; the site is adjacent to a residential district so getting taller was out of context to the south side of the L tracks. Mr. Failor said he could provide commissioners with the RDA agreement for more information. Commissioner Gilbert said the existing application was already over the height of the Marshall Field's building and the agreement doesn't seem to make sense for the site or neighboring properties. Mr. Segobiano said raising the height would have a cost impact, once you go above a certain height it does have a direct impact on economics. Commissioner Burton said they'd like to understand any flexibility on the height.

Commissioner Halpin said the zero setback on Harlem Avenue really concerns her. She measured the sidewalk, which was 7-8 feet wide and it feels very uncomfortable to have no setback on such a busy pedestrian area. Mr. Segobiano said the parking space requirement was dictating the massing there and they were obligated to provide 398 spaces. Chair Mann asked how bus stops will factor into that area. Commissioner Gilbert noted that a bus pull off lane could have been included in the RDA agreement and he was amazed that wasn't considered in such a tight intersection. Commissioner Burton said he had similar issues. He said the key benefit to putting up a building there was getting renters who use mass transit; to ignore those features was the wrong thing to do. Mr. Segobiano replied they manage Oak Park Place apartments so they understand the market very well.

Commissioner Gartland asked how the parking garage will be run. Mr. Segobiano said public parking will be on the lower floors, residential parking will be on the upper floor; some parking will be 24-hour parking. He said the rates will be similar to the village-owned garages. Commissioner Gartland asked why the retail components were separated by the workout area on the ground floor. Mr. Stavrianos said they put the retail on the corners to synergize with other retail in the area. Commissioner Gartland asked

for elevations of the development with existing buildings and the L as well as more of the pedestrian walkway. Commissioner Gartland asked about the affordable housing units. Mr. Segobiano said the rates would be \$70 less than the lowest priced units and all the units would have the same finishes. Applicants will have to qualify with preference for Oak Park residents, then Oak Park employees, then the general market.

Commissioner Halpin asked for photos of existing pedestrian walkways. Mr. Segobiano said they were working with the Public Art Advisory Commission (PAAC) on some art component to the walkway. Commissioner Gilbert said he was concerned it would be a blank pass through and doesn't see it as an amenity. He said he doesn't agree with breaking the retail space as the goal would be to encourage people to walk down South Boulevard. Mr. Segobiano said their retail experts believe there was more visibility along Harlem Avenue, so that space may be more service-oriented and the parcel to the east was better for a restaurant.

Chair Mann moved to cross examination but explained that two of those who have applied for cross examination were outside of the 500 foot vicinity requirement. One person was not present.

Mr. Christopher Stoller, said he was a lifelong Oak Parker and the Director of Americans for the Enforcement of Attorney Ethics. He said the vicinity requirement was applicable if it was only private property, but as the real estate was owned by the Village he had an equitable interest in the project as a resident. A short discussion ensued. Mr. Stoller said he was interested in the low income housing component of the development. Chair Mann said they would allow him to cross examine.

Mr. Stoller asked about affordable housing, saying under federal guidelines, low income senior citizen would qualify with 30% of their gross income. Mr. Segobiano said he was not a housing expert and the renting of the units would go through a vetting process. Mr. Stoller asked if they would follow federal guidelines from the Federal Housing Authority. Mr. Segobiano said the formula they created came through discussions with the Village. Mr. Stoller said 'affordable housing' was a federal term. Mr. Segobiano said they would not be receiving federal housing funds; these were not going to be subsidized units. Mr. Stoller said they were called "low income housing". Mr. Segobiano clarified they were "affordable housing units". Mr. Stoller asked if units would be designated for seniors and those with disabilities. Mr. Segobiano said they defined the units in the RDA agreement. Mr. Stoller said the units were not true affordable housing units; they should not be called that. Mr. Segobiano said other developers did not offer what they did; this was a voluntary gesture from Lincoln Properties.

Mr. Stoller asked about the setbacks on Harlem Avenue especially during rush hour when it is highly congested, would they consider that factor in any redesign. Mr. Segobiano said they will comprehensively review all the comments. Mr. Stoller asked if they would make affordable housing documents available to the Village. Mr. Segobiano said the information was in the RDA agreement.

Chair Mann called for the next cross examiner.

Mr. Jeffrey Stobeck, attorney for Ms. Barbara Parelli who owns the residential building adjacent to the development. Mr. Stobeck asked if trucks would be traveling through the private alley into the Maple Avenue cul-de-sac. Mr. Segobiano said no, signs will be posted to indicate it is private property; all trucks will use the alley. Mr. Stobeck asked if any public traffic will be allowed in the private alley. Mr. Segobiano said the main intent was for emergency vehicle access. Mr. Stobeck asked if the private alley would meet into the cul-de-sac. Mr. Segobiano indicated it would be only a utility easement. Mr. Stobeck asked about the dimensions of the open space on the south side. Mr. Segobiano said 8 feet. Mr. Stobeck asked if the 8 feet was from the wall and would it be green. Mr. Segobiano said currently it was a walkway but they would be happy to make it green. Mr. Stobeck asked for renderings on the south side with the wall shown. Mr. Stavrianos clarified the open space was 8 feet at the first level, at the third level

it goes to the property line. Mr. Stobeck asked if someone would need to get out of building at the third floor would they be able to. A short discussion ensued and it was determined the adjacent property was a two-story apartment building. Commissioner Gilbert asked if the access corridor at ground level would be accessible to the general public. Mr. Segobiano said it would be accessible by the development for ingress/egress but not to the general public. Chair Mann asked if it would be fenced. Mr. Segobiano said that has not been decided. Commissioner Gilbert asked about emergency egress on the upper level, would fire department ladders be able to go up. Mr. Segobiano said they have met with the Fire Department and reviewed the plan with them. Chair Mann asked staff for a letter from the Fire and Police Departments. Mr. Failor said that would be provided at the next meeting.

Commissioner Halpin asked for an elevation view down Maple Avenue.

Chair Mann asked for public testimony. One person deferred until the next meeting.

Mr. Failor reviewed possible dates for the hearing continuance. Commissioner Gilbert moved to continue the hearing to December 17, 2015 at 8 p.m. Commissioner Burton seconded. Commissioner Sanders left at 9:37 p.m. Commissioner Gilbert withdrew his motion. Chair Mann clarified for the applicant any requested items for the next meeting. Commissioner Gilbert asked if any further meetings were planned with the PAAC. Mr. Failor said they were scheduled to meet in early January.

Commissioner Gilbert moved to continue the hearing to December 17, 2015 at 8 p.m. Commissioner Burton seconded. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Other Business

Mr. Failor said the next meeting on December 10, 2015 will be the public hearing on the Madison Street zoning rewrite. He said courtesy letters were sent to all property and business owners along Madison inviting them to the meeting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Burton moved to adjourn. Commissioner Gilbert seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Angela Schell,
Recording Secretary