

**MINUTES**  
MEETING OF THE OAK PARK PLAN COMMISSION  
REMOTE PARTICIPATION  
February 18, 2021  
7:00 p.m.

**A recording of this meeting is available on the Village of Oak Park Website: <https://www.oak-park.us/your-government/citizen-commissions/commission-tv>**

**PRESENT:** Chair Iris Sims, Commissioners; Lawrence Brozek, Jeff Clark, Jeff Foster, Paul May, Nick Bridge, Paul Beckwith, Tom Gallagher and Jon Hale (absent from 7:50PM to 9:05PM)

**EXCUSED:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Craig Failor - Village Planner, Greg Smith – Plan Commission Attorney, Bill McKenna - Village Engineer and Tammie Grossman - Development Customer Services Director

**Roll Call** - Roll was called at 7:03pm. A quorum was present.

Village Planner Failor read into the record a statement regarding remote participation and reviewed the public hearing procedures.

**Non-Agenda Public Participation** – None

**Approval of Minutes** – February 4, 2021

Commissioner Foster made a motion to approve as submitted, Seconded by Commissioner Gallagher. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Foster- yes, Gallagher–yes, May–yes, Hale-yes, Beckwith–yes, Bridge–yes, Clark–yes, Brozek-yes and Chair Sims-yes.

**Other Business** – None

**Public Hearing - PC 21-01: 203 S. Marion Street;** The Petitioner, Focus Acquisition Company, LLC, is requesting planned development approval for a seven (7) story, mixed use residential development consisting of approximately 1,200 square feet of retail, 153 rental apartments, 6 maisonette residential units and 123 covered parking spaces with the following Zoning Ordinance allowances; 1) Article 8: Uses, Sub-section 8.3 Use Restrictions: Table 8-1 Use Matrix allows dwelling units above the first floor only, where six (6) residential maisonette units are proposed on the first floor, 2.) Article 10: Off-Street Parking and Loading, Subsection 10.4: Required Off Street Vehicle and Bicycle Parking Spaces: Table 10-2 requires one parking space per dwelling unit for a total of 159 space, where 0.77 percent will be provided for a total of 123 parking spaces, 3.) Article 8: Uses, Sub-section 8.3 Use Restrictions: Table 8-1 Use Matrix allows a maximum building height of 60 ft, where a 85 foot building measured to the top of the roof is proposed, 4.) Article 8: Uses, Subsection 8.3 Use Restrictions: Table 8-1 Use Matrix allows for a maximum

number of dwelling units of 45 units where the 159 units including the maisonette units are proposed, 5.) Article 8: Uses, Subsection 8.3 Use Restrictions: Table 8-1 Use Matrix requires a building setback along streets to be built to a zero (0) foot lot line where a request for a ten (10) foot setback be allowed for 64 linear feet along Marion Street, 6.) Article 10: Off-Street Parking and Loading, subsection 10.3: Off Street Parking Design Standards, B. Access: requires a nine (9) foot turnaround at the end of parking stalls where a request is to not provide them in order to provide additional parking spaces on site.

Courtney Brower, Focus Development, presented an overview of the changes to the planned development application based on Plan Commissioners comments from the February 4, 2021 hearing. The Focus team members, Michael Werthmann talked about traffic and the alley, Justin Pelej talked about maintaining the quality of the proposal, and David Mann discussed the design changes made to the elevations and site plan.

The Plan Commission Chair opened for commissioner comments and questions.

Commissioner Beckwith indicated that all was good, but he felt that the height should be lowered, the size was still too large and asked about relocation of the first floor amenities and possible underground parking.

Commissioner Bridge asked a question about the building setback requirement along the public alley.

Commissioner Brozek indicated he agreed with Commissioner Beckwith's concerns and asked about underground parking, the removal of additional maisonette units, and stated that the building detailing made the building more attractive.

Commissioner Gallagher indicated that positive changes were made, such as increasing the sustainability rating to Silver, additional contribution for the improved alley reconstruction, and increased building enhancements with window and wall detailing.

Commissioner Hale indicated that the increase in the sustainable rating was positive, but wanted to know details on how that will be achieved. He asked if the green roof was still planned – which it was. He asked about natural gas use in the building, the parking configuration solution, a parking overflow plan if needed, and asked if they would be willing to consider/seek out a black-owned business for the proposed coffee shop location, which they agreed to.

Chairperson Sims indicated that the applicant did an impressive job on the details, and increasing the sustainability rating to Silver. She asked about what water usage improvement were planned – with a response that low flow fixtures would be used. She disused the alley improvements and commented on the traffic and pedestrian concerns with the intersection of Marion and Pleasant. Chair Sims indicated that the additional green space does a good job fitting into the neighborhood.

Public Testimony:

Village Planner Failor read written public comments for 30 minutes.

Chair Sims opened public comment for verbal comments up to 5 minutes for each person.

Marlene Scott and John Lynch (Oak Park EDC) supported the development for the following reasons: It is a welcomed the addition to the Pleasant District. The applicant's compromise in redesign, their economic and patron contributions to the neighborhood and their contribution to the affordable housing fund as well as the village as a whole.

Those not in favor of the development proposal: Patrick Deady, Melissa Bogusch, Robert Taylor, Lex MacNeil, Philip Grossman, Wendy Greenhouse, Bruce Lehman, Greg Marsey, Elizabeth Lippitt, Kelly Arquette, Martin Golub, Rebecca Houze, Rich Schurr and Mike Fox.

The reasons for opposition are;

1. The applicant's economic benefit relative to increased taxes was not accurate. It should be based on what could be built by zoning verse what is there now.
2. The proposed structure is too tall
3. Diminish property values
4. Should provide underground parking
5. Poor building design; has been used in too many buildings in Oak Park and felt the architect could do better
6. No Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) support
7. Lack of parking
8. Overuse of the alley – no Marion Street access
9. Garage design was not safe
10. Intersection at Marion and Pleasant needs more traffic control
11. Money for alley should go towards affordable housing
12. Shadows on neighboring properties
13. Traffic congestion
14. Delivery trucks and on-street loading zone will create congestion
15. Does not fit into the neighborhood which is a residential area
16. The building is out of context
17. Other apartment building in area that are not full and do not meet the national average for occupancy
18. Doesn't meet zoning regulations
19. Out of character with the historic district
20. The developer was more interested in wealth than context.
21. Development only good for the developer, not the village.

Cross Examination on New Information:

Lex MacNeil asked about density, traffic issues, underground parking and possible townhome development.

Patrick Deady asked about alley compensation, traffic, loading and underground parking.

Doug Gilbert asked about alley cost, alley congestion, loading, on-site management and comparison with 835 Lake Street.

The Commission reversed a motion to continue the hearing to the next meeting date in order to allow commissioner comments first with a vote of 7-2.

Commissioner Comments:

The Commissioners offered comments and recommendations. General comments included asking for a reduction of two floors, and stated concerns with the size; height and massing, asked them to consider underground parking, more compensating benefits, consider additional design modification to the north façade, look at discussing parking lot usage to the south with property owner for either parking use or expansion of building footprint to lower height, look at a more cutting-edge design and reduce density. It was also stated that there were no concerns with height, density and design. There was a request to understand the professional management's future relationship with the building.

A Motion was made by Commissioner Brozek to continue the hearing to March 4, 2021 – 7PM via Zoom format. Seconded by Commissioner Hale. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Brozek–yes, Hale–yes, Gallagher–yes, Beckwith–yes, Foster- yes, Bridge -yes, Clark–yes, May-yes, and Chair Sims - yes.

The motion passed 9-0

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:09 p.m. Motion by Commissioner Foster, Seconded by Commissioner Hale. Roll Call Vote as follows: Commissioners; Foster–yes, Hale- yes, Gallagher-yes, Bridge–yes, Clark–yes, May–yes, Brozek-yes, Beckwith–yes and Chair Sims – yes.

Prepared by: Craig Failor, Village Planner / Staff Liaison