



MEETING MINUTES

PLAN COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 11, 2019
7:00 P.M.

Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, James C. Lytle Council Chambers

Members Present: Peter Isaac (Chair), George Halik, Andrew Pigozzi, Jennifer Draper,

Members Absent: Carol Goddard, John Hewko, Jane Sloss

Staff Present: Scott Mangum, Planning and Zoning Manager
Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Brian George, Assistant City Attorney

Presiding Member: Chair Isaac

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: November 13, 2019

Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30, 2019 meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Draper. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously, 4-0.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Text Amendment

New Residential Zoning District

19PLND-0090

A Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment pursuant to City Code Title 6, Zoning, to create a new general residential zoning district designation with a maximum height limit of 3 and one-half stories.

B. Map Amendment

Emerson Street Rezoning

19PLND-0089

A Zoning Ordinance Map Amendment pursuant to City Code Title 6, Zoning, to rezone properties located north of Emerson Street roughly between Asbury Avenue to the east, Gilbert Park and former Mayfair railroad property to the west, and the block north of Foster Street to the north, from the existing R5 General Residential District zoning district to

a new general residential zoning district with a height limit of 3 and one-half stories.

Chair Isaac stated that due to potential conflict of interest he will be recusing himself from these items. Due to that action there will no longer be a quorum in order to conduct business on these items. Mr. Mangum stated that the applicant shared that they were not available on the regularly scheduled January 8th meeting date so the 4th Wednesday, January 22nd, was proposed.

Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to continue this item to the January 22, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Halik seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed, 4-0.

Ayes: Isaac, Draper, Halik, Pigozzi

Nays:

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Planned Development

999-1015 Howard Street

19PLND-0012

David Block, applicant, submits for a Special Use for a Planned Development to construct a 4-story, 73,017 square foot addition to the existing CJE Senior Life building. Addition includes 60 affordable dwelling units for seniors and 55 parking spaces, in the B2 Business District. The applicant seeks site development allowances for: 1) A building height of 51' where 45' is allowed, 2) To reduce the required interior side yard setback for parking to 0' where 5' is required from the east property line, 3) To reduce the required rear yard setback for parking to 0' where 15' is required from the north property line when adjacent to a residential district, and 4) To reduce the required number of off-street parking spaces from 69 to 55. The applicant may seek and the Plan Commission may consider additional Site Development Allowances as may be necessary or desirable for the proposed development.

Mr. Mangum provided an overview of the proposed development, explaining the site layout, public benefits and the additional site development allowance to allow a loading area with a vertical clearance of 11'-10" where a minimum clearance height of 14' is required.

The applicant, David Block then gave an introduction of the development team and CJE staff. He explained that the proposed project is 2 years in the making and provided more information on CJE's services and partnership with Evergreen Real Estate Group. He stated that there is shuttle service, programming and meals for approximately 40 seniors, Monday through Friday. He then explained that the proposed project would

provide housing for independent seniors that participate in the street life and economic life of the area and revitalize that corner on Howard Street. Mr. Block provided information on the unit cost, stating they were all affordable (\$400 to \$1000 per month) with the intention of not having more than 30% of a resident's income going towards rent. \$75,000 is projected in property taxes to start. He then explained how circulation through the site would occur, mentioning CJE vehicle parking, general parking access and connection from the old building to the new. He mentioned that the proposed decks would be secured due to some clients with dementia. He added that some of the design and material choices are due to cost constraints that need to be abided by per IHDA and explained the requested site development allowances and emphasized that the proposed parking is all enclosed.

Chair Isaac opened the hearing to questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Halik stated that he thinks the development is a nice looking project and is a clever use of the site. He then inquired about why the number of parking spaces works for the site, if moving vehicles need the 14 ft. clearance and what kind of lighting would be on the proposed outdoor decks. Mr. Block responded that the lighting is low cut-off lighting with some being uplighting to illuminate the deck (a lighting study can be done if needed to make sure light is not escaping from the deck). He then explained that research had been done regarding move-ins and it was found that small/medium moving trucks as well as Fedex and UPS deliver trucks can clear the 11 ft. height. He added that the team tried to get as many parking spaces as possible on-site. He added that the reason for comparable developments being included was to ensure that the requirements for residents would be met.

Commissioner Pigozzi asked if the accommodation took CJE requirements into account. Mr. Block responded yes and that the staff report looked at both the existing site requirements and new use requirements for parking with a reduction provided for the inclusionary housing provided.

Commissioner Draper asked if the existing utility poles would be buried as there looks like there is some encroachment into the site. Mr. Block replied that the development will need to accommodate utility relocation and/or work around them.

Commissioner Halik asked if the DAPR comments had been incorporated into current plans. Mr. Block responded that the most robust conversation centered on garbage pick-up and the concern that handlers would have enough access. He worked with Groot at the site to create possible configurations and alternate scenarios were created from that. He added that solar energy was also discussed by DAPR. The building is beginning the evaluation for ComEd energy efficiency standards which are intended to be met. Mr. Block added that the site is a good location for solar and that if additional funding is found that will be included. No windows are intended to be added to the east wall as it is a shear wall and the neighboring property could be redeveloped into a

building that covers that wall.

Chair Isaac asked if the current CJE activities will be expanded. Laura Prohov, Vice President of Community Services, responded that programming will continue as it currently exists with some renovation being done to the existing building to enhance the current programming but not increase it or the number of clients. There is a 50 client capacity with 35-40 clients currently being served Monday through Friday, 9:30am to 3:30pm. She added that there are 11 vans and 22 staff members, including drivers. Chair Isaac inquired if additional staff is anticipated with the proposed addition. Ms. Prohov responded that no additional staff is anticipated for CJE. Mr. Block added that a half-time building manager and full-time custodian would be added with the addition of residences.

Chair Isaac then asked what the average age of residents is expected to be. Mr. Block stated that entry age point is 62 with the average age being in late 60s and early 70s. Chair Isaac then asked about the railing on the proposed decks. Mr. Block responded that it is a 6 ft. barrier, likely with additional railing above, as a security measure for current CJE clients.

Chair Isaac inquired if a specific number of parking spaces had been promised. Mr. Block responded no, he would not have promised something he was not sure he could deliver. Chair Isaac continued, asking for clarification on the affordable housing requirements.

Chair Isaac then informed the public of the ability of residents within 1,000 feet of the property to submit a written request for a continuance for the purpose of rebutting testimony provided during the hearing. He then opened up the hearing to questions from the public.

Ms. Lois Headman stated that she was lead to believe the allowances requested would not be asked for and the applicant would work with the neighborhood. She would like to get the presented information to neighbors as there are significant changes to what was initially presented to the community.

Chair Isaac clarified the process for requesting and granting of continuances.

Ms. Clare Kelly inquired whether or not the DAPR comments had been read by the Commissioners. Commissioner Halik responded that he read all of the report and wanted the applicant to point out, for the public, how those items would be addressed on the plans. Ms. Kelly then inquired about the AMI for the units. Mr. Block responded that there will 6 units at 30% AMI, 24 units at 60% AMI and 30 units at 50% AMI. Ms. Kelly requested that the Commission not grant the allowances.

Mr. Steve Friedman, attorney for the applicant, inquired about the continuance process

and why they are generally granted. He added that there should be public comment and questions but was uncertain why a continuance would be granted to share information. Chair Isaac replied that Ms. Headman had concerns regarding the testimony made during the hearing and intended to inform neighbors who would come in to assist in rebutting that information presented.

Ms. Shannon Hackett stated she did not know variances were being requested. She then inquired about the opening in the rear of the building and if it is intended to be a permanent opening. Mr. Block responded that is intended to be an emergency exit and locked gates are to be in place to limit access and provide security for patients. Ms. Hackett then emphasized that parking is an issue in the area and any project with additional vehicles is a problem. Mr. Block responded that as many parking spaces as possible are provided in the garage as well as considerations for turning radii and general circulation within the parking area. Ms. Hackett then asked how trash will be handled and who will maintain the cement facade and expressed concern about the building going to the edge of the lot. Mr. Block stated that there will be a trash chute in the building and Evergreen Real Estate will be responsible for maintaining the façade.

Ms. Headman clarified if the loading deck would be accessed off of Howard Street then inquired about the walls around the proposed deck and connections to access the decks. Mr. Block responded that the rear deck will be at least 6 ft. in height with a possible railing on top of that. He added that this was the best location to also have sunlight and still have ease of access for CJE.

Chair Isaac inquired about the space between parking space for the CJE buses and if the intention is for that space to be for loading then parking. It seems as if more parking spaces could be added if that space between some of the spaces were eliminated. Mr. Block clarified that there are support columns that create additional space between some of the parking spaces and that all of the loading would happen at the front door of CJE.

Chair Isaac then opened the hearing up to public testimony.

Lois Headman emphasized that parking is a concern and the promises of residents having no cars is a low ball number due to employees and possible visitors needing parking. She added that she agrees that Howard Street doesn't look great but to have a building placed there just because it is better is not the way. The exterior should match the beauty of the work done on the interior and also fit into the neighborhood. She also has concerns about building to the alley line and the building height, stating that she will now be looking at concrete instead of the sky and she hopes that the comments provided are taken into consideration.

Mr. Matt Rodgers stated his support for the project. He explained that Evanston has been trying to figure out affordable housing and that this is a commercial street where a

larger building should be. Other uses along that stretch are commercial in nature and the façade works for the site given the budget constraints. Mr. Rodgers added that having a place in Evanston where someone can lease an apartment for \$300 is great to have. He empathized with the neighbors regarding parking issues as his neighborhood has less available parking but feels the project is one that should be supported.

Ms. Sue Loelbach of Connections for the Homeless and Joining Forces for Affordable Housing stated that she is excited that Evergreen is working on the project and that there is reasonable use of site development allowances. Parking is an issue with every affordable development and she hopes that conversations for the development are not centered on that and Evanston can address it on a broader level.

Chair Isaac then asked Ms. Headman if houses in the area are largely single family homes, if they have garages and if parking issues are largely seen during the day or night. Ms. Headman stated that most nearby homes are single family but she is unsure as to how many have garages. She added that people will drive from other neighborhoods to park and leave their vehicles for long periods of time. The Parking sticker and restriction for overnight parking after 6:00pm helped but does not monitor all parking.

Mr. Block stated that he appreciates the respectful conversation and added that he understands that this can be a hot button topic. He disagrees with some of the statements made regarding the building.

Chair Isaac asked for clarification on the building and parking setbacks and asked if the drive aisle is part of the parking. Mr. Mangum replied that the drive aisle is considered part of the parking area.

The Commission then began deliberations.

Commissioner Halik stated that he believes buildings should be quality and this is a good building. He added that being old and brick is not the only measure of a good building. He stated that the 6 ft. difference in height is not significant but the setback and parking allowances are. He explained that the trend is to provide less parking and there are garages that have additional parking available and a neighborhood parking restriction in place. The Commission is not able to prove one way or the other if parking is needed but Evergreen has done many other projects. He continued, stating that the number of parking spaces is a concern and he believes steps have been taken to mitigate the structure being on the property line.

Commissioner Pigozzi stated that this is a good project. It is a difficult site and there are some issues to iron out with utilities. This is a project the City should support but the numbers must work. He added that he does not believe the applicant is being insensitive but attempting to make the project work on the site. Howard Street needs

this and he hopes the project is successful.

Commissioner Draper expressed concern with the development being lot line to lot line with single family homes. Being on Howard Street, this is the best site versus another location in Evanston. She added that she is glad to see amenity spaces. She stated that she is hesitant for the green wall past the 1st floor and that, since it will take some time to grow, other options should be considered. She agreed with Commission Halik regarding the parking concerns as the requested development allowance is a large one but agreed this is a good project for the area.

Chair Isaac echoed the Commissioners' statements and added that, on a whole, the project is easy to support. He suggested that if the building were retail, it could not go lot line to lot line and that would be an ask of a different development as well. Parking is a concern. CJE would get 100% of their parking but take from the residential portion of the development. Parking has been an issue in the evening while CJE uses spaces during the day. It could be possible to add language that sets aside a certain number of spaces for residents.

Mr. Mangum shared that there are currently 26 parking spaces on site. Mr. Isaac then stated that 33 spaces are needed for CJE and 22 for residential use. If CJE only uses 26 spaces then 29 would go to residential and only a 7 space reduction would be needed. Mr. Block added that this is a mixed use development. It will be largely used during the day with vans being parked at night. He stated he can commit to solving potential issues on-site.

Chair Isaac asked for more clarification on the vehicle use of CJE employees. Ms. Prohov stated that 19 employees drive to work while others take public transportation. Buses are pulled out so employees are able to park. There are 8 drivers and 11 employees use other spaces. Shalom buses are used for 98% of the clients, as is required by the Illinois Department of Aging, and some have family members drop them off.

Commissioner Pigozzi stated that he does not believe parking will be as big an issue. The Zoning Code does not address this type of use. Chair Isaac responded that he is attempting to figure out the net effect, not make a value judgement.

Commissioner Draper clarified where the ADA parking spaces are located in the garage.

Chair Isaac asked if there will be a charge for parking. Mr. Block replied that there will not be but that it will be gated since it is not intended to be open to the public.

The Commission then reviewed the standards and largely found that they had been met with the exception of some disagreement on Item 2 in Section 6-3-5-10 and stating that

full effects on property value testimony had not been presented.

Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to recommend approval of the planned development as presented by staff. Commissioner Halik seconded the motion.

Chair Lewis suggested an amendment to the motion regarding making the project affordable in perpetuity. Mr. Block clarified that there is a 30 year affordability requirement from both IHDA and the City of Evanston. Staff then added that the affordability aspect is not under the purview of the Commission so the amendment was rejected.

A roll call vote was then taken on the main motion for the planned development and the motion passed, 4-0.

Ayes: Isaac, Draper, Halik, Pigozzi

Nays:

B. Text Amendment

Setbacks for Planned Developments in Residential Districts 19PLND-0103

A Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment pursuant to City Code Title 6, Zoning, to revise section 6-8-1-10 relating to limitations on site development allowances regarding setbacks for planned developments in Residential Zoning Districts.

Ms. Jones provided an overview of the proposed amendment giving a history of the interpretation of the regulations and stating that the applicant will also be bringing forth a planned development at a later date that could be affected by the regulation proposed for amendment. The amendment itself would apply to planned developments in all residentially zoned districts.

Chair Isaac opened the hearing to questions from the Commission to staff.

Commissioner Halik stated that he believes that setbacks of adjacent properties would be more important to consider. He does not have any issue with the proposed amendment.

Chair Isaac asked if issues with setbacks could be handled through a map amendment from residential to a different zoning district, why the change. Ms. Jones responded that in some cases a zoning change could be requested if the adjacent zoning is similar. However, that would not work for every planned development as that could introduce spot zoning which staff does not generally promote. What is proposed could create a way to evaluate projects and still provide some kind of

buffer where needed.

Commissioner Pigozzi asked if this would apply for Planned Developments that have residential units that are adjacent to residentially zoned districts. Chair Isaac stated that this amendment is for R districts specifically and right now regulations require a 15 ft. building setback from all property lines and the request is to be able to have a smaller setback. Ms. Jones added that the regulation applies only to dwelling units within a building, not parking or amenity space. Commissioner Pigozzi asked for clarification on whether this is between dwellings or from the property line. Ms. Jones and Chair Isaac clarified that the regulations apply only to the distance between residential units and the property line.

Chair Isaac asked the applicant to make a statement.

Mr. Thomas Meador gave an overview of what is proposed and some general information on the proposed development. He added that the building is shorter than other apartment buildings in the area. The density is less than what is allowed and the proposed setback reduction allows for the current height. Without that the building would have to be higher and the economics would not make the project feasible.

Chair Isaac clarified that the Commission is not deliberating over a particular site and that the comments on the amendment will not necessarily have any bearing on the development project when it comes before the Commission.

Commissioner Pigozzi asked if the concern is for future development on adjacent sites. Chair Isaac stated that the request is specific to the setback between the applicant's proposed development and the adjacent property.

Ms. Talar Barbarian, attorney for the applicant, stated that the proposed amendment is a general request and not specific to the Planned Development application. Would allow for the soon to be reviewed development and other similar properties in residential districts to be constructed in context with the street as opposed to requiring a setback that would be in place for all residential districts as they may be in lower density areas. Would allow the Commission to consider a lesser setback in areas of higher density where the reduction would be appropriate.

Commissioner Draper clarified that the Commission and Council would need to review and approve the development allowance. Ms. Jones responded that currently at a staff level, if the 15 ft. setback is not in place, the applicant is generally told to reconfigure the site in order to meet that requirement. Corporation Counsel has interpreted the regulation to not be an eligible site development allowance but past staff has had different interpretations.

The Commission then reviewed the standards for text amendments and agreed that they were met or not applicable.

Commissioner Halik made a motion to recommend approval of the text amendment as presented. Seconded by Pigozzi. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved, 4-0.

Ayes: Isaac, Draper, Halik, Pigozzi

Nays:

5. OTHER BUSINESS

A. 2020 Plan Commission Meeting Schedule

Chair Isaac read the proposed meeting dates for 2020.

Commissioner Halik made a motion to approve the 2020 meeting calendar. Commissioner Pigozzi seconded the motion.

A voice vote was then taken and the motion passed, 4-0.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pigozzi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Draper seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice vote 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Meagan Jones
Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Community Development Department