MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 14, 2015
7:00 P.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

Members Present: Scott Peters (Chair), Jim Ford, Richard Shure, Colby Lewis, Terri Dubin, Andrew Pigozzi, Carol Goddard,

Members Absent: Kwesi Steele, Lenny Asaro,

Associate Members Present: Stuart Opdycke

Associate Members Absent: David Galloway, Seth Freeman

Staff Present: Damir Latinovic, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Lorrie Pearson, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Michelle Masoncup, Deputy City Attorney
Mario Treto, Assistant City Attorney

Presiding Member: Scott Peters, Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

With the Chairman’s term being an annual appointment Commissioner Ford made a motion to nominate Commissioner Peters as Chairman Pro Tempore for this meeting.

Commissioner Shure seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice call 7-0.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters explained the Board will elect a new chairperson for 2015 at the next regularly scheduled meeting as his term ends in March.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M and explained the general meeting procedure, schedule, agenda items, time limits on public testimony and opportunities for cross examination of witnesses. Chairman Pro Tempore Peters concluded the opening statement by saying that the Plan Commission forwards a recommendation to the City Council which makes the final determination on any matters discussed by the Plan Commission.

2. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: December 10, 2014 and December 17, 2014

Commissioner Ford made a motion to approve the minutes from December 10, 2014 and December 17, 2014.
Commissioner Dubin seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT 14PLND-0118

1571 Maple Avenue

Michael McLean of 1571 Maple Avenue, LLC., developer of the proposed project, has applied for a Special Use for a Planned Development in the D3-Downtown Core Development District (Title 6-Zoning of the Municipal Code, Section 6-11) to construct a 12-story (133.3-foot high) multiple-family building with 101 residential units, 3,696-square feet of commercial space and 13 open parking spaces. The applicant seeks site development allowances for the number of dwelling units, building height, floor area ratio (FAR), number of on-site parking spaces provided, and building setbacks from the east, north and northwest property lines. In addition, the applicant may seek and the Plan Commission may consider additional Site Development Allowances as may be necessary or desirable for the proposed development. The Plan Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council, the final determining body for this proposal.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters invited the applicant and the opposing council to make their closing arguments.

Bernard Citron, attorney for 1571 Maple, noted the effort made by the developers to work with the City and propose a development which balanced the interests of all invested parties. He maintains that this project is compatible and consistent with the surrounding area in terms of height and use. Mr. Citron stated that this development provides public benefits, enhances the streetscape, utilizes an underdeveloped site, and meets the Standards of Approval outlined in the City Code.

Tom Ramsdell, attorney for Winthrop Club Homeowners Association, 1571 Elmwood Avenue, closed his argument by explaining how off-site parking will deter women, the elderly, and the handicapped from living in this development. He also explained that the disrupted views at 1571 Elmwood Avenue would adversely impact property values. Mr. Ramsdell upheld that this development does not follow guidelines set in the Downtown Plan and noted the concerns of surrounding residents.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters allowed the applicant to provide a rebuttal statement. Mr. Citron rebutted that the Downtown Plan is a guideline, not a governing document. He notes that this project is a balancing act. He stated that the opposition’s major concern was their view. He surmised that there were no ordinances that determined that existing residents’ views had to be protected by law if a structure was to be built on a developable lot. He closed his argument by observing the fact that any women or elderly who choose to live here will not be endangered by the off-site parking.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters closed the testimony for this case and started deliberations.

Mr. Latinovic noted the proposed staff conditions outlined in the staff’s report.
Commissioner Lewis voiced concerns regarding the ADA requirements for parking spaces. Commissioner Ford suggested that 5 ADA spaces might be a viable condition but suggested that the Commission continue with deliberations until a vote was necessary.

Commissioner Pigozzi inquired whether there are state laws in terms of decibel levels for the rooftop AC units. Mr. Latinovic responded that maximum permitted decibel levels do exist and will have to be met. This is why staff is suggesting a condition for sound mitigating enclosure that would additionally reduce noise levels. Mr. Latinovic further clarified that the applicant would be required to provide sound abatement specifications during final Design and Project Review (DAPR) approval before the permit is issued.

Commissioner Dubin asked if there was a limit as to how long the green wall embankment would be maintained. Mr. Latinovic responded that the development will assume all responsibility for maintaining this space same as any landscaping on their property.

Commissioner Ford noted that 1 ADA space was being proposed where 5 ADA spaces would normally be required if all 114 parking spaces were provided in one location. He suggested that as a compromise 3 ADA spaces be provided on site and 2 more required in the Maple Street Garage. Commissioner Goddard stated that parking is a necessity in that area and that 1 ADA space should be sufficient. Commissioner Dubin also noted that the extra ADA spaces may not be utilized.

Commissioner Ford made the motion to add 3 ADA spaces as a condition to the proposal.

Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion failed with a lack of majority (3-4).

Commissioner Goddard made the motion to approve all recommended staff conditions for the planned development.

Commissioner Pigozzi seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 7-0.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters proceeded with evaluation of the relevant standards for approval of planned developments one by one. Commissioner Ford specifically noted that the development presents no negative cumulative effect since the considered impact does not include future proposals, but only existing conditions. Furthermore, he stated that the planned development may diminish some values at One Evanston building; however, as a whole, this development also may very well increase the value of many other businesses and properties in the area. He also recognized that staff demonstrated in the memo how the development was compatible and consistent with both the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Plan. It was also noted that even though the Form Based Code portion of the
Downtown Plan was not adopted, this development does comply with other guidelines presented in that plan. The Plan is a guiding document that indicated a taller building could be built south of One Evanston. It makes more sense to build the height closer to the train station rather than further away south of One Evanston. He believes the project meets the standard within the Zoning Ordinance for compliance with the Downtown Plan.

Commissioner Opdycke explained the intent of the Downtown Plan was to define the Traditional District within the downtown and prevent canyonization. This project includes a three story portion along Davis and then includes a generous setback before the building goes up to twelve stories. The project is therefore consistent with the intent of the Downtown Plan. He also voiced concern about parking.

The Commission concluded going through the rest of the Standards for Approval. Mr. Latinovic confirmed the seven site development allowances sought are within the maximums allowed.

Commissioner Ford made a motion to recommend approval of the proposed planned development with conditions outlined in the staff report as the Commission has found all Standards for Approval of the Planned Development have been met.

Commissioner Godard seconded the motion.

A roll call was taken and the motion was approved 7-0.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters informed the public the case moves on to the Planning and Development Committee of the City Council and ultimately must be approved by the City Council. He suggested taking a ten minute break at 9:15 pm.

The Commission reconvened at 9:25 p.m.

4. NEW BUSINESS

   A. MODIFICATIONS TO ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE PLAN COMMISSION

Commissioner Ford made a motion to send the Draft modifications back to the Rules Committee.

Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 7-0.

   B. ELECTION OF CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR, LIAISONS AND ZONING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to nominate Commissioner Ford as Chair.

Commissioner Goddard seconded the motion.
A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 6-0-1. Commissioner Ford abstained.

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to nominate Commissioner Lewis as Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Ford seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 6-0-1, Commissioner Lewis abstained.

Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Dubin made a motion agreed to add the new chairman-elect Ford and vice-chairman-elect Lewis to the Rules Committee and agreed to keep all other current liaisons and committee memberships as they are through March in light of the newly elected Chairman.

Commissioner Goddard seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved 6-0-1, Commissioner Lewis abstained.

Associate Opdycke mentioned that staff had informed him that a regular voting member of the Commission should be the liaison to the Housing and Community Development Act Committee, where he served as the liaison. He invited any members of the Commission to take his place. Discussion followed on when the Committee meets. There being no volunteers, Chairman Pro Tempore Peters suggested the liaison role remain the same as other appointments through March.

Commissioner Shure suggested that the Chairman-elect might want to consider joining the Zoning Committee as a chair as well.

Chairman Pro Tempore Peters thanked the Commissioners for their invaluable volunteer work to serve the City during the time he has been the Chair.

Mr. Latinovic mentioned he will provide regular updates to the Board regarding Planned Development projects and text amendments. He noted that a text amendment regarding parking requirements that was heard by the Commission in December was recently approved by the Planning and Development Committee and is pending City Council approval. Mr. Latinovic informed the Commission that the City Council Rules Committee has made changes and recommended improvements to communication between the City Council and Boards and Committees. He mentioned he will send an email to everyone with information about the new guidelines for current boards and committees. Mr. Latinovic also stated that an end of the year Commission report is required to be submitted by the Chair to the City Council, and that he will begin work on the annual report summary with Chairman Pro Tempore Peters.

Commissioner Ford expressed his gratitude towards Chairman Pro Tempore Peters for recruiting him to the Commission three years ago. He praised the Chairman for his leadership, stating he feels more comfortable serving as chair having learned
from Chairman Pro Tempore Peters how to properly and efficiently run the meetings. The Commission and staff gave a standing ovation to Chairman Pro Tempore Peters.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Ford made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved by voice call 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Damir Latinovic
Neighborhood and Land Use Planner
Community Development Department