MEETING MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 11, 2015
7:00 P.M.
Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Council Chambers

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

Members Absent: Kwesi Steele, Lenny Asaro

Associate Members Present: Stuart Opdycke, David Galloway

Associate Members Absent: Seth Freeman

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

Presiding Member: Jim Ford, Chairman

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Ford called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. and explained the general meeting procedure, schedule, agenda items, time limits on public testimony and opportunities for cross examination of witnesses. Chairman Ford 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: February 11, 2015

Chairman Ford noted that the Dempster-Main Overlay and the first half of the text amendment for fences were taken by roll call and approved unanimously. The roll call votes should be reflected in the minutes.

Commissioner Goddard made a motion to approve the minutes from February 11, 2015 with the corrections.

Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

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

Chairman Ford swore in all individuals from the public intending to speak tonight.
3. NEW BUSINESS

A. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

1620 Central Street

John Myefski, Myefski Architects, has applied for a Special Use for a Planned Development in the O1-Office District and oCSC-Central Street Overlay District (Title 6-Zoning of the Municipal Code, Section 6-15) to construct a four-story (45 feet high) multiple-family building with 47 residential units and 54 underground parking spaces. The applicant seeks site development allowances for: 1) the number of parking spaces, 2) the required step-back for the third and fourth floors from Central Street, 3) a landscape buffer for the loading dock in rear, and 4) the building height over the transitional height plane requirement along the south property line. 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.

Mr. Latinovic presented the staff report. He explained that this proposal requires special use approval due to the lot size and the size of the multi-family residential development. He listed the public benefits and stated that the proposal satisfies the Standards of Approval. Staff recommends approval with the conditions noted in the staff report.

John Myefski, architect, explained the proposal. He elaborated on the proximity to transit systems, such as the CTA, Metra, and future Divvy Bike Stations that would make a development like this desirable. The development team has made a conscious effort to involve the surrounding community in the process of this planned development and have made considerable changes to the project based on community input. The project has stayed under the maximum Floor Area Ratio and has stayed under the maximum number of dwelling units. They are asking for a relief from parking requirements among other things. Mr. Myefski went on to explain the project in further detail and noted the public benefits.

Commissioner Shure asked if parents use the alley for drop-off purposes, to which Mr. Myefski said only on occasion, however there is no perfect solution for the alley. Commissioner Shure also asked about the water table and whether a bike lane was planned for Central Street.

There being no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Ford invited questions from the public.

Jacqui Black, 1626 Central Street, asked if the building would be pet friendly, what kinds of windows would be used on the side of the building facing residential uses, and if critters in the existing building would be addressed. Mr. Myefski answered her questions and elaborated that they have agreed not to add extra exterior lighting.

Jim Hughes, 2518 Hartzell Street, asked questions about the 10-foot easement, where Divvy locations would be, if the Commission would consider additional guest parking requirements, and whether the car sharing and parking negotiations with Northwestern University will be complete before the Certificate of Occupancy is
issued. Mr. Myefski answered his questions and elaborated that the car sharing service providers would not commit to any contracts as of yet, but it is in the works.

Jeff Smith, 2724 Harrison, asked if there would be lease restrictions regarding vehicles and whether any sort of home-based business would be held to those as well. Mr. Myefski stated that parking would be restricted per the lease, and was not sure how they would deal with home occupation businesses yet, but it will have to meet the City Zoning Ordinance.

Amy O’Keefe, 2535 Ashland Avenue, thanked the developers for considering the needs for the school.

Mr. Myefski touched on some of the construction plans and potential timeline for the project. He hopes to expedite the construction timeline and limit noise.

Amy Rogers, 2535 Ashland Avenue, asked about utilities and green space relative to LEED, restricting parking on Ashland as a condition, and if detached garages could still be built with variances on neighboring properties.

Chris Kahn, citizen, asked if a parking agreement had been arranged with Northwestern University. Mr. Myefski stated that parking has been arranged for the duration of construction; however they cannot provide overnight parking. Other parking alternatives are being investigated.

Pat Fiene, 1606 Central Street, asked questions regarding the proximity of the proposed balconies to the existing properties. Mr. Myefski stated that the balconies project minimally outward, feature shifted windows, and landscape buffering is being provided.

Chairman Ford opened the meeting to public testimony.

Ms. Black asked about the proximity of the windows and balconies on the west side of the proposed structure.

Larry Cline, 1606 Central Street, asked how this proposal addresses low income housing and stated his dissatisfaction with buffering. He also noted that the traffic study did not include the new restaurant nearby. Mr. Myefski explained that low income housing is not required by Ordinance due to proposed rental nature of the property and stated he is willing to work on the landscape buffering.

Ms. O’Keefe wanted to celebrate the collaborative design method that the developers used to involve the surrounding community. She then raised questions regarding the O1 zoning designation and the substandard size of the lot. She also questioned the benefits of this proposal.

Mr. Smith noted that public transit can be difficult at times and car ownership has increased. He proposed making parking a condition of the lease and questioned the embodiment of the Central Street Plan. He noted the developer’s refreshing amount of effort to confer with the community.
Amy Rogers, 2524 Ashland Avenue, agreed with Ms. O'Keefe’s earlier comments, and raised concerns about building height and traffic flow.

Ms. Fiene stated that the impending construction will drive her out of her home office. She raised concerns regarding benefits to the school and neighborhood, and the lack of affordable housing.

Maureen Rosati, citizen, testified to the congestion in the neighborhood due to the tight block, school, stadium, and various Northwestern events.

Mr. Myefski then made his closing comments noting that he was fine with prohibiting street parking as a condition of the lease, and due to various kinds of transportation in the area, a need for this kind of development does exist.

Mr. Latinovic noted that changes to the proposed east elevation as noted in applicant’s presentation will need to be resubmitted prior to project being reviewed by P&D Committee. If approved, the project would again be reviewed at DAPR.

Chairman Ford closed public testimony and suggested a 10 minute break.

The Plan Commission entered into Deliberations.

Commissioner Goddard noted her concerns regarding traffic on Ashland and in the alley.

Chairman Ford asked if the development allowances and loading dock needed to be discussed.

At Commissioner Lewis’ request, Mr. Latinovic clarified that the development complies with setbacks, but not step back conditions along Central Street.

Chairman Ford asked if the reduction in parking spaces creates an on-site parking issue. Commissioner Pigozzi noted that he did not see how any development could be constructed without the parking request. He pointed out that at least the parking was underground.

Commissioner Shure stated his support of the parking reductions as well. There will be conditions in the lease and at least 1 spot will be available for each unit.

Commissioner Peters believes the lease condition will solve parking issues and does not want to add restrictions on top of the Zoning Ordinance.

Associate Opdycke stated that if he had a vote, he would be in favor of the proposal. He was impressed with the developer’s efforts to accommodate the community and noted that 1 parking spot per unit is better than the proposed parking plan of the 1571 Maple development.

Associate Galloway concurred with Commissioners Shure, Peters, and Opdycke. He also expressed admiration of how the developer went about addressing this project with the community.
The Commission discussed the Standards. They noted the purposes and policies of the Comprehensive Plan as noted in the staff memo. Commissioner Peters stated that the proposed development minimized impact. The parking lease and traffic issues were discussed. The Commission considered and concluded all Standards for Approval have been met.

Commissioner Peters made a motion to recommend approval of Planned Development for 1620 Central Street with all conditions outlined in staff report memo.

Commissioner Shure seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Ayes: Commissioners Peters, Shure, Lewis, Dubin, Goddard, Pigozzi and Chairman Ford.

Nyes: none

4. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Appointments of Associate Members, Committee Members and Liaisons

Chairman Ford recommended Associate Commissioners Galloway, Opdycke and Freeman for appointment. Commissioners Shure, Peters, and Asaro will soon be eligible for Associate Commissioner Positions. Chairman Ford recommended Commissioners Peters and Asaro for Associate positions after their regular terms expire. Commissioner Shure explained he is not interested in continuing to serve as an associate member.

Appointments of Liaisons and members of committees:

Chairman Ford proposed he and Commissioner Lewis continue being on the Rules Committee with possible meeting dates in October or November and may add additional members to that committee if necessary.

Commissioner Dubin was recommended as liaison to the Economic Development Committee.

Commissioner Lewis was recommended as liaison to the Planning and Development Committee.

Commissioner Goddard was recommended as liaison to the Housing and Community Development Act Committee.

Chairman Ford was recommended as liaison to the Transportation and Parking Committee.

Associate Member Freeman was recommended to remain as liaison to the Public Place Names Committee.
Commissioner Goddard volunteered to serve as liaison to the ADA Advisory Board.

Commissioner Pigozzi was recommended to be added as a member to the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

Commissioner Dubin made a motion to approve all appointments as recommended and as discussed.

Commissioner Pigozzi seconded the motion.

A voice call was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Latinovic noted that all Plan Commission members are welcome to attend any of the committee meetings discussed.

**B. 2014 Plan Commission Annual Report**

Chairman Ford thanked Commissioner Peters and Staff for working on the annual report.

Chairman Ford noted that the Zoning Committee will meet the following Wednesday at 7 p.m. and the next regular meeting of the Plan Commission will be on April 8, 2015.

Mr. Latinovic conveyed an email to the Commission from the City Manager’s Office regarding training opportunities on the 21st and 24th of April.

Mr. Latinovic then informed the Commission that 1571 Maple was introduced to the Planning and Development Committee and recommended for introduction at City Council for consideration and action on March 23, 2015.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was received.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Peters 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 10:14 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Damir Latinovic
Interim Planning and Zoning Administrator
Community Development Department