Plan Commission Members Present: Scott Peters (Chair), Jim Ford, Richard Shure, Seth Freeman, Barbara Putta, Patricia Ledesma, Melanie Johnson, Stuart Opdycke (Associate), Lenny Asaro

Plan Commission Members Absent: Kwesi Steele, David Galloway (Associate)

Staff Present: Susan Guderley, Melissa Klotz, Ken Cox, Sarah Flax

Presiding Member: Scott Peters, Chairman Plan Commission;

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Chair Peters announced that the Plan Commission would meet on July 17, 2013, to consider the business on the agenda of its June 12 meeting that was canceled due to the closure of the Civic Center related to severe weather.

2. PLANNED DEVELOPMENT 13PLND-0052
635 1611-1629 Chicago Avenue (North Shore Residence)
John Myefski, representative for Horizon Realty Group, developer of the proposed project, applies for a Special Use for an Independent Living Facility and a Planned Development in the D4 Downtown Transition District (Zoning Code Section 6-11-5-3 and 6-11-1-10) to construct an 8-story, 85' tall addition to the existing North Shore Residence (formerly North Shore Hotel) at 1619 Chicago Avenue. The addition will consist of 65 independent units and 2,600 square feet of ground floor commercial space. The project also includes the remodeling and combining of existing residences in the original structure, reducing their number from 185 to 140 units. Together, the proposed remodeling and addition will result in a net increase of 20 units, for a total of 205 units. Respectively, the Zoning Board of Appeals and Plan Commission are the recommending bodies for the Special Use Permit and Planned Development to the City Council. City Council is the determining body in this case.

Jeff Michael, co-owner of Horizon Realty which owns the subject property, stated that he purchased the North Shore Hotel in 2012. At that time, many of its units were vacant and the operator was facing foreclosure. Horizon Realty’s intent is to revitalize and expand the facility so that it can successfully operate as a senior facility. To accomplish this, he intends to both renovate the existing structure and construct a new addition, the proposed planned development. Renovation of the existing rooms will address their obsolete design, notably their lack of individual bathrooms and kitchens; this work is currently underway. The proposed addition will add both residential units and shared amenities and facilities (indoor swimming pool, movie theater, wellness center) that will be on a par with peer senior facilities. Renovation of the existing building is planned so as to not displace its current residential tenants. Nor, will it affect its ground floor...
commercial spaces fronting on Chicago Avenue or Davis Street. One of these, Tapas Barcelona, currently uses a portion of the addition’s proposed site for its outdoor café. However, this function will be accommodated by the addition.

John Myefski, applicant for both the Special Use Permit and Planned Development and architect for Horizon Realty, reviewed the components of the requested zoning relief and planned development. The existing facility is a legal, non-conforming use as Independent Living Facilities are neither a permitted or special use within the D4 Downtown District. M. Klotz explained that the North Shore Hotel was operating as a retirement hotel under a special use permit granted in 1978. This use category was subsequently eliminated by the 1993 comprehensive amendment of the zoning ordinance. This request for a Special Use Permit applies to the larger site, 1611-1629 Chicago Avenue and bringing both the existing structure and the proposed addition into compliance with current zoning.

The planned development for the addition applies to the portion of the site located at 1619 Chicago Avenue, a space currently occupied by an outdoor pool, garden area and Tapas Barcelona’s outdoor café. It will contain a total of 65 residential units. The existing building now contains 185 units which will be reduced to 140 during renovation, as a result of combining and reconfiguring their spaces. Together, the renovation and addition will result in a total of 205 units, a net increase of 20 units. Units in the original structure will be a mix of studio, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom apartments. Units in the addition will all be 1 bedroom.

Mr. Myefski stated that another goal of the project is to return the former North Shore Hotel building to its original glory. Though the structure is not a designated landmark, both interior and exterior renovation work reflects their interest in celebrating the building’s past. In particular, the intent is to renovate the building’s ballroom and to make it available for multiple events and users. The building’s lobby, which has been the subject of numerous remodeling projects since the 1950’s, will also be gutted and renovated to provide a more open and attractive space along the lines of its original appearance.

In addition to the new residential units, the addition will provide new common areas and modern amenities, including indoor swimming pool and locker rooms, movie theater, wellness center and roof top patio. Administrative offices currently located in the original building will also be relocated to the addition. A signature feature of the addition’s ground floor will be a winter garden, topped by a 40x40 foot skylight, that will serve as both resident common space and connector to the original hotel building. Along its Chicago Avenue frontage, the addition’s ground floor will also feature a 2,500 square foot commercial space and covered outdoor patio for Tapas Barcelona.

If granted, the addition will trigger the need for 9 additional parking spaces. There are currently 23 on-site and thirty-two will be required. To address this and avoid the need for a variance the owners will lease 9 parking spaces in the City parking garage at Church and Chicago.

Chair Peters asked both Mr. Myefski and Mr. Michaels if they could confirm that they were familiar with the project’s exhibits and drawings submitted to the Plan Commission and ZBA and that, other than the plans related to the canopy and facility signage, they...
intended to adhere to the project as proposed? Both Mr. Myefski and Mr. Michaels stated that they were familiar with the exhibits and intended to proceed in a manner consistent with the submitted documents and their testimony.

The ZBA adjourned their portion of the meeting and the Plan Commission convened to discuss the proposed Planned Development Application. Chair Peters invited questions from the Plan Commission Members.

Noting that the new addition will share and be served by the existing building's entrances, Member Freeman asked the distance between its elevators and main Chicago Avenue entrance. Mr. Myefski stated that would be 160 feet but noted that residents will also have the option to exit the building by Tapas Barcelona, a distance of 90 feet. Mr. Freeman also commented that he believes that the additions northern elevation lacked windows and should carry over the half-timber motif of the original North Shore Hotel building. Mr. Myefski noted that there were some windows in an inset portion of that façade but that windows on that wall could be an issue should the property to the north be developed, largely due to fire code considerations.

Member Opdycke asked for an explanation of the effect of the addition to the windows on the northern elevation of the original building, a clarification as to whether units would be rental or ownership, whether there was any provision for affordable units, and whether or not there is a requirement that the project achieve LEED status.

Mr. Myefski stated that most of the existing building’s northern façade is inset from the addition and, therefore, only a few north-facing units will be affected by the addition. Most will either look out over the light well above the winter garden or will be separated by about 14-feet from the addition. Mr. Michaels stated that the units will be for rent at market rates. He anticipates rent increases of 20% (which includes a dining plan) but that there will be incentive programs to try to accommodate current residents. M. Klotz stated that LEED compliance is not required, but is encouraged.

Commissioner Asaro complimented the project for providing a way to extend the useful life of the existing hotel building. But, in light of the comments related to the decision to limited number of windows in the addition’s northern elevation, he asked whether there are any current plans to redevelop the two, 1-story buildings immediately to the north. Mr. Myefski stated that Horizon Realty maintains several long-term leases with the businesses in these buildings and that there are no current plans to redevelop these properties.

Member Putta asked whether the impact of special events in the ballroom had been considered by either the traffic or parking analysis. Mr. Myefski stated that while this was discussed for the traffic analysis, it was not possible to attach any definitive scenario(s) to its future use. The effect upon parking is considered to be within the capacity of the city’s Davis Street parking structure, which is currently underutilized.

Member Shure asked the target demographics for this project. Mr. Michaels stated that most of the hotel’s remaining tenants are in their mid-80s. It is expected that over time and with the addition of the planned amenities, the median age of tenants would drop to the mid-70’s. He stated that there will be no minimum age requirement.
Member Putta asked how the project will impact current residents. Mr. Michaels stated that the building currently has a significant number of vacancies but that current tenants have 13-month leases. He anticipates some attrition of current tenants, but is offering incentives to try to offset expected rent increases.

The Plan Commission addressed the project’s compliance with the design guidelines for planned developments and standards for a Planned Development. The Commission found that the proposed planned development had addressed all applicable design guidelines for planned developments, noting that those for signage and lighting must be addressed in detail during plan review, and that the proposed planned development does comply with all standards of a Planned Development.

Commissioner Ford motioned to provide a recommendation to the City Council to approve the requested planned development 13PLND-0052 at 1611-1629 Chicago.

Commissioner Shure seconded the motion.

Motion passes unanimously (8-0).

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Susan Guderley, Neighborhood Planner
Community and Economic Development Department