

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting  
Minutes of September 26, 2011  
City Council Chambers – 7:15 p.m.  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center**

ALDERMEN PRESENT: J. Fiske, D. Holmes, A. Rainey, D. Wilson, M. Wynne

STAFF PRESENT: G. Farrar, C. Godwin, S. Griffin, W. Hallen, D. Marino,  
B. Newman

PRESIDING OFFICIAL: Ald. Wilson

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**I. DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

A quorum being present, Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 12, 2011 MEETING MINUTES**

**Ald. Rainey moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Ald. Holmes.**

**Ald. Fiske moved to amend her comment in the minutes regarding P3 (Bed & Breakfast at 300 Church St.) as follows:**

- *The issue lies in what the ZBA identified as a commercial use in a residential zone, since 98% of the ownership does not live on the site*

**Ald. Rainey moved approval of the minutes as amended, seconded by Ald. Fiske.**

**The minutes of the September 12, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously 5-0, as amended.**

**III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**(P1) Ordinance 80-O-11 Amending the Approved Planned Development (PD) for 1700-1722 Central Street (7-O-7)**

**The Site Plan and Appearance Review Committee and staff recommend approval of Ordinance 80-O-11 amending the approved planned development (7-O-07) for 1700-1722 Central Street. The Site Plan and Appearance Committee recommendation was based on a proposal of 78 units. The unit count has been requested to increase from the approved 51 units to 80 units. The on-site parking has been proposed to decrease from 100 spaces in the approved PD to 81 spaces, including one space for a car-sharing vehicle.**

**For Introduction**

**Ald. Wynne moved approval, seconded by Ald. Fiske.**

Chair Wilson explained that the developer would give his presentation, after which the public would be called on to speak.

Robert Horne, Principal of Dodge Capital, LLC, the developer of 1700 Central (The Eastwood) introduced Michael Breclaw of OKW Architecture, Luay Aboona of KLOA Traffic Consultants, and Gregg Graines and David Reifman of DLA Piper Law.

Mr. Horne explained that the planned development for a 4 story mixed used that was approved in 2007 was halted by the economic downturn. He said they have maintained the property for the past four years and after studying several alternatives, this proposal made sense, which is substantially similar to the original proposal in that:

- The F.A.R., height and footprint remain the same
- The retail and parking remain on the ground level

The proposal:

- Increases the number of units from 51 condos to 80 luxury rentals
- Decreases parking from 99 to 81 parking spaces
- Increases the amount of retail space to a minimum of 10,500 sq. ft.
- Improves the quality of retail space by increasing the depth from 36' to 50'
- Widens the alley by 5' to 19.5'
- Proposed to makes Eastwood Avenue 2-way from Central St. to the alley, decreasing the flow of traffic into the neighborhood
- Is LEED Silver level with highly efficient HVAC, a green roof over much of the parking area; close to transit
- Is supported by market studies which show that condos are no longer being built
- Will re-establish a tax base which will bring in more than the theater, formerly on the site

Mr. Breclaw explained further about the architecture of the proposal:

- The apartment lobby, full time rental/management office and a cyber lounge with a fireplace and fitness center for tenants will be at the west end of the ground floor
- Parking is accessed in the alley (individual garages) and on Eastwood
- 15' sidewalk on Central will allow for outdoor furniture and bike racks and conforms with the Central Street Master Plan
- Building will be set back in the middle section along Central St. with a strong canopy over the residential entrance at the west end of the building
- Rear of building is to be U-shaped with the 2nd floor green roof, which will not be a shared space
- 15' increase in setback on green roof
- More options for retail with residential entrance at the west end instead of in the center of the north elevation, as previously proposed
- 2nd Floor units on Central St. will have balconies
- Massing is broken up with strong bookends on either end and the middle setback
- Tall windows with transoms above the sliding doors
- Materials: masonry base to 15'; highly efficient, low maintenance, hardy panel siding on exterior wall above

- 20 private garage doors along the alley without indoor access and one open space for an IGO or Zip car
- Height: 48' to roof
- 1-3 bedrooms using luxury materials such as granite counters

Mr. Aboona explained that the traffic study revealed:

- The impact to traffic will not be significant due to the CTA, Metra and Pace bus line and shuttle services to NWU and Northwestern University Health Systems Hospital
- The former theater generated more traffic than this use would
- 1 space per unit is adequate based on the transit access, car sharing option, rental vs. ownership of units, parking needs of commercial retail

Chair Wilson called the public to speak:

John Labbe of 1727 Harrison spoke against the proposed amended PD:

- He does not believe there will be enough parking for retail customers; none is provided by the development for retail
- Appearance is different from original proposal
- Other buildings in the area are brick on all sides – not hardy board on any
- No guarantee that the apartments will be luxury
- The Central Street Neighbors believe they should have time for more input

Claire Labbe of 1727 Harrison spoke against:

- Agrees with John Labbe about parking issues
- Census data the developer used is from 2000
- Safety concern about foot traffic in alley for garage access
- Employees of retail cannot park on side streets until after 7:00 a.m.; parking on Central is 2 hour; lots are only available in the evening
- Parking study was not done during the summer; no school in session
- Doesn't want the area to be burdened if it becomes revitalized

Caroline Winkler of 1721 Harrison spoke against:

- Had a small house behind her previous to the PD
- New residents in development will look into her yard from their 7' windows
- Asked whether current residents are being asked to subsidize the value of the development by decreasing the value of theirs
- Doesn't like the hardy board on rear of building
- Believes the tenants will be mainly graduate students

Marjory Catoire of 1717 Harrison spoke against:

- None of the apartment buildings in the area have parking; adding 80 more people with cars
- Students/tenants will be moving intermittently causing blockage in the alley
- Asked where the snow would go that falls in the alley; currently the residents take care of the plowing

Gary Callgren of 1726 Central (next to development) spoke against:

- Too much traffic coming through alley
- Parents of the student tenants will park in front of the garages
- Commuter traffic is bad; they park everywhere
- Balconies will be over his roof, invading his privacy

Joe Hill of 2600 Broadway spoke against:

- Has never seen a traffic study that shows there will be impact
- Wants proposal to go back before Plan Commission

David Staub of 2627 Broadway spoke against:

- President of the Central Street Neighbors Association, who was in favor of the original planned development believes it should be looked at again as it is not substantially the same as the original PD in that:
  - The density will increase by over 50%
  - Changing from condo to rental
  - Appearance not as nice; less luxurious materials
  - Devoting a portion of retail to tenant use
  - Large development merits attention of the Plan Commission
  - Citizens should be able to work with developer to remedy shortcomings

Jeff Smith of 2724 Harrison spoke on behalf of Central Street Neighbors against:

- Referred to the conditions of the PD, the developer cannot make a major adjustment
- Referred to 6-3-5-15: Special use terminates after land is vacant; extension has not been granted for the special use
- Rendering shows sun shining on building which is not possible because it is northern exposure
- Parking survey does not include the area west of the viaduct; merchants there will say employee parking is a problem
- Only 1 loading dock is proposed where 3 are required
- Showed examples of backed up traffic on Central Street
- Difficult to park on Chancellor, Central and Eastwood; commuters walk several blocks to park in non-metered spots
- Didn't like the comparison to Seattle or Milwaukee; Evanston has a higher density

Bob Danon, gallery owner at Poplar and Central, spoke in favor of the proposal:

- Went through the opposition to the 11<sup>th</sup> and Central Optima project and it has enhanced the neighborhood
- There is a lot of parking for the businesses at night
- He believes the development will enhance the property values in the area by revitalizing it
- If parking was enforced by the City, it would not be an issue
- Took a photo at 2:30 pm of Central street; there was 1 car and 1 person walking; the block is dead
- Believes this is progress

Chair Wilson thanked the public for their comments and correspondence.

Ald. Wynne asked the architect which buildings in Evanston used Hardyboard, to which Mr. Breclaw said Nathan Kipnis has used it on several buildings in Evanston. He agreed to send a list to the Committee of such buildings. He said the AMLI project is using a great deal of Hardyboard also.

Ald. Wynne asked Mr. Aboona why the downtown was used for comparison, to which he replied that the studies were readily available. He added that the Reserve

has a ratio of 1 to 1 parking to which Ald. Wynne replied that the condos at 811 Chicago and 515 Main have 1 to 1 parking ratios and the tenants far exceed in terms of car ownership; area is more saturated than expected and she does not believe the picture is accurate. Mr. Aboona noted that those are condo owners and the proposed are rentals, shown to own less cars, an important distinction. He believes there will be enough parking because of the shared car, bike racks, and the fact that they are separating the use of the garage spaces on top of the rent; the use of Ryan Field's lot for parking and the lots across the street, which the owner has granted permission to use, and the fact that there is more than ample parking on the street.

Ald. Rainey asked at what point do we begin to discourage ownership of cars; if spots are not available or at a premium, it will be discouraged, adding that they need to practice what they preach; she mentioned the other new developments in the City and noted the excuses for not wanting the development: the alley was too narrow, the Hardyboard is not acceptable, though Nate Kipnis uses it and it is green; she said she sensed an undertone of a problem with rental to Northwestern students.

Ald. Fiske argued that the traffic will be an issue; she said student rental is good but the retail is almost all services in the area where they live and not destination retail. She wondered how a large retailer would impact traffic, to which Mr. Aboona replied that the studies were all in destination retail areas. She said Hardyboard looks cheap and that the other buildings are all brick; she added that where uses abut, there is always stress.

Mr. Breclaw said if the building is done well, the windows, shifts in plane and shifts in color will work. He added that the 1500 sq. ft. units have been reduced to 900 sq. ft. average and that they are using contemporary materials in the strongest way and the way they are used makes a difference.

Ald. Fiske said it was good that they are planning to widen the alley because there will be lots of turnover with students renting. She said there is a problem changing from a condo to a rental building and she thinks this project should go back to the Plan Commission because it is so different.

Ald. Wilson agreed with Ald. Rainey that the developer does not need to encourage cars by providing more parking. He added that one cannot expect the car ownership level of a purchased unit.

**The Committee voted by majority 3-2 with Ald. Fiske and Ald. Wynne opposed, to amend 80-O-11.**

**(P2) Hearing: Appeal of the Decision of the Sign Review and Appeals Board Made on the Wall Sign Variation Requested by Office Depot**

**Office Depot has filed a request for an appeal of the decision of the Sign Review and Appeals Board on July 25, 2011 concerning a sign variation for Office Depot store at 2722 Green Bay Road. At the August 8, 2011 meeting the Planning and Development Committee set the date of September 26, 2011 for a hearing to occur on the appeal.**

**For Action**

**Ald Wynne moved to deny the hearing of the appeal, seconded by Ald. Fiske.**

Jerome Koch and Rosalyn Hatfield, representing Office Depot, said they had made significant changes to the property and that the signs need to be visible and viable, and must be seen while moving in traffic:

- Improved property
- Former sign was 15'6" higher
- Green canopy would have to be moved at an expense if signs are moved
- Walgreens has devoted a larger section of their remodeled store to office supplies
- Showed illustrations of former and proposed signage
- Originally 4'tall and 25' high
- On north side: the letters "Offi" are 5'6" and 21' high; the other letters are 4'7 and 25' high
- On Green Bay side the proposed letters are 19' high; they dropped them as low as possible to 12'5": the letters "Offi are 16'5", which is 11" over allowed height

Ald. Holmes suggested that the lights go off earlier than 9:00 when the store closes, to which the applicant replied that that they need to encourage business as long as the store is open.

Mr. Koch argued that the Jenks side sign faces the brick Dominick's wall.

Ald. Wynne agreed with Ald. Rainey to separate the two signs and vote against the Jenks side sign because she can see the reflection of a sign that shines in her window starting at 4:30 pm.

Chair Wilson called the public to speak:

Randy Otte of 2744 Woodbine spoke against the Green Bay side sign:

- Asked that it be compliant
- Two people were present representing 15-20 neighbors
- The signage failed to meet 6 standards of the code
- The previous signage was affective and compliant
- Removal of the 2 story parking improves the visibility of the signs
- The proposed sign on Green Bay shines into people's homes on Woodbine and Poplar
- The proposed signs are not in character with the neighborhood; the previous ones were compliant and in character with the neighborhood
- 150 residential and commercial neighbors signed a petition to uphold the sign regulations
- All the other businesses along Green Bay have affective, compliant signs; business owners agree that the code should be enforced consistently: all six standards must be met
- The hardship cannot be created by the applicant: in this is case it created by an architectural element of the applicant's
- Anything above the 15.5' railroad embankment is visible in the neighbors'

windows

- The Sign Board's decision was unanimous; this appeal is for Office Depot's convenience

Saul Wexler of 248 Woodbine spoke against the Green Bay side sign:

- The sign is better suited to a strip mall
- The current size sign is visible on Green Bay; people are only traveling 30 mph.

Craig Peterson of 2745 Woodbine spoke against the Green Bay side sign:

- He is a 30 year law professor who has studied land use and has been a consultant to the National Appellate Division of Appraisers
- The sign would harm public welfare by reducing property values (the final of the six standards required by the regulation), causing external obsolescence
- Competent realtors would price property lower because of light caused by sign

**Ald. Wynne moved to deny both aspects of the appeal.**

**Ald. Rainey moved to amend the motion and to move approval of the Green Bay side sign and to require compliance on the Jenks side sign.**

**The Committee voted unanimously 5-0 to accept the Sign Board's denial of the Jenks side sign.**

**The Committee voted 3-2 to reject the Sign Board's denial of the Green Bay side sign.**

#### **IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

There were no items for discussion.

#### **V. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bobbie Newman