Planning & Development Committee Meeting  
Minutes of November 28, 2011  
City Council Chambers – 7:15 p.m.  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center

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

STAFF PRESENT:  G. Farrar, S. Flax, S. Griffin, D. Marino, J. Murphy, B. Newman  
J. Saul

PRESIDING OFFICIAL:  Ald. Holmes

I. DECLARATION OF QUORUM
A quorum being present, Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:19 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 14, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Ald. Rainey moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

The minutes of the November 14, 2011 meeting were approved unanimously 5-0.

Chair Holmes announced that she would call those who signed up to speak before each item on the agenda.

III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Resolution 65-R-11: Approving of a Plat of Consolidation for Two Lots Located at 2664-68 Sheridan Road
Staff recommends Planning and Development Committee and City Council approval of Resolution 65-R-11. The property owner of 2664 Sheridan Road, an owner-occupied single family home, has purchased 2668 Sheridan Road, a single family home to the north. The owner proposes to demolish 2668 Sheridan Road and consolidate this parcel with the parcel to the south, where he resides.  
For Action

Ald. Rainey moved to recommend approval of Resolution 65-R-11, seconded by Ald. Fiske.

Ms. Rosemary O’Neil, a neighbor of 2664 Sheridan Rd., said she is excited about the improvement they are making by tearing down a mundane cottage and putting a beautiful addition on their home, in these economic times when there is not a great deal of building going on.

The Committee thanked her for her comment.

The Committee voted unanimously 5-0 to recommend approval of Resolution 65-R-11.
Ordinance 91-O-11: Expiration of Building Permits

Staff recommends City Council consideration of proposed Ordinance 91-O-11 regarding the expiration of building permits as a further amendment to Title 4, Chapter 2, Section 2 of the City Code. The major change is the addition of a time limitation for all permits regardless of work status.

Ald. Rainey moved to introduce Ordinance 91-O-11, seconded by Ald. Fiske.

Chair Holmes commented that this is long overdue as there are buildings in the 5th ward that have had building permit signs in their windows for many years.

The Committee voted unanimously 5-0 to introduce Ordinance 91-O-11.

Approval of Amendment of Redevelopment Agreement for Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 and Program Update

Staff recommends approval of the attached amendment to the redevelopment agreement ("RDA") between the City and Brinshore Development, LLC for Phase 2A of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 ("NSP2") grant. This amendment covers the development of the first phase of Emerson Square, the new housing development located at 1600 Foster Street (former Bishop Freeman site). $3,085,000.00 in funding will be provided by: $2,085,000 in NSP2, $600,000 of West Evanston TIF, $300,000 of HOME and $100,000 of Affordable Housing Fund ("AHF") funds. The Illinois Housing Development Authority will fund an additional $8.9 million from Low Income Housing Tax Credits and other sources.

Ald. Fiske moved to recommend approval of the amendment, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Chair Holmes called the public who wished to speak to the podium:

Rodney Greene of 2016 Brown Avenue, said he is against funding Brinshore $3,085,000 for Phase 2 because they have not finished Phase 1. He described a home at 2020 Brown that has been vacant since the owner passed away that should have been demolished yet Brinshore chose to renovate it. He said that Cliff Washington has bid on the job but could not pay for the required insurance so Brinshore did not hire him. He believes Brinshore is doing faulty business and is not helping the community.

Bill Smith, owner of Evanston Community Builders, said his company is mission-driven: he hires people with high barriers to employment with the purpose of creating meaningful and permanent employment for them. His company is doing quite a bit of work for the NSP2 program and he intends to do more. He said it is not easy to navigate the incredible payoff schedules and the slim profit margins but he is doing it because it is keeping his people working. He said, given all the difficulties including the competitiveness for landlords, he believes the program will improve the neighborhood and the community is better served by working together to this end. He asked how the City is tracking the number of residents that are better off through the NSP2 program, how many jobs have been created and how we increase that number, adding that none of the problems are insurmountable. He suggested that the
community work with Brinshore to enhance the bidding and allocation process to give more work to small businesses, minorities and women’s businesses and to rent to as many African Americans as possible. He referred to the house on Brown that was addressed by Rodney Greene, saying that it had been brought back from the brink. He said the work is very difficult as the homes they are renovating had gone into foreclosure and are in very bad condition. While he was working on the house on Brown an African American woman stopped by and asked to see it. She was impressed with the work they had done and asked how she could obtain the house and was very grateful for the improvement that had been done. He said many believe the NSP2 program is finally providing some high quality affordable housing in the community and will be of benefit, as many people have told him they would love to live in Evanston but can’t afford to.

Eric Dingle, owner of Best One Built, said he has been working on the some NSP2 projects and that it has benefited him and his employees and sub contractors, in fact the work is keeping him in his own house. He said many of the properties in the NSP2 area should be torn down they are in such bad condition and that the payment cycle is long but the program is definitely improving the area. He believes Emerson Square will also be an improvement.

Robin Rue, owner of Signature Construction Services, born and raised in the 5th ward and raising her children on Dodge near Foster, said she has only good things to say about the NSP2 program. She said her revenues have grown 30% in the past year since she has been involved with Brinshore and she has worked on other projects that have similar pay schedules so she does not have a problem with theirs. She said the product is not an inferior finished product and that David Brint is very concerned about the quality of the work when he goes on walkthroughs. She said her 6 full time employees and subcontractors thank Brinshore and that she would have had to lay off employees for the season if it was not for NSP2.

Jim Pareti, an Evanston resident and appraiser who has been working with Todd Lieberman of Brinshore for 18 months, said the NSP program has had a positive impact on his appraisal business. He thanked the City and Brinshore and said he looks forward to working with them in the future.

Ray Hansen has a surveying company. He said the NSP2 program has had a positive impact on his business and kept his people employed. He said he sees the before and after and he is impressed and that Evanston should be very proud of having these buildings instead of the dilapidated buildings that had been there.

Theresa Velazquez said she wanted to move to Evanston because Park School is the best for her child, who has disabilities. She also has her son enrolled in District 65 for a speech program. She had been living in a substandard apartment in Evanston, paying $800 a month for rent plus $300 a month for utilities in which there was mold, roaches, bugs and category A and B violations which had not been corrected. She needs a 1st floor apartment for wheelchair access and she could not find one for less than a $200 increase, the median rent for a 1 bedroom being $800-$1000 and $1,000-$1,600 for a 2 bedroom. She was afraid she would have to move out of District 65
and back to the south side of Chicago until Brinshore rented her a beautiful 3 bedroom apartment she could afford. With tears in her eyes she thanked Brinshore.

Nate Kipnis, an Evanston architect who’s office is at 1642 Payne, said he has been contracted by Brinshore to do architecture, which has been one of the hardest hit professions in the economic downturn, with 25% of architecture firms out of business. He said Brinshore has provided him with his base load for the past one and a half years. He is astounded at some of the conditions of the dwellings such as mold infestation, where children have been living. He added that Brinshore is doing a tremendous amount of green work and he has created their green specifications. He thanked the City.

Lou Dickson of the Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse explained that her company dismantles and recycles building materials, keeping them from going into landfills. She became affiliated with Brinshore when her company was granted $25,000 by the CDBG fund to train a qualified Section 3 workforce, whom she hires first, including 12 Evanston residents who are her employees. She thanked the City for the CDBG grant. She said she is working with Brinshore to dismantle buildings and keep recyclable building materials out of landfills.

Jolene Saul, NSP2 Specialist, explained that this amendment to the Redevelopment Agreement covers Emerson Square and that the original agreement only included the scattered sites because other funding sources were not in place at that time. She explained further that Emerson Square is a component of the West Evanston Master Plan, whose goals are for affordable housing, improved land use and a safer neighborhood.

Todd Lieberman of Brinshore Development, LLC, said he was touched by all the speakers. He presented plans for Emerson Square, a new construction, mixed income development on a former Brownfield site. He explained that Brinshore has over 4,300 residences in their portfolio in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Indiana. The Emerson Square project is committed to a contextual design in their goal to stabilize the neighborhood, rebuild a public park, add a new street and build a community garden using MWEBE employees, and improving safety and land use in this former industrial corridor that had been owned by Bishop Freeman. Mr. Lieberman presented photos of the current site pointing out the impervious surface and poor condition. Brinshore plans to build 32 units on 2.34 acres in the first phase. He said the City received the NSP2 grant for this project and they have closed the gap with funding from the Illinois Housing Development Authority. He overlayed the plan with the West Evanston Master Plan to illustrate its conformity. They plan 5 housing types including 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms with in unit laundry, high grade finishes, and an on-site leasing office.

Steve Rezabek of Papageorge Hanes Architects presented the site plan, further explaining that they plan to build 9 townhomes on the new street and 2 6-flat buildings along Foster. Parking will be accessed through the alley except for 1 parking lot. The townhomes will have covered entry porches, double hung windows and brick and stone details. The rents will range from $287-$830/month for (4) 1 bedrooms, $339-
$1,018/month for (18) 2 bedrooms and $372-$908/month for (10) 3 bedrooms, providing housing for a wide variety of incomes.

The developer intends to break ground in June of 2012.

The Committee voted unanimously, 5-0 to recommend approval of the Amendment.

(P4) Approval of Appointment of a Mayoral Committee to Consider Proposed Ordinance 38-O-11 Regarding the Licensing of Rental Dwelling Units
The Planning and Development Committee recommended at its November 14, 2011 meeting that a mayoral-appointed committee be established to review proposed Ordinance 38-O-11 regarding the licensing of rental dwelling units. For Action

Chair Holmes called the public who wished to speak to the podium:

Josh Braun, representing the Evanston Property Owners' Association (EPOA), noted that there are over 3,000 rental units in Evanston. He said he understands that the City's goal is to provide safety, landlord identification and increased revenue, but said there are already a property maintenance code and a rental registration ordinance in place and asked what the need is for licensing. He said the EPOA wants to work with the City to focus on the real problems, acknowledging that not all landlords are good but he does not want the bad ones to bring the good ones down. He recommended that the Mayoral Committee, before considering another ordinance, study the problems further, and include students, landlords, City staff and aldermen to work towards finding permanent solutions to the problems. He wants to be there to help solve the problems.

Ald. Rainey moved to recommend approval of the appointment of a Mayoral Committee, seconded by Ald. Wilson.

Chair Holmes said she wants to include small and large property owners and representatives from other parts of the City such as the west side.

Ald. Rainey said Evanston has a huge population of tenants and landlords and she would like to see more focus on permanent residents, not just students, adding that tenants are staying in rental dwellings longer due to economic conditions. She said she is a founding mother of the Landlord/Tenant Ordinance. She said landlords have no problem being heard but she wants to hear from the tenants too.

Ald. Fiske agreed with Ald. Rainey that the focus appeared to be narrowly including student tenants and agreed it affects all the wards. She volunteered to be on the Mayoral Committee.

Ald. Wilson volunteered to be on the Mayoral Committee, stressing that it is important to have landlords with small and large rental volume on the Mayoral Committee.

Ald. Rainey asked whether the Committee should submit their recommendations to the Mayor, to which Chair Holmes replied that she has received several requests to be
on the Mayoral Committee. She asked that everyone forward their requests to the Mayor. Ald. Rainey said she would like to assist the Mayor in choosing the members. She said she has spoken to adjudicators who have referred to the wording in the City’s ordinances, and she would like it to be improved and would like a representative of the Legal Dept. to be on the Mayoral Committee to address this.

Chair Holmes stressed that the date certain for a solution is 90 days from when the Mayoral Committee is approved.

The Committee voted unanimously 5-0 to recommend approval of the appointment of a Mayoral Committee.

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
There were no items for discussion.

V. COMMUNICATIONS
There were no communications.

VI. ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbie Newman