Planning & Development Committee Meeting  
Minutes of September 23, 2013  
City Council Chambers – 7:15 p.m.  
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center


STAFF PRESENT:  G. Farrar, S. Flax, M. Muenzer, B. Newman

PRESIDING OFFICIAL:  Ald. Wynne

I. DECLARATION OF QUORUM
   A quorum being present, and Chair Wynne called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2013


The minutes of the September 9, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously 7-0.

III. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Resolution 45-R-13 Authorizing an Agreement with Evanston Township High School District No. 202 and Community Partners for Affordable Housing for the Development of 1941 Jackson Avenue

City staff recommends approval of Resolution 45-R-13; which authorizes a Development and Affordable Housing Agreement between the City, Evanston Township High School District No. 202 (“ETHS”), and Community Partners for Affordable Housing (“CPAH”) for the future development of a property acquired with Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (“NSP2”) funds, 1941 Jackson Avenue.  

For Action

Ald. Grover moved to recommend approval, seconded by Ald. Tendam.

Sarah Flax, Housing & Grants Administrator of the City of Evanston’s Community Development Department, explained that the building at 1941 Jackson was a dilapidated, foreclosed 2 flat that was acquired by the NSP2 Program. The property would have been land-banked for up to 10 years until the funds to rebuild became available. She said the project to build a home for the site instead, achieves educational goals and provides an affordable house that meets all the NSP2 requirements and the City’s goals for affordable housing. Ms. Flax introduced Bill Stafford, CFO of Evanston Township High School (ETHS).

Mr. Stafford said they are thrilled to be there and introduced Shelley Gates, Department Chair, Applied Sciences and Technology at ETHS and Rob Anthony of
Community Partners for Affordable Housing (CPAH) and explained the role of each of the partners of the project:

- High school students are going to build the house in the ETHS parking lot and move it to the site at 1941 Jackson
- The City will:
  - Conduct inspections to make sure the house is code-compliant
  - Obtain title to the house from Brinshore Development
  - Transport the house to the Jackson site
  - Transfer title to CPHA
  - Secure tax credits in the 10’s of thousands of dollars
- CPHA will:
  - Apply for tax credits
  - Sell tax credits to banks or financial institutions for approximately 80 cents on the dollar
  - Proceeds will be put back into the project for the following year
  - Assist in selling the home to a family at or below the poverty level

Mr. Stafford thanked Ald. Holmes for her wonderful suggestions such as community service days on the property and for her assistance working with the City, Michelle Masoncup of the City’s Legal Dept. for help in preparation of documents, Sarah Flax, Dennis Marino, former Manager of Planning & Zoning and CPHA for bringing up the tax credit concept.

Ms. Gates presented the “Geometry in Construction” program, formed by two high school teachers at Loveland High School in Colorado 7 years ago to invigorate their math program. They have built a house each year with Habitat for Humanity. The teachers have come to the midwest and teachers from Evanston have gone to Colorado for training. The benefits of the program to students are:

- Experience working in cooperative groups
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Math application: geometry is being taught differently; students earn 2 credits (honors or regular)
- Construction skills
- Awareness of housing issues in Evanston
- Pride in their community
- 54 students; 2 double periods in the morning
- Well-attended by parents night
- Community participation days

The instructors teaching the class are Maryjoy Heineman, geometry and calculus teacher and Matt Kaiser, welding, construction, civil engineering and architecture teacher, and the mastermind of the house they are building. She welcomed the community to visit any time to see the process and progress. They are making a concerted effort to involve the community. The parent night was very well-attended and parents will be invited to participate in community build days. Ms. Gates showed photos of the students in the newly constructed classroom and explained that the students are in the process of building stair cases using geometry. Each one is building a stringer for
one side of the staircase, which must be very precise because someone else is building the stringer for the other side.

Ms. Gates said there is an Advisory Committee and expressed special thanks to the following people who have generously contributed to the process:

- **Donna Lee Floeter**: Architect; has applied as many nice features as possible
- **Robin Rue Simmons**: Contractor with NSP2 project; will bring ETHS-graduated plumbing and electrical contractors who will explain their part of the process to the students
- **Bob Fisher**: ETHS graduate, owner of Evanston Lumber; who has helped them get the materials for the house donated or greatly discounted
- **Lou Dixon**: Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse; may be donating windows
- **Walter Kihm & Nathaniel Braithwaite**: North Shore Solar LLC; will assist in helping them obtain a solar water heater
- **John Fuller**: Property Manager, works with the students
- **Walter Hallen**: Plan Review & Permits Supervisor, City of Evanston, assists along with several other employees of the City
- **Rob Anthony**: CPHA; provided funding for tools
- **ETHS Foundation**: Provided a grant
- **Lemoi Ace Hardware**: Super discount on tools

Ms. Gates presented a site plan of the house.

At Ald. Grover’s inquiry, Ms. Gates said the class is open to anyone taking geometry. Currently the class is split between 9th and 10th graders with a couple of juniors, so it is mostly 14 and 15-year-olds.

At Ald. Grover’s inquiry, Mr. Stafford explained that the budget is $40,000 to $50,000 for materials and they have funds to pay professionals also. Ms. Gates explained that their goal is for the program to become self-funded and at Ald. Grover’s inquiry, said there is an enormous opportunity for more funding. They are considering having garden clubs involved in the landscaping and there are other resources for professional services that they have not yet explored. Mr. Stafford said their goal is to build a house yearly.

Mr. Stafford said this is not an isolated class. Through collaboration, the Science and Technical Engineering Department expanded the computer design of robots and the problem solving skills related to it, to teach manufacturing and modeling a robot to ten of ETHS’s faculty at a 3-day session at the Ford School of Design at Northwestern University. These types of projects develop the creative and critical thinking skills students will need for the challenges that lie ahead.

Mr. Anthony explained that CPHS’s role will be the non-profit sponsor that applies for Illinois affordable housing tax credits, hopefully up to $80,000, for the project’s long term sustainability. CPHA will provide information sessions, screen clients, manage the waiting list and assist applicants in securing mortgages, once the house is built. CPHA’s mission is not only to provide affordable housing but insure long term stability for families so they provide ongoing services like home maintenance, financing and
landscaping classes and information about their revolving loan fund for critical home repairs. They work with them on neighborhood issues and property taxes. They maintain affordability of the home through a deed restriction so it will not just help the first family, but it will be available for family after family as an affordable unit. They are very excited about the project.

At Ald. Fiske’s inquiry, Ms. Gates explained that the first community day would be in October. She said an important part of the Colorado program is to make sure that everyone in the community has an opportunity to help with some aspect of the build. The teachers, Bob Fisher and some of the other contractors will participate as well as several of the students and their parents. She will notify the Committee of the dates.

Ald. Holmes encouraged the Committee to visit the classroom. She is very excited about the project. It is a wonderful opportunity for so many students to participate in something that will be beneficial to the community. She also said this is a great alternative to land banking.

Ald. Tendam said he thinks this is a wonderful collaboration that will show Evanston at its very finest and that the idea of a fund raiser will raise awareness of the project, which is very important and the ideal thing to promote.

Chair Wynne said it is a fantastic project. When she did a renovation on her house the foreman, who was an ETHS graduate, had been part of a garage-building program at ETHS, and he still shows his children who are now ETHS students, the garages they built. She congratulated them on their hard work.

The Committee voted unanimously 7-0 to recommend approval of Resolution 45-R-13.

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

V. COMMUNICATIONS
There were no communications.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Ald. Tendam moved to adjourn, seconded by Ald. Grover.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbie Newman