

**Special Planning & Development Committee  
Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2009  
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m.  
Evanston Civic Center**

Aldermen Present: S. Bernstein, A. Hansen, D. Holmes, L. Jean-Baptiste, E. Moran,  
R. Rainey, C. Wollin, M. Wynne

Staff Present: K. Cox, J. Chambers, D. Marino, J. Metzger, B. Newman

Presiding Official: Alderman Moran

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Moran called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m., a quorum being present.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Consideration of Plan Commission Recommendation to Adopt the Downtown Plan As Revised by the Plan Commission**

Mr. Marino stated that the Downtown Plan is a policy and strategic document with zoning recommendations, however the adoption of the Downtown Plan would not adopt the zoning recommendations, explaining that there is a separate process for that through the Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission, with formal notice of public hearings to property owners, which begins to occur after the City Council adopts the Downtown Plan.

Mr. Marino introduced Mr. Kirk Bishop of Duncan Associates, the lead consultant for the Downtown Plan, who developed responses to questions raised by Committee members regarding the Downtown Plan, adding that copies of the questions and answers were being distributed to those present.

Mr. Kirk Bishop said he was the Project Manager for a four year study of the Chicago Zoning Ordinance that was concluded successfully in 2004. He thanked the Committee for providing the questions in advance and said he would like to go through their responses with a PowerPoint presentation. He introduced John LaMotte and Kevin Clark of The Lakota Group and Tom Smith of Duncan Associates.

**“Are the parking study recommendations in the report sufficient to support the recommended reductions in multi-unit residential parking standards?”**

Mr. Bishop said his group feels that KLOA, the well recognized regional firm who did the study, based it on a well founded, well accepted methodology for assessing parking demand. Moreover, the study and the recommendations are conservative in that the recommendations are not at the level of observed demand. They were established to recommend even higher ratios than observed demand to account for seasonal variations in occupancy and the fact that some of the buildings were newly constructed and may not have been fully occupied. The margin of error was built into the recommendation. He said the parking study is consistent with national recommendations by recognized groups including the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Their work suggests approximately 1 to 1.5 spaces per unit in highrise residential construction, which is what the parking study addressed. He reminded the Committee of the number of public parking spaces that exist within the downtown either in garages or on the street and that the parking recommendations in the study are consistent with their observed best practices in working with

jurisdictions throughout the United States, large and small, but particularly in downtown settings that are served by transit. He said Evanston is remarkable among those in its multimodal transportation options such as the convergence of the rail lines, the excellent bus service, the use of the bicycle, and the transportation mode split that is observed in transportation studies and census counts. He added that there is no disputing that more surveys could lead us to more reliable conclusions and findings and they do not want to undermine anyone who recommends that more studies might be useful. He said it is ultimately a policy question for the Committee but that they may elect to delay action subject to additional study pending the completion of the multimodal transportation study.

Ald. Bernstein said that Mr. Bishop had just addressed the residential parking demand but asked, since they were talking about new construction and residential units in those buildings, what relevance the 3,215 public garage spaces have to residential parkers. He asked whether they were suggesting that people would put their second or third cars in the garages or on the streets. Mr. Bishop responded that many of these buildings have dedicated parking for the units as well as parking that is available to the public at large and said their observation is merely that there are significant available parking spaces within the downtown and to the extent that shoppers use those spaces, there may be spaces available. Mr. Tom Smith explained further that in many residential parking codes there is a factor for visitor parking. Part of the requirement in most parking codes is some allowance for visitors' spaces within the residential building and you must provide spaces that would be available. He said with Evanston's many parking garages, visitors can come to residential buildings and not expect to park in the building itself, but to park in a municipal garage. Ald. Bernstein said he understands that and some of his constituents have indicated that our code does not provide for guest parking, which is another concern, but he said when they are talking about reducing what the City modified 4 or 5 years ago, his concern is the number of car spaces per unit and this is a substantial change from the reality that he knows. He said Mr. Bova did a study which they dispute.

Chair Moran said he saw an article in the New York Times that cited three fairly large cities in the United States who recently proposed revisions to their zoning ordinances on parking in multi-unit residential buildings, especially in their downtown areas, if it is a transit oriented area: No parking will be provided in the buildings. He said they are obviously trying to influence people's habits and people will either not live there or sell their cars. Mr. Smith said they respectfully reject the notion that they don't have a visitor parking requirement. You don't have to have a separate ratio that is called visitor parking in order to have a ratio that has been established to account for the total demand associated with residential dwelling units. They believe that the existing ratios as well as the proposed ratios take into account both resident-dedicated parking and the need for visitor parking. Ald. Bernstein accepted his answer and thanked him for the explanation.

**“Can the bonus heights be realistically achieved with bonuses?”**

Mr. Bishop said there are two ways to interpret this question: one is “Will there be enough floor area to achieve recommended bonus FAR levels?” and the other is a more direct correlation to the question, “Are the bonus heights actually achievable or are they likely?” He said his answer is, on the floor area question, usually you will be able to achieve the recommended FAR levels and on the height questions it is definitely “but.” To explain, he reminded the Committee that the maximum allowable FAR increases under the proposed recommended districting for residential transitional districts, the downtown traditional and the downtown core districts, projects can achieve the maximum allowable increase that would be theoretically available if one availed themselves of the bonus system. He made reference to an illustration in the proposed ordinance showing that in RD1 an increase of up to 45% over the base would be allowable as a maximum. It wouldn't be a guarantee but it is a maximum that the ordinance would allow; in the DC2 district the maximum allowable increase in FAR is 100%, so keeping those maximum allowances

in mind, the menu of bonus public benefit amenities in the ordinance would yield a maximum potential floor area increase of 135%, if one were to make full use of the bonus menu. He concluded that from a mathematical standpoint it is possible to achieve the 100% increase over the base in the DC2.

Mr. Bishop said the recommendations in the zoning section which the Committee is not being asked to adopt tonight, don't necessarily tie bonus floor area to bonus height. The maximum allowable height would be subject to review through the public bonus review process, (just as the maximum allowable FAR increase would be) which entails a review by the Plan Commission and the Planning & Development Committee and City Council. He said that for residential and mixed use buildings it is very easy to achieve the height levels but it would be difficult in some of the lower intensity districts to achieve the maximum allowable height because of small lot sizes. There is much variation in lot sizes in the traditional and transitional residential downtown districts. Office buildings, he explained, are likely to reach the maximum FAR before they reach the maximum allowed building height under the bonus. They will be using bonuses but because offices have different programmatic needs they are larger, bulkier structures, so they will often reach the maximum FAR before they achieve maximum height. Residential and mixed use buildings are likely to be more slender towers, as the emphasis is on providing light to all the units which can be a good thing but it is very easy to achieve the bonus heights for them.

He summarized that the answer to the question is affected by many factors such as the allowable FAR and how much floor area they have to work with to configure the building. He said that what defines floor area for the purposes of FAR calculations is a discussion that they have spent a good deal of time on with the Plan Commission. He explained that there are many things in a building that relate to that building's size and bulk that don't count as floor area under Evanston's current zoning ordinance (or many other cities' ordinances): hallways, common areas and mechanical equipment areas, which can take up sizeable portions of the building and don't count towards FAR: a building may appear to have a 15 FAR but it is a 10 or 12 at most, and that floor to floor heights influence height. He said you would be able to achieve those bonus heights except in small lot situations or where you can not fit parking on the site. He said if the economics don't work to do underground or structured parking, they will run into practical, physical constraints about how much building you can put on the site, but as a rule in high rise construction, you can get 3 or 4 floors of building per point of FAR. So if you have a 4 FAR, it is likely to yield a building of at least 15 stories because of the things that don't count as floor area and because every little notch that you take off of the building multiplied by the number of floors, begins to add up in terms of what is taken off of that building's FAR.

**“Are there, in light of some of the concerns that have been expressed about the traditional districts, alternative height maximums that we ought to be considering?”**

Mr. Bishop said they have thoughtfully and carefully considered this question and they believe there is an interest in allowing for greater building intensities, more floor area and more building height in the traditional districts and that the thing that needs to be addressed is parking because in the traditional districts, where there are buildings of 2, 3, 4 and 5 stories, they are not likely to be doing structured parking and it is very unlikely that they will be doing underground parking. Therefore, he said, the City's parking requirements begin to have an impact on the size of the building that can be placed on that parcel because if you are devoting a portion of the ground floor or a portion of the site to open air surface parking, you are constraining the site in terms of the amount of building you can put on it and therefore the amount of height that you can fit on that lot. So there is an interest in allowing greater building intensities, meaning floor area and/or height and the most effective way to do it would be to consider some reductions in parking requirement for those downtown traditional districts. It will be very hard for them to achieve even the bonus levels contemplated under the recommendations absent some creative solutions to how they fit the parking on the site, in light of the economics of those smaller buildings, so they

think that would be a de facto alternative compromise without necessarily undermining the goals of the plan and they strike a balance to preserve areas of true traditional lower rise character and the smaller storefronts and not create a perverse incentive to knock those buildings down so much larger buildings could go up. The reduced parking, if it were to be considered in the future, might also help to address some affordable housing, affordable office space and student housing issues. Since it would not link a parking spot to every dwelling unit, it would have some affect on the price point for those housing units. He said if the parking idea is off the table and the Committee is still interested in coming up with some alternative ideas for building heights in the traditional districts, their best recommendation is to think in terms of the 42' as a base and 85' as a bonus maximum height. He does not think that would completely undermine the goals of the traditional area and it correlates to the existing B2 zoning which is the predominant zoning in those areas, which allows 42' and 85' in height currently.

Ald. Wynne said she is trying to envision what happens, that it is like a balloon and if you squeeze it in one spot it will open up in another. To achieve greater density, you would have more units potentially, but she does not know where those people would park. It would really be pushing people into the transit oriented development, living without a car. She said she doesn't know what those three cities were that were mentioned in the New York Times article, but she thinks they were cities like San Francisco, Boston and New York and possibly Portland, where people are already getting out of their cars. She thinks it will take living in the equivalent of San Francisco or Manhattan for people to truly get out of their cars unless we have \$5.00/gallon gas. She said as soon as you move away from the downtown core where people really do feel to some extent like they are living in a downtown, she does not think people want to live without their cars, so reducing the parking requirement is going to end up with people asking City Council to build them a parking lot eventually because that is what her experience has been in her ward in the Main and Chicago area, where they have been at saturation for 10 years. The merchants and the residents of the vintage condos ask her and Ald. Bernstein to build them a parking lot because there isn't enough parking, and that is an area that is very transit oriented. She said her concern is that increasing the intensity and reducing the parking allowance spells a parking crunch. Mr. Bishop responded that he sees it less as dictating transit oriented mentality but rather providing for some level of consumer choice and that this is a phenomenon that is not limited to the nation's truly urban centers. He said just last week Minneapolis (who recently built light rail lines along some city corridors) has drastically overhauled its parking requirements. He said to not address the effect that parking has on the urban environment and economics is, he believes, swimming upstream. He said they were asked how the City can allow for a little more in the traditional districts without undermining their character and the honest answer from a planning and economic perspective is the parking thing would do it. He agreed that it is not without the risks that she mentioned but they are talking about 2 to 4 story buildings, not 10 to 30 stories, and lots that are constrained in terms of size, so they presented the idea for consideration.

Ald. Wollin said if there were to be a change, that it not exceed 42' to 85' and originally it was 38' to 60' so the base is only going up 4' but the bonus is going up 25' so that would address some of the questions they had from business owners on the traditional side of Davis Street. Mr. Bishop said the full disclosure of the 85' will be but a theoretical maximum because of this parking constraint. He said the consultants want the Committee to be aware that the builders are going to say they can not get their maximum 85' and will ask for some relief. Mr. LaMotte added that 85' became a convenient target for them because it is exactly what is allowable today (with a base height of 42'). He said the thing they grappled with is the tipping point. They wanted to not provide such allowable increases in intensity that there is an economic incentive to level the traditional districts. They are not exactly sure what that tipping point is, but they doubt it is 85'.

Ald. Wynne clarified that the first three bullet points are what you could do if you did not want to change it. But the last one is that you could leave the parking as it is, but bounce the height up.

Mr. LaMotte said you could bounce the height up approximately 2 levels. So, Ald. Wynne said this is an either or option. Mr. LaMotte said the new plan recommends the down zoning of the base height which makes it more difficult because you get less building to get parking into and obviously less units. This last recommendation is to keep what you have today but now with the form based code. Chair Moran added that it allows the property owner to get creative with how they deal with the parking, saying that maybe 85' allows enough of a building that they can do one level of parking underground.

Mr. Bishop said the next question refers to a statement is in the plan: **“The city should evaluate all public owned property for park use”**.

He said he senses that the person who asked this question was reading this as a recommendation that all publicly owned property was appropriate for park use and that it be evaluated solely for its usefulness or the wisdom of making a park or open space site out of it, and that was not the consultant team's intention. He said like many statements in the plan, they could have more artfully worded it and that it means that if the space is publicly owned they should do a comprehensive evaluation of its best use in terms of the city's and the downtown's needs & that would include consideration for it as a park site, an economic development site or for some other public or quasi public use. He also clarified that the plan does not purport to identify all publicly owned sites, there is no map of all publicly owned sites and it was not their intention to skip over any. He concluded, the recommendation does apply to all publicly owned sites.

**“How does the adaptive re-use rehabilitation fund work?”**

Mr. Bishop said this question goes to Objective II on Page 39 of the Plan which reads, “Protect and rehabilitate character-giving buildings, structures and sites.” It talks about establishing a rehabilitation and adaptive re-use fund that would be funded from the public benefit bonus system and would be used to provide matching funds for building owners who do rehabilitation projects. He explained that this is referring to the recommended bonus for financial contributions to historic preservation: one of the bonusable items under the recommended menu of bonuses is a bonus for these cash financial contributions paid to the city that would be used for rehabilitation and re-use, which is sometimes called an “adopt a landmark” fund. He said there is a formula in the ordinance for how one makes use of that public benefit bonus, and there is a maximum bonus that is available by use of that fund. They envisioned that the City would pre-designate candidate buildings so that when someone made use of this bonus the money would be put in a trust fund and it would be used for pre-identified projects for an owner who wishes to do some work and could use some matching funds. He added that the procedures and rules for how the fund is administered and how candidate buildings are selected would require some additional study from the Plan Commission and Preservation Commission with, of course, policy guidance from the City Council/P&D Committee.

**“Can a zoning ordinance permit reestablishment of nonconforming buildings that are accidentally damaged or destroyed?”**

Mr. Bishop said that is a great question and their answer is, “Absolutely, yes it can and yes it should.” He said this is an often overlooked provision in many ordinances that say if a building is accidentally damaged or destroyed to the extent of X% of its value then the only way you can rebuild it is to build it in complete conformance with the zoning regulations that are in effect today. He said he believes this is one of the most unfair rules in zoning that he can imagine: someone, through no fault of their own, loses their major investment, whether it is their home or their business, and we tell them “I'm sorry you can't rebuild it” not knowing any of the considerations that go into it, the size of the lot and what they would need to economically readjust themselves after such a catastrophe. He said many ordinances are now being corrected to address this deficiency and to say yes, if a building is accidentally destroyed you can rebuild it and we are not going to hold you to any percentage limit in how much is destroyed before it needs to be brought into compliance. He said the Committee has that authority and it would be

their recommendation, not only in the downtown but in the city as a whole, after some careful consideration, that they amend the ordinance to allow it.

**“In the map of the east side of Chicago Avenue it just says 66’ to 110’. Does that 110 refer to bonus height?”**

Mr. Bishop said this is a very easy question about the building heights shown on one of the maps on the east side of Chicago Avenue. He said that shorthand reference, 66-110’ refers to a maximum base height without public benefit bonuses of 66’ and a 110’ only through the public benefit bonus system.

**“What would the population be at buildout of the City of Evanston if this plan came to full fruition?”**

Mr. Bishop said to answer this question they started with these facts: The 1960 population was approximately 80,000. In 2000, according to the census, there were 74,000. There have been a little over approximately 2,500 residents added since 2000 for a total of almost 77,000. The analysis in the report suggests that you could expect on average over a longer period of time (not year by year) of growth of 150 units annually over the next 10 years. That would generate 2,250 additional residents using a persons-per-household figure of 1.5, which would yield a total estimated city wide population of approximately almost 80,000 (back to the 1960 level). These estimates are made by merely playing out the trends: there will be other demographic changes occurring over the next 10 years, for instance you will probably continue to see some populations declining in household size and increasing in other segments of the population, demolition, and any number of factors that could have influence. He confirmed their estimates to be about 80,000 at buildout at the end of that 10 year period.

**“Will there be public facilities and services adequate to accommodate that population?”**

Mr. Bishop said their analysis, based on a review of relevant transportation data, meetings with the City’s department heads and service providers such as Public Works, Engineering, Emergency Services staff and other City personnel, suggests that it is a supportable population. He added that there will, of course, need to be continuing maintenance and upgrades to facilities over that life span, but they are expected to be adequate to accommodate that projected growth.

**“Impact of Northwestern’s Master Plan and the relationship between Northwestern University’s recently released (September 2008) Master Plan and the recommended Downtown Plan”**

Mr. Bishop said there are nine major improvements recommended in the University’s new Master Plan, one of which ties very directly into the recommended Downtown Plan and that is the new campus edge along Clark Street to better connect the link (the term used in the Downtown Plan and also Northwestern’s plan) to downtown with the University and provide more engaging mixed use linkage on the northern link area. He said he thinks the new mixed use ideas that the University is proposing would synchronize very well with some of the recommendations in the Downtown Master Plan. He said the other significant reference relates to the University owned property in the Research Park area, west of the Hilton Garden Inn. The University anticipates developing that property in the future, still related to research, and the Downtown Plan contemplated as much in terms of zoning and land use recommendations for that site.

Mr. Bishop thanked the Committee for providing the questions in advance. He said he hopes the responses are helpful and he would be happy to answer any other questions they might have.

Chair Moran thanked the consultants for providing the answers to their questions.

Chair Moran had distributed points to the Committee members in order to review the Downtown Plan and vote on each point. In order to preface the more specific questions, he presented some general statements related to the Downtown Plan:

“The proposed form based code reflects the conclusion that downtown Evanston is the best location within the City to accommodate new growth because of its exceptional transportation infrastructure, its diverse mix of uses and its central location relative to goods, services, cultural facilities and jobs.” He asked for a vote from the Committee on whether they believe this to be a valid general statement in relation to this plan.

**The Committee voted unanimously that the statement about the form based code is valid.**

“The factors that give rise to the downtown housing boom as it is described in the proposed Plan are 1)Excellent transit service, 2)Access to and views of the lakefront, 3)Proximity to Northwestern and 4)The sustainable, vibrant environment.

**The Committee voted unanimously that they agree with the factors that gave rise to the downtown housing boom as described in the proposed Plan.**

Ald. Rainey said the Committee does not have the time the Plan Commission spent on every detail of the plan and she appreciates their doing the heavy lifting. She proposed that they focus first on the development framework of the districts as it has been presented by Chair Moran because it has some of the most controversial issues.

**Ald. Rainey moved that their first discussion be on the Core District, then the East and West Core Districts, then down the list as it has been presented in the Plan.**

**Ald. Rainey moved acceptance of the Central Core District, bounded by Sherman, Orrington, Church and Davis, and an amendment to the height making it a maximum of 42 stories, that being the only change in the description of the Core.**

Chair Moran said that is the area that was described in discussions before the Plan Commission as the Central Core.

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

Ald. Wynne said she disagrees with having a central core with a maximum height of 42 stories having read through the Plan Commission’s discussion and agrees with Ald. Rainey that there is controversy on this issue between Plan Commission members as there is in the community. She stated that she cannot support it because the community has indicated their disapproval many times. She said she will vote no on the motion because the maximum height should be lower.

Ald. Wollin said she understands Ald. Wynne’s feelings. She said she believes it was Chairman Woods who made the compromise motion of 365’ as a maximum height and she would accept that as an amendment to Ald. Rainey’s proposal.

Ald. Rainey accepted the amendment to the height proposed by Ald. Wollin, of 365’. She said she thinks there could be some controversy whether or not there should be a central core but she believes there should be a central core and given the west core recommendation of 15 -18 stories, and that in the east core there is currently a 21 story bank building, she asked Ald. Wollin whether she meant 36 stories with the bonuses, to which Ald. Wollin replied affirmatively, with the bonuses. Ald. Rainey said she would accept it for the sake of moving the discussion along.

Ald. Hansen said she is in agreement with Ald. Rainey and that there may be two issues: whether or not there should be a central core district and if there is consensus about that then talk about the height. Chair Moran agreed with that.

Ald. Wynne said her understanding is that the central core is the Fountain Square area and the recommendation in this plan is a 42 story height. She said the central core is either the core with the center at 42 stories or just the core where everything is at the same height. She asked Ald. Hansen whether we can have a central core that is higher than the rest of the core, to which Ald. Hansen replied that that is what she is suggesting. Ald. Wynne said that is similar to what Ald. Wollin just proposed: that there is a core and the central core (Fountain Square) is not 42 stories but 36 stories. She also cautioned the Committee about using 365' versus 36 stories because she does not think that is what 365' translates to. Ald. Wynne said they should determine whether they are talking about feet or stories. Mr. LaMotte said 365' is about 33 stories.

Mr. Bishop said the consultants were strongly recommended to use feet, not stories, and in doing that they calculated an average of 11' per story so 365' would yield a 33 story building.

But, Ald. Rainey said, she thinks Chairman Woods was talking about 35 stories. Mr. Bishop said he did use the 365'.

Ald. Holmes suggested reaching a compromise and simply going with 35 stories. Ald. Wynne explained that you can have different stories but depending on the construction style it may be a different height because for instance, commercial buildings usually have higher ceilings than residential, so it makes sense to use feet because it has an absolute measurement. She said she shares the consultants' view to use the foot height, though she cannot visualize how tall 365' is. Chair Moran said they have to recognize that there is some sway there.

Mr. LaMotte said they use feet so it is easier for everyone and because of the ability to cap it in the zoning and they put in the parenthesis on the chart how many stories it yields. He suggested they decide how many stories they want in the central core and the consultants will do the math and calculate the height for them tonight.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked Ald. Rainey to clarify her amendment.

Mr. Marino reviewed the discussion thus far: Ald. Rainey said her motion is 42 stories. Ald. Wollin suggested 365' and the discussion occurred as to whether it will be defined in stories or feet.

**Ald. Holmes moved that the maximum height should be 385' as a compromise.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

Ald. Wynne referred to (in the cover letter) 3 options the Plan Commission voted on: 1) A Central Core of 42 stories; 2) No Central Core, just a core height throughout the downtown; and 3) The modified Downtown Core that Ald. Wollin referred to at 365'. She said she does not think they necessarily need a central core and she supports the position that won the most support by the Plan Commission that they just have a core district with no taller central core, but she especially does not think the modified core ended up with a split on the Plan Commission, which was 365' and she does believe 20' makes a difference. She said she is voting no on the motion and if it fails she will propose that they not have a central core and that they have just the core district of the downtown.

Chair Moran said the motion is a combined motion. Ald. Holmes is suggesting that there is a central core district with a maximum height of 35 stories to be converted to feet.

**The Committee voted 6-2 with Ald. Wynne and Ald. Bernstein objecting, to establish a Central Core with a maximum building height of 35 stories including the bonus.**

**Ald. Rainey moved acceptance of the Plan Commission's recommendations on the West Core and the East Core Districts.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the West Core and the East Core Districts as recommended by the Plan Commission.**

Ald. Wynne clarified, regarding the maximum height of 385' in the central core, the recommended height is 165' base and 365' bonus so she believes they are not following the correct terminology and they should indicate a base maximum height of 165' base and 385' bonus. Mr. LaMotte confirmed that the base height recommended was 165' and the bonus, 385'.

Ald. Rainey said her understanding was that the 42 stories maximum was from a base of 275'. She said the core as identified in the plan was 165' to 275', with 165' as the base and 275' the maximum with bonuses. She said she was proposing 275' as the base with a maximum of 35 stories.

Ald. Wynne asked whether Ald. Holmes understood that the base would be 28 floors in the core. Ald. Holmes replied she wants a maximum of 35 stories. The Committee discussed how to make the motion correlate to the recommended plan's terminology.

Mr. LaMotte clarified that the framework is that you have a base and you work up to the maximum height, explaining that the original plan recommends a base height in the central core, which was identified as Fountain Square, of 25 stories as of right, with a bonus height of 42 stories. So he suggested they clarify the central core's maximum height and base height and the core's maximum height and base height. He said they have suggested a maximum height with bonuses of 35 stories in the central core and now they need to establish a base height in the central core.

Ald. Rainey said to have a base height lower than an adjacent building makes no sense.

Chair Moran said they have proposed a maximum height of 35 stories, which indicates a reduction of 1/6<sup>th</sup> and asked whether it would be appropriate to reduce the base height to the same degree, making the base height 21 stories. Ald. Wynne agreed that it is proportional.

Ald. Bernstein argued that the central core should not have a maximum height that is lower than the buildings in the core, if they are using the wedding cake system.

Chair Moran asked the Committee for a suggestion for a base height in the central core.

**Ald. Wynne moved that they adhere to the Plan Commission's recommended base height of 165' in the Central Core.**

Ald. Rainey expressed concern that after providing all the public benefits the maximum height would never be affordable. She said she understands that Ald. Wynne disagrees with the central core, but it is a very developable area and given the current economy, the last thing we want to do

is make development impossible in downtown Evanston, no matter how unpopular it is. She acknowledged that there is pressure to keep it to a minimum, but not if development can not happen.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste clarified that the Committee considered a motion by Ald. Rainey for 42 stories and they accepted an amendment to that motion for a height of 35 stories. Then they attempted to clarify base height in relation to it. He suggested the Committee consider Ald. Rainey's clarification of her motion and vote on that companion aspect of the downtown core and if that fails, reconsider. Chair Moran agreed.

Ald. Wynne said that Ald. Rainey proposed 42 stories. It was modified to 35 stories. Ald. Wynne made a motion on the base height of 165'. The Committee discussed the process.

Chair Moran ruled that Ald. Rainey should suggest a base height.

**Ald. Rainey moved that the Committee approve a base height of 25 stories in the Central Core District.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted 6-2 with Ald. Wynne and Ald. Bernstein opposed, to approve the base height in the Central Core District, of 25 stories.**

Chair Moran opened the discussion of the Core District (I), bounded by University Place, Grove, the Metra tracks and Sherman Avenue, with the exception of the Central Core and the Sherman Traditional Districts.

**Ald. Wollin moved to accept the Simple Core District I as recommended.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Simple Core District, I, as recommended.**

Chair Moran opened the discussion to the 3 Traditional Districts: K (south), J (west) and L (north).

Ald. Rainey asked to discuss the presentations by the business/building owners on west Davis Street. Ald. Bernstein said regarding traditional districts, the strongest objections were from the people on the 1000 block of Davis in J, the west traditional district. He said he thinks they made an excellent point that with the existing construction that surrounds them, they would be a canyon amidst all those tall buildings so he does not see a reason to downzone that particular area relative to the rest of downtown. Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked Ald. Bernstein whether he thought J should be included in the core. Ald. Wollin suggested considering Duncan's recommendation of 42' base to 85' bonus heights. Ald. Bernstein said he is concerned that the plan upzones the entire downtown. He said throughout the Plan are accommodations on the ad hoc nature of how the downtown has been developed and he is not going to apologize for what has happened however he wants to make it flexible. He said he trusts the Council to make the right decisions in the future but in the current market he wants to impose fewer restrictions other than the maximum height and he would like to include J in the downtown core, explaining that it differs from the other traditional districts as it is surrounded by tall buildings. Ald. Rainey said that would bring the maximum height to 275'. Ald. Bernstein said Districts G north and G south of J, have buildings that are 18 stories. The Committee asked for clarification of Duncan's recommended parking regulations.

Mr. Bishop said there were 2 possible alternatives for consideration: 1) To reduce parking, which would be a de facto intensification of the 38' – 60' recommended in the plan or 2) Ignore the parking issue and simply allow a base of 42' with a maximum of 85' (almost 8 stories) with bonuses, without the parking reduction, which is consistent with B2, the existing zoning in that district.

Ald. Bernstein said the plan recommends a 5 story maximum in the West Core, J and pointed out that the G zones which abut the J zone go up to 18 stories. He said he sees no distinction other than the fact that there are existing role model buildings on that block so he asked why they would reduce that block's maximum height, making it a valley between mountains. He suggested making the maximum height 18 stories, consistent with what they are calling the West Core, G. Ald. Wynne said they should leave it as it is, as suggested by Duncan, which does not downzone it from what they currently have and it does not exacerbate a parking problem. She believes this is one of the charming traditional areas people talk about, adding that if they leave it zoned as it is the property owners are not disadvantaged and they can develop as if they were not adopting this Plan. She said she thinks that street does feel different than the streets to the south and the north of it and that it is a wonderful street to shop on. She said she shops there 2-3 times a week and that LeMoi Hardware and Tom Thumb are terrific.

**Ald. Wynne moved to recommend that the West Traditional J District not exceed 42' base and 85' bonus maximum heights, and that they do not change the parking requirements.**

**Ald. Hansen seconded the motion.**

Ald. Hansen agreed with Ald. Wynne saying she hesitates to envelop J into the core district.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste clarified that the recommended heights are 38' base and 60' with bonuses and the motion is to change to 42' base with 85' with bonuses.

Mr. Bishop clarified that the current D2 zoning, which is the 1000 block of Davis, has a maximum base height of 32' and 85' with the bonuses. The proposal is for a maximum base height of 42' and 85' respectively.

Ald. Bernstein argued that their proximity to the trains is closer than any other traditional zone so when trying to promote transit oriented development as the plan does, why would it limit their height?

Ald. Wynne argued that part of the charm of that district is that it is a wide street with pedestrian oriented buildings and 7 story buildings that change between a face of 4 and 6 stories, is pretty big. She said by having them remain as they are now, with a base of 42' up to 85', some of those buildings have a large footprint and can take advantage of the maximum height, but they should recognize it as a traditional shopping street in the tradition of Evanston.

**Ald. Wynne moved to approve a base height of 42' and 85' with bonuses, with the parking remaining the same in the J District.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded.**

Mr. LaMotte said on the map it says 88' so he suggested keeping the base at 42' and adding the 3' so the heights are consistent with the current D2 zoning. Ald. Wynne accepted the suggestion.

**The Committee voted 7-1 with Ald. Bernstein opposed for the West Traditional District heights to be 42' base and 88' with bonuses with no change in parking requirements.**

**Ald. Wollin moved to accept the South and North Traditional Districts as recommended in the Plan.**

**Ald. Wynne seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the South and North Traditional Districts as recommended.**

Chair Moran said the Plan does not recommend a category for the district that includes the southeast corner of Davis and Chicago, but the report suggests putting it in either the East Edge District or in the South Traditional District.

Ald. Wynne suggested that this corner stay in the East Edge District because they should keep the edges continuous explaining that this is where Evanston starts to change and the boundary should remain what it is north and south of it, at a base of 6 stories and a maximum of 110'.

Ald. Wollin said she agrees. She said she has read the Plan very carefully and has been to every Plan Commission meeting and this corner is a wonderful opportunity for economic development to occur. She said she has talked to at least 5 developers who are looking at this land: some proposed 18 and some proposed 16 stories, which were rejected because they were too high, but she would not want the height shorter than 110' with bonuses.

**The Committee voted unanimously to designate the corner of Davis and Chicago as being in the East Edge District.**

Chair Moran said the remaining categories to be voted on are the East Edge, the South Edge and the North Edge Districts.

**Ald. Wollin moved to accept them as presented in the Plan.**

**Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the East Edge, South Edge and North Edge Districts as recommended.**

Mr. Ken Cox of the City's Law Department said to make sure that no portion gets inadvertently omitted, there is a Northwest Edge, designated B on the map and should be voted on in a separate motion.

**Ald. Wynne moved to recommend approval of the Northwest Edge.**

**Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the Northwest Edge as recommended.**

Chair Moran said the two link districts, the University Link F at Clark Street, and the West Link C, on Ridge were next to be voted upon.

**Ald. Hansen moved to adopt Link Districts F and C as recommended.**

Ald. Wollin expressed some hesitation regarding the closing of Clark Street east of Sherman and wanted some reassurance that it is only a recommendation. She does not feel it is realistic to close Clark Street yet though, she said, the concept is lovely.

Chair Moran emphasized that it is a planning document, not a zoning ordinance, nor is it a mandate and that there are numerous recommendations that he believes they may agree on, on a conceptual basis. He said he believes it is incumbent upon the Committee to underwrite the notion that various proposals are viewed as favorable.

Ald. Bernstein said the zoning enactment legislation is going to follow what they decide to do tonight and he does not see much distinction. Mr. LaMotte clarified that they are really voting on the use, not the street alignments and that closing Clark Street is about getting a better gateway to the north and a better, closer edge to Northwestern University. He explained that if the Committee votes that it is supportive of the concept, then it will go into further study by the engineers and the transportation study and the zoning would follow up, after which time the Committee will have the option to take it off the table if they wish, after the studies are done.

Ald. Rainey wondered whether they are not committing by voting that the concept has a positive implication and said she would rather say they will review those options in the future. She said also that the realignment of Elgin Road is not a cheap proposition. Mr. LaMotte clarified that right now they are at use and that bulk and design features are next on the checklist, and that the consultants just need to know if they are going in the right direction. He said also that the issue of 2-way traffic is a recommendation for further study and that these recommendations all require further study. He said if they vote to leave it in the Plan, Engineering, Public Works, and transportation study people can clarify it, and they can keep it in or take it out later. Ald. Rainey maintained that she is not sure she is ready to say it makes sense. Mr. LaMotte said they are at land use and density and getting to the open space and transportation in a couple of minutes and they need guidance whether to take it to the next level or to remove it from the plan, adding that he hopes they will get a chance to tell explain why they put it in the Plan.

Ald. Wynne said Ald. Rainey has a good point. The Plan recommends heights of 6-8 stories and this is a big parcel & some buildings around it are already at 6 stories, but a lot of those buildings are lower rise. She said in the Plan's description of the University Link it says the buildings are set back even though they are denser, and the change in the park and the roadways are definitely integral to the change in the zoning of 6-8 stories in height. She asked whether the Committee could uncouple them and vote on the 6-8 stories and asked how much that will change the vision of the Downtown Plan. Mr. LaMotte referred to the Burger King property, which is the key gateway, saying that if you don't change the streets or roads you could still do the 6-8 story height. He explained that the consultants looked at the scale of the intersection and the depth from the buildings of Northwestern, and they feel that is fine for that area as a frame and an edge, so there is a downtown edge and a university edge and the designs they recommended for the park and the intersection are to help make it even better. He said they could live with that height on that corner if Burger King was redeveloped, with the streets as they are, or you could make the streets better and adjust them with the intersection change. The uncoupling is definitely possible. Wynne clarified that the boundaries of the University District are the Burger King property on the east, the Orrington Hotel on the south, and Sherman on the west.

Ald. Wollin said that in Northwestern's 50 year plan they call for taking down Rebecca Crown and propose low rises along Clark Street with opportunities for pedestrians to see the dance studios and they propose enlivening Clark Street so this concept goes along with theirs, with restaurants & outdoor seating on Clark Street. She said she likes both in concept, and is comforted to know the public roads issue is separate.

Ald. Bernstein said he is comforted that it is not implicit but to the extent that the heights match. He said it is difficult for him to piecemeal it.

Mr. LaMotte added that they have had good discussions with Northwestern about framing the street better, closing the gap, activating it more, making it a nice approach to the University and vice versa to downtown.

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the West Link C and the University Link F Districts, as recommended.**

Chair Moran stated that all the proposed districts had been voted upon.

The Committee decided that no discussion was necessary regarding the already designated Evanston Landmarks.

Chair Moran said the next category is public places. He asked the Committee to vote on whether they agree with the fact that “Fountain Square is currently small and ineffective as a plaza for public assembly.” He clarified that by “ineffective as a plaza for public assembly” he meant “a place where it is not easy for the public to assemble,” in the context of an event like the jazz concerts or even something more modest. Ald. Wollin agreed that there is not enough space. The Committee added “as currently designed” to clarify the statement and make it separate from the second statement.

**The committee voted unanimously to affirm that Fountain Square, as currently designed, is small and ineffective for public assembly.**

Chair Moran asked the Committee to vote on whether they agree that there is merit in closing Orrington from Grove to Davis Streets so as to expand the square, conjoining it with the existing median that separates Sherman from Orrington just south of Davis. He said he believes by voting that the statements are true, it gives them an opportunity to look at Downtown as they see it and how it might be and explore improvements to it. He emphasized that it is not a mandate or an endorsement, just something worth examination.

Ald. Wynne said that by even making a comment on this they are getting ahead of the multimodal transportation study, the comprehensive study of all of our forms of transportation, currently being conducted, and she wants to wait for the results before entertaining the option to close a street in the downtown. She suggested moving forward on the other items and holding off on this question until the study is revealed because it may raise issues that make their comments mute.

Mr. LaMotte responded that these are concepts that make sense for the next phase of improving the downtown, arguing that many people said they need better open spaces and the current design isn't working and that there has been a great deal of input by architects, landscape architects and planners on how they could make these spaces better. He emphasized that if the Committee votes that any of the open space concepts need further study by staff then each one will be adjusted as they go along. He said when the traffic study shows whether or not we can take Orrington out there, then the design study will explore whether a park can be put there. If the Committee likes the concepts staff will follow up on them. He explained that every master plan they do has 10-20 initiatives that need follow up including for traffic. Further study should determine if Orrington should be closed at that stretch, whether to do the realignment at the University and whether we should consider 2 way traffic. These are visionary items for the transportation study and future studies to say yes, no, maybe or needs further study to, but that can be clarified later. Ald. Wynne

argued that the Committee is not informed enough to make a comment on any traffic concept, to which Mr. LaMotte replied that as policy makers they can recommend whether they like the concepts that need further study. He said at the charrettes, many people contributed ideas and their desire to open the streets. He added that there is a qualifier in the Plan that all open space concepts will be studied further as far as feasibility, including whether the street should be realigned or not.

Mr. LaMotte said he believes it is clear throughout the open space text that they are saying concept or potential change, but they need a qualifier on each page that these are recommended for further study. He explained further, saying the City's policy is to improve these open spaces and that is agreeable, but how to do it needs further study, and he suggested adding that language all the way through.

Ald. Hansen said she is in favor of enhancing Fountain Square but not at the expense of closing any streets, as it would entail re-working the whole flow of traffic. She said the Committee for the Multimodal Transportation Plan, which she is on, has not discussed closing off streets in the downtown and that if anything, they have talked about making it more walkable and bicycle friendly, but not rerouting traffic. She suggested voting on enhancing Fountain Square but removing the 2 options that close off the streets. She said the rest seems agreeable options that include closing Orrington.

Mr. LaMotte argued that the consultants were charged with many things, many of which were ways to make the downtown better. He said a master plan can only go so far. He said in the current plan there are 2 versions of Fountain Square: 1)Keep the current size and 2)Remove the building to the north to make the square bigger. He said they may not want the latter version in the Plan but if they agree that they need to upgrade the City's open spaces and it makes sense for further study, they are helping staff get some direction on what to study.

Chair Moran said the street issue probably bears some traffic engineering examination and that it might turn out to be a disaster or it might turn out to be feasible, but maybe some fears would be allayed by their findings. He explained that Mr. LaMotte is asking whether they want to disallow them any further examination.

Ald. Hansen said there may be several options for the improvement of Fountain Square and she understands that this is a broad concept but she is hesitant about committing to an option that has these streets somewhat closed off. Chair Moran reminded her that they are not asking for a commitment, just whether they should be studied, as Mr. LaMotte had said you are just giving guidance.

Mr. LaMotte explained further that in all cities, staff need as much guidance and clarification of their direction so when they study a realignment or an open space they have some ideas, for example, in the objective to improve the quality of the physical environment, to raise the bar for the design quality for all private developments and public improvements to maintain a human scale that attracts us to downtown in ways that contribute to the overall livability of Evanston, there are several strategies that then would be followed up by the Committee and staff. He said one of the reasons for the transportation study is that they think 2 way traffic & the realignment at the north and taking Orrington out have some merit for further study, and that there was excitement from property owners, businesses and residents when they saw what Fountain Square might look like.

Ald. Bernstein said he does not want to give any property owners reason to believe that the City is coming after their land. The Committee discussed how to best word their approval of the concept of improving/expanding Fountain Square.

Mr. LaMotte said there are 3 options for Fountain Square: if you don't take a piece of Orrington out to get some extra land and join the island, and you don't go to the north, you will get the same size, but with good design you tie all the corners in and if you close all the lengths off for a festival, so you can do at least the first step without going for the Hahn building. The Plan suggests these options because people had expressed the desire to expand it as well as redesign it.

Ald. Wynne said she agrees with Mr. LaMotte about redesigning the square and defining the area through pavers with adjoining corners but she is skeptical about closing Orrington and wants to wait for the multimodal plan, but considering acquiring the Hahn Building is unthinkable and the idea should be removed. Chair Moran argued that he thinks it merits a tremendous amount of consideration, recognizing we don't have the money to do it now, but that the building is ugly and they are talking about making Evanston nicer looking. He said he is looking for a more expansive, nicely designed, expanded, Fountain Square. Ald. Wynne said she thinks we can make it a wonderful plaza area without making it larger.

**Ald. Wynne moved to explore redesigning Fountain Square with the current property dimensions and connecting it in some way to the surrounding areas and to not completely reject the idea of closing Orrington, but hold off until the multimodal plan is complete, and not to explore acquiring property north of Fountain Square.**

**Ald. Rainey seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted by majority 7-1 with Chair Moran opposed, to approve the motion by Ald. Wynne.**

Chair Moran asked the Committee to vote on the suggestion to rezone Fountain Square OS (open space).

**Ald. Rainey moved that Fountain Square is rezoned OS.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to rezone Fountain Square OS.**

Chair Moran introduced the item of Bookman's alley shown in the plan as being redesigned and upgraded.

**Ald. Rainey moved to continue study for the concept of redesigning and upgrading Bookman's alley.**

**Ald. Wollin seconded the motion**

Ald. Rainey asked how it would happen, to which Mr. LaMotte replied that it is a concept needing further study physically and financially. He explained that the concept is like the European alleys where you can do deliveries by day. Ald. Rainey said it is adorable but it is a fairy tale if we do not have some vision as to how it would happen. Mr. LaMotte said in their experience it would probably be a combination of the City working with the adjacent property owners on a joint plan which would be funded jointly.

Mr. Marino agreed that it would be a joint project adding that it is in a TIF district so the public side would deal with the right of way and pavement improvements and the private side with the

façade treatment to try to implement the rendering. He added that the façade improvements may involve some City assistance as well.

Ald. Wollin said for the Varsity Theater to become a live performance center the City might be able to get some state funding from arts programs, it will definitely have to be a private/public partnership and it will be very expensive. She said if there is an artistic venue in Bookman's Alley it may be eligible for state funding also.

Ald. Bernstein said all of these concepts are consistent with the plan to make the downtown friendly and enhancing the aesthetic quality, but Bookman currently has dumpsters and the backs of buildings, so there is more than just putting in pavers to enhance it. He said he too would love to see a live performance center downtown but he has been told it would take millions of dollars to bring it to an acceptable standard and he does not see how at this point they can make a policy decision on how to achieve these ideas. Chair Moran reminded him that they don't, that they just have to vote on whether they ever want to consider them.

Mr. Bishop recommended that all of the physical improvements they have been discussing go under the section called "The Illustrative Plan," which begins with language that suggests its conceptual nature. He suggested strengthening the language from saying "an illustrative plan was prepared to conceptually define potential building massings, site layouts, and open space designs for the identified area" to say "The adoption of this Plan does not constitute a commitment on behalf of the City to pursue any specific concept, but rather to illustrate a range of concepts that may be appropriate for future study, and there may be other concepts that are even more suitable as we move forward for consideration, consistent with the established objectives in the earlier parts of the plan." He said that sort of cover will say we like the idea of vision, but we don't like the idea of signaling to people that we are really going to pursue in the foreseeable future the acquisition of major property that we don't own, and that we are not committed to 2 way traffic and closing any streets, but these are ideas. He suggested that the Committee focus on those that must be removed because they are absolutely misleading, and strengthening the language that makes clear the conceptual nature and that it does not represent a commitment on behalf of the City to pursue any of them.

Ald. Rainey said the mere mention of potentially acquiring or even a suggestion of acquiring those 2 properties is dangerous. She expressed her wish to remove it. Ald. Wynne agreed with Mr. Bishop's suggestion about the language and said she likes the Bookman's Alley idea if it does not engage too much of the City's resources to create it, and that the Varsity Theater would be lovely but extremely expensive.

Mr. LaMotte clarified that this is a part-policy, part vision document. He explained that they are sending a message out comprehensively that says we have got some great things downtown and we can make it even greater, suggesting to people that they go to the downtown, stay in the downtown, and invest in the downtown, highlighting that each idea has to be studied further.

Chair Moran agreed that the City may not be able to afford to do these ideas but said the proposals are not constrained by how much money the City has, but whether we see the reconfiguration of certain portions of downtown as being positive, and, he said, a combination of institutions or private investors may want to do this. Ald. Wynne agreed that the Varsity, Bookman's and the Benson Street Market Place are all part of an open ended positive vision of the downtown.

**Ald. Wynne moved to approve the language stressing the conceptual nature of all of these illustrative ideas (A through C) and that Bookman's Alley and Benson Street Market Place merit further study.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.**

Chair Moran opened the discussion to item D, potentially expanded parks: Oldberg Park, Raymond Park, Maple Grove Plaza, Grove Street Park, Northern Plaza and the Chicago Avenue Park concept.

Mr. LaMotte clarified that each one of the open spaces has merit but the one that really needs clarification is the Chicago Avenue space by the Library because that was seen initially as an open space opportunity whereas others said it is a development opportunity, and the consultants were cautioned that it is important that the Committee explores it thoroughly, stressing that the others are enhancing some open spaces but that one is actually creating a new one. He asked them to make sure whenever they are ready, it will be finalized.

Ald. Wollin alerted the Committee that there are already plans for Raymond Park that include a very substantial public piece of art that has been donated and has already been sited in Raymond Park. She said it is going to be there and it has been paid for.

Ald. Rainey said there are several items left for them to discuss such as wayfinding, bike systems and the Downtown circulator. She asked for some comment on those items from the members of the Committee who are on the Multimodal Traffic Committee. Chair Moran volunteered to provide the information.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste commended Chair Moran on a great job of breaking down the items into a manageable form.

Ald. Rainey requested that the Downtown Plan be on the 1/26/09 Planning & Development meeting agenda and if they need more time it will be reviewed further at a special meeting.

Chair Moran said they may be able to finish it at the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ald. Hansen commended the Committee on their job so far.

**Ald. Hansen moved to adjourn and pick another special meeting night to discuss the rest of the items.**

**The Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Bobbie Newman