

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Minutes of November 10, 2008
Council Chambers – 6:30 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center**

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

Staff Present: K. Cox, J. Chambers, S. Guderley, D. Marino, B. Newman, T. Norfleet,
D. Spicuzza

Presiding Official: Alderman Wollin

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Wollin called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., a quorum being present.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

**(P1) Draft Downtown Plan - Recommendation for Approval from Plan Commission
Plan Commission recommendation to approve the Draft Downtown Plan as revised by the
Plan Commission**

Chair Wollin announced that there would be a short introduction from former Chair and Associate Member of the Plan Commission, Larry Widmeyer, a presentation of the Draft Downtown Plan by consultants Kirk Bishop of Duncan Associates and John LaMotte of The Lakota Group, and questions by the Committee. The Planning & Development Committee meeting on November 24 will be devoted to public comment. She added that the draft plan and transcripts are available on the City's website.

Mr. Widmeyer said he began the planning stages of the Downtown Plan three years ago when the guiding principles were formed, dividing the Downtown into three areas. The consultants were hired to help with applying form based code to the Downtown. He explained that the materials contain two versions of the Draft Downtown Plan: a "redline" version, showing the history of the changes, and a "clean" version showing the current draft plan. He introduced Kirk Bishop of Duncan Associates.

Mr. Bishop presented the substantive points of the Draft Downtown Plan in a PowerPoint presentation. He said their task was to provide an update of the Strategic Plan of 1989 whose goals were to: encourage economic growth; promote building and development; retain strong pedestrian orientation and physical amenities; attract shoppers, businesses and residents; circulate traffic; and provide a high-activity, 24/7 downtown. He said the original 1989 plan has been wildly successful.

He gave a timeline of the progress starting with the Comprehensive General Plan formed in 2000 to the Downtown Guiding Principles, formed in 2007. He reviewed the plan update process from the kick-off Plan Commission/City Council work session in June, 2007 to the 13 Plan Commission meetings ending in October of 2008. He reviewed the Charrette Principles: street level intimacy; enhanced public amenities; thoughtful new construction; and better rules for development. He said these were formed in collaboration with the Plan Commission and with

important input from the Preservation Commission using all the information gathered from the community to form a draft of the downtown plan.

He stated the updated vision for the downtown: “A mixed-use central business district that is attractive, convenient, livable, sustainable, accessible, and economically vibrant for residents, businesses, and visitors. . . it is everyone’s downtown.”

Mr. John LaMotte presented illustrations of the areas recommended for parks, open space and pedestrian environment, including open green/meeting space opportunities at the current outdoor library parking lot and at the northeast corner of Maple and Grove Streets, and enhancements of green spaces at the plaza at Sherman and Elgin, Oldberg Park, Fountain Square, and Raymond Park. He also showed an illustration of an enhanced Bookman’s alley with upgraded paving and windows or faux windows.

Mr. LaMotte presented the circulation and parking goals of the downtown plan: encourage increased transit use (residents and visitors); enhance vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation; continue focus on way-finding signs; study the feasibility of realigning Orrington/Clark and Orrington/Davis intersections; study the feasibility of making Orrington and Sherman 2-way streets; implement the City’s new bike plan; improve sidewalk conditions; and lobby for high-quality, convenient transit service. A Multi-Modal Transportation Study was done by KLOA, Inc. of the Consultants’ team. Mr. LaMotte presented the recommended alternative to the Orrington-Clark intersection which would close Clark Street and take Orrington to a “T” intersection at Elgin Rd. and an alternative to the Orrington Davis intersection expanding Sherman Plaza to the west, and possibly making Sherman and Orrington two-way streets, which has been shown to be better for retail stores.

Mr. LaMotte explained the Core, West/East Core and Edge Character Zones, showing that the two railroad tracks are at the Core. He presented an overlay identifying development opportunity sites for the future, explaining that development characteristics would be guided by form based code for each of the downtown Character Zones. He said that form based code would preserve flexibility and quality by specifying guidelines for building size, height and floor area, but if a developer proposes to go outside the guidelines, he/she would be subject to a public review process similar to a planned development and an opportunity for “bonuses” based on public benefits, such as: underground parking; whole-building sustainability; on-site affordable housing; affordable office space; public parks/open space; wrapped/concealed parking; landmark preservation; streetscape/alley improvement; public plazas; and façade improvements. He said these bonuses would afford the developer specified adjustments to the guidelines. Mr. LaMotte presented illustrations of the way the buildings would look if they follow the form based code compared to the way they look now. Mr. LaMotte noted that the City is still working on the Downtown Zoning ordinance.

Ald. Rainey asked when the consultants thought the Burger King site would be redeveloped, since it is very successful. Mr. LaMotte replied that the site is underdeveloped and if a developer came in who wanted to buy the property, it could be reconfigured, explaining that he didn’t mean it would be removed from the site if it was redeveloped. He suggested that the parking lot in back of the Burger King could some day be a building. He explained that these are the ideas for the future, for if and when it happens, what the City would want there.

Chair Wollin stated that the University’s Campus Framework Plan for the next fifty years includes opening Orrington and adding street level shops on Clark, possibly with student housing above.

Ald. Tisdahl said that Evanston citizen, Carl Bova did a parking study which showed a different ratio of autos per household than KLOA's study. She asked whether his data changed the outcome of KLOA, Inc.'s study, to which Mr. LaMotte replied that they did not change their data. He also said KLOA's study was done in the summer. The Committee agreed that there is less traffic in the summer.

The Committee discussed the perception of a lack of parking in the downtown. Mr. LaMotte said regarding the perception that there is not enough parking, there are many off-street parking spaces which people may not be taking advantage of. He also said that not providing two parking spaces per residence in a building compels buyers to decide to make a life-style change when they purchase there, given the transportation options Evanston offers. The Committee discussed the alternatives, such as zip cars, U-Go cars and car lifts. Mr. Bishop said the parking generation data is consistent with research throughout the country.

The Committee discussed the balance between adding enough green space while promoting economic stability. Mr. LaMotte suggested that if parking is being added within the new buildings, the new green spaces would work, and that there would hopefully be retail surrounding these green spaces.

Chair Wollin thanked the Consultants for their presentation.

Chair Wollin called a Special Meeting to be televised, on Thursday, December 4th, 2008, to be devoted to discussion of the Draft Downtown Plan.

The Committee agreed to continue the Downtown Plan until the November 24th meeting.

Chair Wollin announced that Evmark will hold a public meeting on Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. in the 3rd floor auditorium of the Rotary Building at 1560 Sherman in Evanston.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

(PD1) Discussion of planned RFQ for Consulting Services for Affordable Housing Comprehensive Plan

Update of Housing Commission plans to develop an Affordable Housing Comprehensive Plan

Ms. Susan Munro of 1516 Maple and Chair of the Housing Commission, refreshed the Committee on their plan in June to develop a Comprehensive Plan for Affordable Housing. She said the Task Force assigned to form the plan represents a variety of knowledgeable people including residents who are in need of affordable housing, bankers, and experts in affordable housing. She said they are requesting the use of Affordable Housing Funds to hire a consultant, as these funds are not in the general fund and must be used for housing. She said the current strategy for providing affordable housing is not meeting those in need because there are empty units, many who still need units, and a moratorium on building more, adding that this is the perfect time to do planning. She said the criteria described in the packet memo would make the process easier.

Ald. Moran said the request is a valid and sensible way to spend the Affordable Housing Funds and suggested that the request be granted. Ald. Rainey suggested the Housing Planner

collaborate with the Task Force to create the plan. Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked for further explanation of the proposed use of the consultant and the expected outcome of the plan. Ms. Munro explained that we are dependent on CHDOs to find properties with no guidance from the City and consequently we are not addressing the City's needs, especially for rental property. She further explained that there has been a push towards home ownership since the end of the 1990's and the City needs to address the needs of the people who cannot afford to buy a home. She said she expects that a practical plan would come from the consultants. She said the Commission members and the Housing Planner, though committed to the task, need someone with expertise to keep the process moving.

Ald. Rainey said she believes it could be done for less than \$60,000. At the request of Ald. Jean-Baptiste, Mr. Marino explained that per the HUD guidelines, the Home Funds roll over to the following year, but must be committed and dispersed by a designated period of time. He said the City receives \$550,000 a year and the current balance is approximately \$1.4 million in uncommitted funds, with \$800,000 reserved for future CHDO projects, to be used within 2 years. Mr. Marino said Staff is committed to seeing the Comprehensive Plan succeed, and that Ms. Spicuzza, the Housing Planner can devote some time to it, and possibly some other Housing staff, but an outside facilitator would also bring a fresh perspective to the process.

Ald. Rainey said her ward is greatly impacted by low income households and she would like to use the money to help people who own a home and are struggling to replace a furnace, a roof or a porch, or paint. She asked if it could be used for rehabbing. Ms. Munro said the plan would have a rehab component to it. She said that when a unit is empty for over a year, renting is a temporary option to prevent it from remaining empty.

Mr. Andrew McGonigle of the Comprehensive Plan for Affordable Housing Task Force and architect for Northwestern University, said he is very happy to work on the Task Force, but he believes it is important to grant the request as he has seen the benefit of using a consultant in the development of the Evanston Master Plan. Ald. Rainey suggested he ask the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern to come forward and lend us a consultant, to which he replied he was there as a private individual and not as part of the university, but he will take her message to Kellogg.

(PD2) Foreclosure Issues

At Chair Wollin's request and the unanimous vote of the Committee, this item will be held over until the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbie Newman