Planning & Development Committee
Minutes of September 12, 2005
Room 2200 – 7:00 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center


Presiding Official: Alderman Bernstein

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Bernstein called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 15, 2005 MEETING MINUTES

Ald. Tisdahl moved approval of the August 15, 2005 minutes, seconded by Ald. Jean-Baptiste. The minutes were approved unanimously.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P2) Ordinance 101-O-04 – Plan Commission Recommendation: Special Multi-Family District, R4a (Map Amendment)
Chairman Bernstein recalled that this item was introduced at the last meeting and referred back to Committee for staff to provide additional information requested. Mr. Wolinski reported to the Committee that staff has provided a revised Ordinance that shows the specific addresses within the map location of the areas effected by the R4a zoning amendment. Ald. Wollin thanked Mr. Wolinski and staff for providing this helpful information as requested by the Committee at the last meeting.

With no further discussion, Ald. Wollin moved approval of Ordinance 101-O-05 as amended, seconded by Chairman Bernstein. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

(P4) Housing Rehabilitation Guidelines
Chairman Bernstein noted that there is no representation from the Housing Commission present this evening, however he acknowledged Mr. Stan Janusz, Asst. Director of Community Development, over the Housing Rehabilitation and Property Standards Division, being present to address any questions or concerns by the P&D Committee.
Ald. Rainey moved approval of the Housing Commission’s recommendation to increase the loan maximums on single-family and multi-family rehab loans, seconded by Ald. Wynne. She stated that the amount of $7,500 per multi-family unit is currently without doubt economically unfeasible. She said the need for this increase has been evident for some time now. She requested staff to provide a summary of the Housing Commission’s discussion on this matter. Mr. Janusz responded and gave the P&D Committee and detailed overview of the Housing Commission’s analysis for recommending the increase in maximum loan amounts for single-family homes and per multi-family units. He noted the most important factors including coming short in the amount of funds required to bring single-family houses up to code requirements and the cost of reasonable construction to do so. He pointed out that obviously those realistic costs have increased over the years since the current maximum loans amounts were put into place. This same fact includes the reasonable increase in construction and rehab cost for multi-family units as well. Mr. Janusz pointed out that with multi-family rehabilitation, there are basic requirements and additions that are currently assumed to be included in any such multi-family rehab construction project, that were not included when the current maximum loan amounts were established that obviously exceed the amounts in place.

Ald. Rainey totally agreed with what Mr. Janusz reported on the Housing Commission’s reasoning and analysis of their discussion. She further proposed to increase the recommended amount from $7,500 to $12,000 per unit for multi-family to $20,000 per unit. She justified her recommendation from experience in view of the current needs and requirements for upgrading multi-family units under rehabilitation construction. She pointed out several specifics required that are very costly, however equally considered necessary for a reasonable and adequate rehabilitation project. Therefore, Ald. Rainey motioned to amend the recommended amount of increase from $7,500 to $12,000 to a maximum of $20,000 per multi-family unit. Ald. Wynne seconded the motion.

Ald. Wynne asked Mr. Janusz how many applications per year the City receives for housing rehabilitation assistance. Mr. Janusz responded that they receive approximately 20-25 applications for single-family. He said that they have received 3 applications for condominium rehabilitation recently, which such housing was just included recently under the single-family guidelines. He said the City receives approximately 4-5 applications for assistance in removing diseased trees on single-family property over the last year. He continued with additional information on the different programs for assistance the Housing Rehabilitation provides and the varying applications they receive over a period of time. Mr. Janusz noted that the Housing Rehabilitation Division puts forth effort to advertise their services provides by several means and the response fluctuates year-to-year according to individual needs. Ald. Wynne asked if the increased single-family loan amount from $30,000 to $40,000 is sufficient and practicable in view of the current needs and request for housing rehabilitation applications received. Mr. Janusz responded that the $40,000 is sufficient for the majority of the basic single-family rehabilitation projects; however, realistically there have been occasions where additional funds would be needed to fully comply with all code requirements and sufficiently
complete a total rehab job. He noted that on the average case currently for a single-family or 2-unit building, the cost would be on an average of $25,000. Chairman Bernstein asked for confirmation that the City is not running out of funds for housing rehabilitation functions. Mr. Janusz assured that the City is not short of any funds; currently the available funds are at an amount of approximately $280,000. Ald. Wollin asked for information on the length of time and options in loan repayments. Mr. Janusz elaborated on the different types of rehab loans available ranging from very low interest loans repayable over a 20-year period to title-transfer loans according to income qualification levels.

In conclusion to the discussion thus far, Ald. Wynne moved to include with Ald. Rainey’s amended motion, to increase the maximum single-family loan amount from $30,000 to $40,000 to an increase of a maximum of $50,000. Ald. Rainey seconded the motion. The amended motions combined received a vote of 9-0 in favor of the motion. In regards to the approval of the Housing Commission’s recommendation to increase the loan maximums of the Rehabilitation Guidelines, Ald. Rainey moved approval, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

(P3) Planned Development – 1567 Maple Avenue, Plan Commission’s Recommendation to Deny

THIS ITEM WAS TRANSCRIBED BY A COURT REPORTER IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE KLAEREN RULES, THEREFORE DETAILED MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE TRANSCRIPT. A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION THAT TOOK PLACE FOLLOWS IN THE MINUTES PROVIDED.

Chairman Bernstein announced that he was directed by the City’s Corporation Counsel and City Legal Staff that he is should recluse himself from this case due to his legal relationship with one of the partners involved in this development organization. He further noted that Corporation Counsel and City Legal Staff has directed that he excuse himself as Chair of the Planning & Development Committee during and involving any hearings of this matter. Therefore, Chairmanship is handed over to the previous Chair, being Ald. Tisdahl.

At this time, everyone in attendance who wished to make presentation, comment, or respond in any way with regards to this case, be sworn in accordance to the Klaren Rules. Before moving forward, Legal Staff called a brief meeting between staff and the Chair of the Committee to discuss the appropriate way to proceed. In the meantime, Mr. James Murray, Attorney for the applicant, gave opening presentation comments. Upon completion of staff’s meeting with the Chair of the P&D Committee, Ms. Szymanski noted that it is her understanding from staff is that the building will be reduced by approximately 20 feet. Mr. Murray responded that to be true and there are several considerations that have also altered with the height change which can be discussed in further detail with the architect. He noted that these changes have not been reflected in
either of the presentations before the Plan Commission nor anywhere else other than his letter to the Ward Alderman regarding the gross height of the building being reduced as a proposal by which to gain the Committee’s approval. Ms. Szymanski then announced to Chairman Tisdahl that threshold leaves them with the changes in the PUD are so substantial that it could go back to the Plan Commission to conduct a public hearing with testimony. She has had experience with projects before the Committee which have been less in scope and have not gone back before the Plan Commission provided there are no other changes. She noted that a reduction in height is one of those changes that can be considered as no so substantial that the project would have to go back, however there is nothing that says it can not go back. She added to that Mr. Murray’s remarks about having substantial testimony at this level of the proceedings at the Planning & Development Committee. Ms. Szymanski asked the Committee to then consider whether at this time they want to proceed with a hearing of that substantial major development Klaeren protection cross examination with direct rebuttal and citizen comments. She noted that there is a court reporter present if this is the Committee’s choice. She said, if however the Committee wishes to remand this back to the Plan Commission for that body to conduct the fact finding and make recommendations based upon the revisions to the plan, this choice can be made at this time also.

The Committee members gave their opinions and discussed this matter. Ald. Wollin questioned if it is necessary to go back and notify all required that previously received notice of this Planned Development. Ms. Szymanski responded that the last time this matter was noticed was before the P&D Committee, however she can not say that all persons who would wish to ask questions had they known of this change are all present this evening. Ald. Jean-Baptiste recommended that the Committee make a decision based on the impact of the changes that have been proposed as opposed to the amount of time the developer may have spent in the process. In this instance, the changes that have been proposed are changes that if anything create a possible positive recommendation from the Plan Commission and it would be appropriate for the P&D Committee to hold a hearing at this time. After further discussion, Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved that the Committee hear this matter tonight on the basis that the changes that have been proposed address one of the objectives of the project. Ald. Wynne seconded the motion and the vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

Ms. Szymanski explained the Klaeren Rules. The court reporter swore in the applicants first who wished to give presentation. Mr. Bob Horner, Principle with Winthrop Partners and Mr. Pat Fitzgerald, Architect with Fitzgerald Associate Architects. Mr. Horner gave opening comments and Mr. Fitzgerald gave a presentation and overview of the project.

An affordable housing/Inclusionary housing discussion followed. Mr. Murray assured that the applicants have pledged to contribute $150,000 to facilitate affordable housing homeownership through one of the existing programs which would be preferable, however they would be willing to consider some combination along with contributing to one of the existing programs.
The Court reporter then swore in any citizens within 1000 feet of the subject property who wished to cross examine the applicants at this time. The following citizens were sworn in:

William Best, 1640 Maple Avenue
Jeannine Martin, 1640 Maple Avenue
Bennett Johnson, 708 Washington Street
Dan Schiff, 1640 Maple Avenue
Dr. Robert Rudley, 1640 Maple Avenue.

Due to lack of sufficient time for discussion to conclude this hearing, Ald. Wynne moved to hold this in Committee and to be the first item of order on the agenda for the September 26, 2005 meeting. Ald. Holmes seconded the motion and the vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee