

**Special Meeting  
Planning & Development Committee  
Minutes of January 29, 2007  
Room 2200 – 7:00 p.m.  
Evanston Civic Center**

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

**Alderman Absent:** E. Tisdahl

**Staff Present:** J. Wolinski, J. Aiello, J. Carroll, K.Cox, S. Guderley, D. Jennings, D. Marino, R. Russell, J. Brownlee

**Presiding Official:** Alderman Jean-Baptiste

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Jean-Baptiste called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

West Side Master Plan for Sub-Areas 1, 2 and 3

Mr. Wolinski stated that the presentation will be headed by Dennis Marino, Asst. Director of Planning Division, and Sue Guderley, Neighborhood Planner, who has been the Project Manager. Also he recognized the two consulting firms of Farr Associates and JJR who will be making their separate presentations this evening as well.

Mr. Marino gave an overview of the West Side Plan. The Plan is the product of a lot of work done by numerous stake holders in West Evanston including residents, property owners, developers, City Officials, and several representatives from institutions, also City staff and the consultants. He said this is an ongoing dynamic process which is continuous. The purpose of the Plan is to shape and promote high quality new developments in this area and the process has been lead by the consultants. He introduced Ms. Leslie Oberholtzer representing Farr Associates and Mr. Brad Winick representing JJR and also recognized their team members who have assisted them through this project.

Mr. Marino stated that tonight they are asking the P&D Committee to consider recommending adoption of the Plan so that it can be used as a standard for development proposals once the moratorium for this area expires on February 10<sup>th</sup>. He said they are also asking for the Committee to favorably consider the Guiding Principles and documents, the Development Component, the Transportation Component and the approximate density and building types described in the Plan. Mr. Marino noted the zoning and regulating aspects of this plan are currently in front of the Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission, which held a meeting this morning. He said the entire Plan has been recommended by the Plan Commission and staff as well. At this point he asked each of the consultant representatives to give their presentations.

Farr Associates Presentation

Ms. Oberholtzer stated that Farr Associates was responsible for Areas 1 & 2. She pointed out from the slide presentation that the limits of Sub Area 1 include the Mayfair Triangle from Simpson down to Emerson which the Bishop Freeman property is in and the northern portion of

the Robinson Bus Depot. The limits of Sub Area 2 originally were set from Emerson down to Church including the southern portion of the Robinson Bus Depot, the ComEd facility, the Hines Lumber property with the Church Street Village development. She noted that they subsequently revised the areas to remove the ComEd facility and also removed the Cyrus Home Church Street Development because the PUD had already been approved. The Mayfair Right-of-way runs through both sub areas.

Ms. Oberholtzer said they held a series of three public meetings over a several months beginning in August, 2006. The first meeting they had an image preference survey where they showed many slides and had some discussion after the presentation. The second meeting they had a community charette where they gave a variety of dwelling building types as well as street and park spaces to place on aerials. She noted this meeting was a very active hands-on setting. The third meeting they showed a series of options that were drawn from those charette solutions. They then rendered those solutions and set them at several different tables and the attendants gave their opinions and discussions of the pros and cons on each rendering. She noted that all three meetings had a very good turnout in attendance.

Ms. Oberholtzer stated that from those three meetings they came up with a very clear list of guiding principals that the Master Plan is thoroughly based upon. She went over the Guiding Principles in detail from the slide presentation. In summary the following five principles are:

- 1) Reconnect the Community – Proposed actions include: Level the grades of the former rail right-of-way and remove the retaining walls in all locations, Reconnect and extend the surrounding neighborhood street grid, and develop a continuous multi-use trail through the neighborhood.
- 2) Maintain the Green Character of the Community – Proposed actions include: Require front yard on residential buildings, Incorporate wide parkways with street trees, and provide vest pocket parks in new developments.
- 3) Increase the Walk ability of the Neighborhood – Proposed actions include: Provide a walkable block pattern, Provide calmer streets, Provide continuous, wide sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, Provide interest and more interaction along streets, Improve pedestrian crossing opportunities at Emerson between Dewey and Ashland, and Provide for bicyclists as well as pedestrians.
- 4) Provide a Life Cycle of Housing Choices – Proposed actions include: Expand upon the existing housing stock with additional types, Provide opportunities for affordable housing units, and Respond to the Real Estate mark Available.
- 5) Provide Feasible Neighborhood-Scaled Commercial Space – Proposed actions include: Provide small nodes of commercial space, Concentrate commercial nodes along collector streets, Design the commercial spaces for maximum feasibility.

Ms. Oberholtzer went over the Transportation Component in detail from the slide presentation. In summary the components involve:

1. Street Network - which shows the proposed new street grids that reconnect to the existing streets, exhibits the current major streets, alleys, proposed changes to existing narrow streets, alleys and one-way streets and proposed new alleys. Also the street network includes intersection and crossings at new streets, on-street parking and bump-outs, streetscape improvements, and the inclusion of bicycle lanes.

2. Pedestrian Accessibility – which involved both a Predzone Analysis of current area and Predzone Analysis of proposed development plan and covers streetscape element improvements, especially on Emerson.
3. West Evanston Trail – which covers from Simpson/Green Bay south to Mason Park. This trail would provide a pedestrian link throughout that area.
4. Bicycle and Transit Access – which covers a proposed plan throughout the Master Plan Area.

Ms. Oberholtzer went over the Development Component in detail from the slide presentation. In summary this component covers: The Overall Site Plan – which includes the future development for mixed-use buildings, preserving facades, trail connection throughout the area, aligning new and extended streets with existing street network, improved streetscape and crossings along Emerson, apartment buildings in two locations, townhouse compromise majority with the Plan, open-space provisions, improved connections to Fleetwood Jourdain, etc. She noted the proposed estimated unit counts for each sub area.

Ms. Oberholtzer went over the Zoning Recommendations. In summary:

1. Base Zoning – currently the area includes I2, R4 and B2 majority zoning. The Plan includes a series of building types that would fit into the current zoning, however specific lots and areas would need to be rezoned to accommodate some of the new proposed residential & commercial development and parking requirements.
2. Regulating Plan for accommodation of zoning to fit the proposed townhouse developments and small lots for new single-family housing.
3. Proposed Overlay Zoning Areas.

Ms. Oberholtzer talked about phasing options and the possible options for the Onyx site, the Cahill site and the post office site.

#### JJR Consultants Presentation

Mr. Brad Winick introduced himself along with him from his firm, he introduced his team members Vishal Kundra and Kevin Campbell. He also acknowledged the work and shared information of Ms. Valerie Kretchmer. He summarized the process in order to justify how the plan developed and what alternatives they looked at; also what community involvement and discourse in order to arrive the preferred plan. He explained the process has been approximately 6-8 months with three levels of community meetings including small groups, focus groups orchestrated in large part by the City's Planning Division headed by Susan Guderley, also Ald. Holmes and Ald. Jean-Baptiste. Mr. Winick stated that meetings were held in both the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> wards during the process and also went before the Plan Commission several times.

Mr. Winick acknowledged the numerous key stakeholder concerns and the community has indicated that this area is in important one and it is their home and want to build upon their strengths, maintain the character and continue to be a community marked by diversity of all types, buildings, people, land uses that are important to the residents of this area. He said that community has also indicated their desire to keep this plan balanced and to incorporate important elements of the community into the neighborhood plan so to redevelop from the area position of strength. Mr. Winick stated that ETHS (his alma mater) was an active participant. His firm met with ETHS representatives and they presented the Plan in from of the District 202 Board, which they very clearly see the importance of the school's role in this and the school's property and the

Church/Dodge intersection in this Plan. He feels the Church/Dodge intersection is the center of the West Evanston Plan District and neighborhood. His firm's responsibility was for Sub Area 3 which includes the Church/Dodge commercial intersection, Church Street corridor extending down to Greenleaf Industrial district.

Mr. Winick reiterated that there was plenty of community input throughout the plan processing phase. He showed several photos of the neighborhood meetings held and the active involvement of the attendants. He stated that from the meetings, the community expressed to create generous greenways, connections, buffers, and open space are all very important. He noted that there was a lot of discussion about how all this will be implemented. He said most of the area land is owned by a variety of private owners and implementation will require deals to be made and cooperation between numerous entities and property owners. Also the Plan will very likely require phased implementation because it is quite a unique shaped area where certain pieces of land will need to be developed in order to facilitate development and connections of land areas.

Mr. Winick said that it was agreed by all and from the beginning that a key to the project is for the Plan to work at the Church/Dodge commercial intersection which is a catalytic point for Sub Area 3. The streetscape needs to be people-friendly and draws residents and business to a comfortable safe setting for retail and to welcome a healthy mix of national draws and local community retailers. He said the intersection itself should be the high point in the neighborhood both figuratively and literally. Mr. Winick suggested that this is where the building height should be highest and taper down to meet with the existing community building formations. He said the community told them in no uncertain terms that the existing rail road berm should be eliminated and they looked at various options because it is a wall that divides the two halves of the community. He said they also looked at a number of options as what the elimination of that berm might imply or suggest for Davis and Grove. In looking at a number of options, the consensus was that they should be extended as non-vehicular pedestrian connections with the potential that if in the future things were to change, nothing would foreclose the possibility but plan wisely and keep options open. He said that it was also suggested from the community that the streetscape continue down Church Street from the Dodge intersection all the way west to the canal and down Dodge all the way south further than the Greenleaf boundary.

Mr. Winick summed up that from a very vigorous set of conversations and analysis of the existing fabric and talking with people about their aspirations, hopes, fears, concerns, etc.; they narrowed down a few different ways to approach some of the key elements and also looked at a number of key strategies at the intersection of Church and Dodge. He said they looked at how to deal with the opportunities that presented themselves with the elimination of the railroad berm and connectivity of streets and non-vehicular thoroughways. He pointed out the area of difficulty being the odd triangular area between the berm and Dodge from Church to Lake Street. He said they looked at different redevelopment opportunities that might present themselves at different portions of this triangle. Mr. Winick said they then presented a number of plans to the community with a combination of mix and match scenarios which they requested feedback on preference in building types, designs, and development patterns that would accommodate the residents/stakeholders that live and utilize this neighborhood. He noted that they also looked at different options for the portion of Sub Area 3 from Lake to Greenwood and Brown and Dodge, incorporating the potential site of the ETHS power plant if it were deemed to be outdated and become a redevelopment prospect.

Upon the outcome of their analysis from the community input meetings, JJR did some configuring for retail which could go greater or lesser in this area. Mr. Winick referred to Ms. Kretchmer's analysis which recommended guidance was that the area could support up to 20,000 square feet of retail; consolidated within a half block of Church and Dodge commercial district and suggested not to consider pushing further retail beyond that amount. He then pointed out several density figures they worked out within the different options concluded from their analysis. He made note that the calculations would differ with the inclusion of asphalt parking areas. He referred to his slide presentation, which illustrate the three Plan Alternatives for development and density options.

1. A development option proposing approximately 121 units with a total of 9,300 square feet of retail and 9 dwelling units per acre.
2. A development option proposing approximately 209 units with a total of 14,300 square feet of retail and density of 16 dwelling units per acre.
3. A development option proposing approximately 235 units with a total of 18,400 square feet of retail and density of 18 dwelling units per acre.

Mr. Winick stated that from these three plan alternatives they derived with a preferred plan which is truly a synthesis of several elements from all three different plans. He summarized the key areas:

- Church and Dodge – incorporate some existing retail with the addition of several suggested new retail establishments that from community input would fit their neighborhood and enhance the commercial business.
- Mixed use development – preferably 4-story mixed use buildings on the three corners with a variety of residential, in every instance with parking incorporated within the footprint behind the building.
- A mix of mid-rise condo buildings, no more than 3-stories.
- Townhouse developments scattered throughout the entire area.
- Strong key element preferences for greenway connections, pedestrian crossings, a median along Dodge Avenue from Church Street south to Lake or Greenwood.

Mr. Winick said the consensus from the community meetings was for lots of open space. He noted the existing open space in Sub Area #3 is approximately 2.25 acres versus the preferred plan proposal offering 3.5 acres of open space. He pointed out from his slide presentation where those open-space areas are and how the accumulated space in the entire area sums up.

Mr. Winick stated one of the major concerns expressed in the community meetings was the question on implementation of the Master Plan. He assured that the importance of phasing areas for independent projects and inter-dependent projects is very important and needs to be managed and planned out carefully by a combined effort from City Officials and staff as development proposals come in. Mr. Winick concluded his presentation with a brief overview of the preferred streetscape plan for Sub Area #3 with the inclusion of the median down Dodge Avenue, the change in vehicle lanes, inclusion of a proposed bike lane, and inclusion of a safety drop-off lane on the west side of Dodge Avenue in front of the High School.

This concluded the consultant presentations. Mr. Marino informed the P&D Committee of the Plan Commission's process with the zoning review of the West Evanston Plan currently on the Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission's agenda.

Chair Jean-Baptiste recognized that from the beginning up-to-date of this process, the planning involvement did not include some needed input from the Parks and Recreation Department that should have been integrated. He called on Mr. Doug Gaynor, Director of Parks, Forestry & Recreation for his comments at this time.

Mr. Gaynor referred to his memorandum distributed to the Committee this evening regarding an opinion on the need for additional green/park space in the West Evanston planning project. (See attached.) In summary, Mr. Gaynor felt instead of using Gilbert Park for development it should be replaced with upgraded park facilities for better utilization of the park by the neighborhood and to save this green space. He stressed the loss of this park area and green space is a big concern of his and he highly recommends keeping and revitalizing the park. He suggested finding a way to incorporate the park area within the proposed green space walkways proposed to run through Sub areas #1 and #2. He pointed out the average park area/open green space in Evanston versus the national average park area/open green space for similar communities is below average. He went into further detail as stated in his memorandum on the City's responsibility to its citizens to maintain the well being of the community which he finds preserving as much existing green space as possible very important. He further pointed out the concerns and preferences expressed by the residents for the preservation and need for parking within the study area as one of the top priorities.

Mr. Gaynor informed that Parks/Forestry and Recreation staff met with Community Development staff and the consultants to discuss the issues of concern as outlined in his memorandum. From that meeting several compromises were discussed: Area 1: Increased park Space Option A, seems to better address and meet the potential needs of the community. In the original plan, Area 1 included 43,225 square feet of park space. This compromise includes an additional 12, 615 square feet of parkland (approximately .30 acres) for a total of 55,840 square feet of park space within Area 1. This additional acreage will allow the City to maintain and not decrease its overall average of open/park space. In conclusion, Mr. Gaynor requested that the Committee consider the revised plan for Area 1: Increased park Space Option A, as the better plan for the West Evanston redevelopment initiative.

#### Citizen Comments

Edwina Wesson, 2018 Wesley, stated that rumors have been heard amongst her neighbors that the City of Evanston want to tear down the three apartment buildings at 2014, 2018 and 2024 Wesley to make way for the West Evanston Plan. She expressed her concern for herself and fellow tenants on relocation if this rumor is true. She also noted that the tenants of these buildings were not notified of tonight's meeting. Chair Jean-Baptiste responded assuring that the City of Evanston has no such plans to demolish those three apartment buildings. He explained this process has been underway for over 6-months to create a vision for the West Evanston area and reassured that the consultants in the planning process did not consider tearing down any existing residential housing, however the plan does include proposed redevelopment of several industrial sites within the area and the presented plan does exhibit those areas. He also stressed the proposed Master Plan is a working development guideline for redevelopment proposals for the west side as well as a working guideline to follow for implementation of improved residential, retail and infrastructure improvements. Ald. Rainey suggested that special provisions be made to keep the residents of those buildings well informed and notified, by hand-delivery if necessary, throughout the planning development process. Staff concurred.

Bessie Collins, 2018 Wesley seconded Ms. Wesson's concerns expressed.

Mary McWilliams, 1606 Wesley read from a prepared statement (copy available in the Community Development Administrative Office).

John Wertheimer/Michael Sieja, Mayfair Green Company. Mr. Wertheimer spoke for both he and his partner who are currently working on a proposal project for the TAPCO property. He raised a question in regards to the guidelines presented this evening for the West Evanston Master Plan/versus the Planned Development process. He asked for clarification if any PUD's in this area would still be subject to the required procedure to go before SPAARC review and subsequent other zoning bodies if necessary before the permit review process. Chair Jean-Baptiste responded suggesting that this question wait for property response upon P&D Committee and Council opportunity to deliberate and make final decisions on any regulations and requirements for further proposed development of this area.

Ron Fleckman, representing Cyrus Homes. He noted that his company is in the process of preparing a housing developing the Bishop Freeman site. He recognized and appreciates all the work and proposed improvements for the West Evanston Plan. However, they have presented their proposal to the City and the feedback they are receiving at the staff level is not with regards to the suggested development guidelines of the Master Plan area but more toward the existing PUD guidelines. His concern is as this Master Plan is considered and subsequently approved, the question is where will their process be geared and what the flexibility of the process will be at that time. Chair Jean-Baptiste responded and again reiterated this is another question and concern that will have to be addressed once Committee/Council deliberations have been done.

Walter Kihm, Cyrus Homes, seconded Mr. Fleckman's comments and concerns. He feels somewhat relieved after hearing Ald. Jean-Baptiste's comments this evening after attending the meeting of the Zoning Committee of the Plan Commission this morning. He noted one of the issues he saw in this whole process is that the entire stakeholders of this community including developers, property owners and retail merchants, felt they would have more input into the resulting community plan rather than a nice finite plan for every individual piece of property. Mr. Kihm expressed his opinion is that a real serious consideration and appropriate time has not been given for each individual piece of property in order to make a finite conclusion for the Plan and how each property really appropriately fits for redevelopment into the Plan for the betterment of the neighborhood and immediate surroundings. He feels there has not been a lot of recommendation for realistic diversity of housing for this area and that more time and consideration needs to be given before such a finite guideline plan is approved for redevelopment of this area.

Betty Sue Ester, 2114 Darrow – read from a prepared statement (see attached correspondence). She concluded that the plan needs to go back to the community for further study.

Carliss Sutton, 1821 Darrow expressed his concerns with the notification process and the many complaints of tenants and property owners saying that they did not receive any notice of past meeting held or hearings on this matter. In his opinion, the community has not been given the opportunity for enough input into this Plan as it is presented by the consultants this evening for final approval. Mr. Sutton stated that he is deeply concerned for the loss of green space and open park areas that should have been included from the beginning of this process, as verified by the

Director of Park/Forestry and Recreation this evening. He concluded in his opinion this proposed Master Plan is welcoming extreme gentrification of their neighborhood in the outcome.

Roberta Hudson, 1941 Dewey said that she is appalled of the City conducting this meeting tonight without proper notice to the neighborhood residents that have to live in this community. She read from a past SPAARC report/minutes which stated the recommendation for 20' alleys wide enough for streets and thru traffic. She assures that most of her neighbors and other community residents do not want alleys big enough for possible street traffic to come through at all times. Ms. Hudson feels the plan is much too dense for the area and that amounts of suggested residential dwelling units proposed for this area is far too great to pack into the boundaries of this master plan. In her opinion the City is paying way too much money for consultants that only seem to benefit the developers in their community.

Robert Parris said that his parents hold several property sites throughout the Master Plan area. He said that he fully supports development in general, however the approach could have involved more land/property owners in and throughout the entire process. He feels a more collaborative approach would have been more helpful and still can be from this point moving forward. In his opinion, the current moratorium could have a very negative impact on property values and cause problems with future development proposals.

Tina Paden, 1122 Emerson said that she also owns properties at 1507 Emerson and 2012 & 18 Darrow. She also did not receive proper notification for the previous meetings and hearings and received no notice of this meeting tonight. She was even on a special list from a past neighborhood meeting and still did not receive proper notice. Ms. Paden raised several questions of concern: 1) Are the proposed multi-family buildings going to be majority condominiums or rental or an even mix? Who is going to pay for all the street, alley and public improvements – taxpayers? The proposed bike path is unreasonable for the streets in their neighborhood because even Dodge Avenue is too narrow to add a bike lane; in her opinion this idea very unsafe. In view of the condominiums being proposed, are they going to be in the same purchase price range as the new development on Church for approximately \$300-400,000? The majority of residents in this neighborhood could not afford such prices; where is the affordability?

Bennett Johnson, representative of NAACP, feels the plan lacks community concerns and does not address affordable housing in the neighborhood. In his opinion, more time and consideration of the neighborhood's concerns need to be further addressed.

John Cahill, Cahill Plumbing, noted that their business has been located on Church Street in this neighborhood for over 100 years and has always been family owned and operated. He said they do not want to leave Evanston and assured that his company is not planning on budging from their current site.

This point ended citizen comments.

Ald. Rainey agrees with the comments made by many property and business owners; they need to have more involvement in this process because they are an integral part of the planning. as well as many other large land owners/business owners in that community. Ald. Holmes assured that the large property owners were at the neighborhood meetings, the problem is the Plan being presented this evening without notices being sent out. Ald. Bernstein feels this Plan is a good beginning but still there remains much to be done and a long way to go. Chair Jean-Baptiste

stated that it is every municipality obligation and the elected officials' job to do planning and move forward with development. He detects a lot of misconception of the Plan by the community, so therefore it is obvious that more education and learning period is needed to have a better understanding by the residents of this neighborhood. He reminded that this Plan is in response to community input and what is being presented is a collaboration of ideals that the consultants gathered from that information to come up with a vision for this West Side area.

The Committee discussed scheduling another special meeting to continue discussion on this item and give time for deliberation. The consensus was arrived by the P&D Committee for a tentative special meeting date on Thursday, February 22, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 2200. Mr. Wolinski reminded the Committee member that the current moratorium is up on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jacqueline E. Brownlee