

**Planning & Development Committee  
Minutes of November 12, 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, E. Tisdahl, C. Wollin, M. Wynne

**Staff Present:** J. Wolinski, J. Aiello, J. Brownlee, J. Chambers, K. Cox, B. Dunkley, G. Morgan, R. Russell, D. Spicuzza, L. Woods

**Presiding Official:** Alderman Hansen

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 22, 2007 MEETING MINUTES**

Ald. Rainey moved approval of the October 22, 2007 meeting minutes, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The minutes were approved unanimously with a vote of 9-0.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

Chair Hansen made a special acknowledgement presented by Mr. Wolinski of the single largest permit fee paid at one time since he has been the Director of Community Development. Mr. Wolinski added that from his knowledge, that this is the largest permit fee ever paid and collected at one time. He displayed an enlarged copy of the check from Northwestern University showing the amount of \$1,012,000+. The permit fee was for the new Molecular therapeutics & Diagnostics Building that will be built on the east side of Sheridan Road. He informed that a representative from Northwestern University came over to the city as soon as they received the call from Building Division staff that the permit was ready and the final fee had been calculated. Mr. Wolinski noted that there have been larger total permit fee amounts for other major developments in Evanston, such as Sherman Plaza, however those permit fees were collected in intervals over time of lesser amounts; making this single payment for the entire permit fees for a project at one time. The Planning & Development Committee commended staff for this milestone in City of Evanston/Building Department history.

**(P1) Request for Families in Transition Funding from Connections for the Homeless**

**Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved approval, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl.**

Chairman Hansen acknowledged Ms. Katie Patterson as the representative for Connections for the Homeless. Ms. Patterson gave a brief synopsis of their history with this client they are requesting funds to sponsor. She noted that the client is a single mother with a 4-year old daughter whom their organization has had the opportunity to build a close relationship with since March of 2004. This client was in their Transitional Housing Program for 2 years from March 2004 until March of 2006 in which she made significant progress. Connections for the Homeless subsequently continued assisting this client by sponsoring her in the FIT Program from April 2006 until May 2007. During this period of FIT sponsorship, the client made even more progress by obtaining a better paying job, establishing stable daycare for her daughter, and attending college classes as well. Ms. Patterson explained that at the expiration of this Fit sponsorship in May 2007, the client decided not to renew her lease and made plans to move to Georgia where

she thought to have a stronger support network. However these plans did not succeed and the client has since been staying with several family members in the area. In conclusion, Ms. Patterson stated that their organization would like to continue supporting this client and recommend a second year for FIT funding because of the noted significant progress made by this individual.

Ald. Rainey asked if the client has found an apartment in their affordable cost range and if so, where is it located. Ms. Patterson responded that housing has been found in the area of Custer Avenue. Ald. Rainey expressed her concern with the exact building which the apartment is located in, since it is in her Ward and has the awareness of certain buildings and landlords that she would be worried about taking advantage of a tenant in such a special situation. She requested that Ms. Patterson meet with her directly after this meeting to discuss the specific apartment location for her assurance that proper housing is given in this case. Ald. Rainey noted that she has confidence in Connections for the Homeless in doing a background check on the building and landlord history, however she would like to assist and offer input if necessary on situations within her Ward that she might have additional knowledge on insight on that might not become aware from a regular background check. Ms. Patterson agreed.

**The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.**

(P2) Request for Additional Funds from Reba Place Development Corporation for Rehab of 602 Mulford

**Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

Ms. Mary Goering, Project Manager for the 602 Mulford Project spoke on behalf of RPDC and acknowledged the presence of several of their Board members as well. She explained that the City Code has changed since the beginning of their rehab/condominium conversion project. RPDC is requesting \$80, 0000 in additional HOME funds to help cover the cost to install the required fire-suppression sprinkler system. She noted that this money would only help with the hard cost but there are extra costs involved that come to approximately \$200,000. She informed the Committee that two other sources of funding besides these HOME funds requested have been pursued and approved from the Federal Home Loan Bank and Illinois Housing Development Authority.

Ald. Rainey brought attention to the fact that the cost listed per square foot for these units are higher and more costly, compared to larger condominium conversions with units valued at \$400,000+. Therefore, it appears this affordable housing project per unit cost more than what is cost to rehab condo units for sale at market value. Again, Ald. Rainey reiterated her concern stated all along with the high cost of these affordable housing projects managed by not-for-profit organizations. She stressed the importance of the City finding other ways to provide affordable housing because this way is much too costly.

Ald. Rainey also noted that she has talked with the tenants of the neighboring building that are complaining about the landscaping and the hideous conditions that they have had to deal with since the beginning of this project. She requested that this developer at least clean up the entire site to make it presentable for the other residents of this block as a courtesy since they keep their properties neat and presentable. Ald. Holmes mentioned her understanding in that as a condition with these units, the buyer will be contributing to the landscaping of this building and that is why nothing has been done yet until the buyers start to purchase and move into the units. Ms. Goering agreed and explained further this condition that will be part of the purchase of these affordable

units. She said that it will be a unified effort by the unit owners to contribute so much man time to the landscaping of this building. Ald. Rainey said that is a separate issue from simply cleaning up the mess that remains there and make the grounds at least presentable for the neighborhood. This clean up has nothing to do with their final landscaping plans.

Ald. Wynne asked if there have been any closings scheduled to date for any of the 12 units. Mr. Goering responded that there are 6 contracts out at present, however things were held up due to the last stage of IHDA negotiations and approvals, which came through in mid September and RPDC has just received IHDA's commitment letter. She stated that those units that were completed and ready for occupancy approximately a half year ago, RPDC is now free to issue contract to the buyers and move forward from there. She said that 13 completed applications of income-qualified buyers have been received and a few more applications are in process.

**The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.**

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### (PD1) Review of the Zoning Ordinance

Ms. Aiello opened comment by giving a chronology of what the staff team has accomplished since they began meeting and discussing the goals and strategic approach for an update to the Zoning Ordinance. She suggests that the Zoning Board of Appeals take on this project of updating the Zoning Ordinance once recognized as an established board for the Zoning Ordinance in the City Code. She noted that the Team has come up with two different strategies, A and B, as described in staff's memorandum. The Team has suggested that phases 1 and 2 be done concurrently followed by phase 3, which involves the review of the larger citywide issues that may require additional study. She turned comment over to Mr. Dunkley to explain in further detail the three phases and the appendix summary of issues.

Mr. Dunkley explained the phases in more detail. He pointed out that phase 3 is likely to be more costly and extensive with larger concepts to deal with. He went through the highlights of the summary of issues beginning with Phase 1: Special Use Expiration dates, of the "ZBA Creation" being the Zoning Board of Appeals is not currently recognized as an established board in the zoning ordinance, as stated earlier by Ms. Aiello, and the types of major variations and special uses such as air conditions and additional to non-conforming structures that could be done administratively. Ald. Rainey pointed out that some air conditioning unit variations can be very controversial and might require more review. Ms. Aiello responded that these variations can still be done administratively to go before the P&D Committee for final review. Also, staff has recommended that restaurant classifications should be revised due to the trend in "quick casual" dining. The recommendation is that table service only be considered as a type I restaurant. Ald. Rainey mentioned that it is very important and depends a lot on restaurant location in this case as well.

Ald. Tisdahl said that she is interested in form-based coding, and asked what phase this matter would be considered. Ms. Aiello suggested phase 3. Ald. Tisdahl said that she would like to avoid consultant input with this issue.

The Committee wanted to know which cases are dominating of the Zoning Board's time. Staff responded that Air conditioning units and type 2 restaurants are the main cases that come before the Zoning Board. That is why staff would like to see many of these cases be done administratively.

Ald. Moran stressed the importance of making people be accountable and requiring that the Zoning Ordinance be followed accordingly. Ms. Aiello said that would be the ideal however with ever changing technology, this has been one of the biggest issues in following the Zoning Ordinance to the letter. Ald. Wollin expressed her concern with actually getting a wide diverse input with the downtown plan because it seemed like the same people attended all the neighborhood meetings in the different neighborhoods.

Mr. Dunkley finished explanation of the Implementation Process. Mr. Wolinski added that the phase 3 list is not conclusive because staff realizes that this phase will take on the more extensive items, some continuing from phases 1 and 2 for further review.

Ms. Aiello noted that staff is not asking for the Planning & Development Committee's approval this evening but instead are looking for a consensus of the Committee on how they would prefer to proceed with the Zoning Ordinance Review; either by Strategy A or Strategy B. Upon this, she said that staff can then move forward and send out an RFP for the Legal staff consultant. **The consensus of the Committee was in favor of Strategy A as staff recommends.**

Mr. Jeff Smith reminded the Committee that the moratorium is going to expire on the Central Street plan very soon, so it is imperative to move forward quickly with the implementation of the recommended zoning changes for Central Street. He agrees with minimizing consultant input at this time due to cost and time constraints. He has much confidence in staff's ability and expertise to complete this stage without consultant input. He also agrees with air conditioners, at least most, do not need to go as major variations and can be done administratively.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jacqueline E. Brownlee