

**Special Meeting
Planning & Development Committee
Minutes of February 22, 2007
Room 2200 (Moved to Council Chambers) – 7:00 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center**

Alderman Present: S. Bernstein, A. Hansen, D. Holmes, L. Jean-Baptiste, A. Rainey, E. Tisdahl, C. Wollin

Alderman Absent: E. Moran, M. Wynne

Staff Present: J. Wolinski, J. Aiello, K.Cox, P. D'Agostino, S. Guderley, D. Jennings, D. Marino, J. Brownlee

Presiding Official: Alderman Jean-Baptiste

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Jean-Baptiste called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

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

Chairman Jean-Baptiste opened commentary stating that he first wanted to clarify and put things in perspective in an attempt to ease a lot of concerns, rumors, and misconceptions expressed from the last meeting and apparently still on-going. He felt a brief overview on the history of the West Side Master Plan would be helpful. Chair Jean-Baptiste noted that there have been six community meetings held since the on-set of this project, two public meetings/hearings before the Plan Commission presented by the Consultants with the presentation of the collective and collaborative input of responses and results of those community meetings. Finally, the first presentation before the P&D committee at the special meeting held on January 29, 2007. To give a sense of background, Chair Jean-Baptiste recalled that approximately 1-year ago City Council was presented with a plan for the development of 44 townhouse units on the previous Hines Lumber site and a series of public meetings followed ultimately resulting in the City Council approval of the Planned Development. During that meeting process, a multiple number of neighbors and involved citizens of that area came forward with several issues and concerns. The main concerns expressed included the question of future development plans for the two adjacent industrial sites directly to the east of this project, which would result in further density to this neighborhood area. Additionally, concerns were also expressed for future development plans for other industrial sites in close proximity to the Hines property; specifically the TapeCoat and Bishop Freeman sites.

Chairman Jean-Baptiste continued explaining that City Community Development and Planning staff started approximately 2-years ago looking into the future development possibilities on the West side and began the planning stages. This involved the initiation of several City staff, specifically headed by the Neighborhood Planner (Susan Guderley), in conjunction with many interested 5th Ward residents, property owners, business/commercial owners and other parties with interested investments in this area. As an ultimate result from this combined effort, a TIF District was formulated and designated in majority 5th Ward and the inclusion of specified connecting areas of the 2nd Ward. He noted that a designated TIF area is for enhanced improvements to much needed residential and commercial/business development, the

improvement of rehabilitating existing business areas, infrastructure, street, and public-way improvements, etc. The boundary TIF area is an opportunity to invite an increase in tax revenue to the specified area and revolve and reinvest back into that area for redistribution over a period of time. Chairman Jean-Baptiste noted for information other TIF designated area in Evanston, especially the Howard Street area TIF which is equally in dyer need of enhanced redevelopment assistance. He informed those in attendance that the boundaries of the West Side Evanston TIF primarily extends from the South on Greenleaf, specific areas west to the Canal on Church, north to Simpson, west on Green Bay; all in a very zigzagged area (refer to map).

Chair Jean-Baptiste wanted to respond to the concern expressed previously of the rumors regarding teardown of existing affordable housing in Sub-area 1; specifically with plans to replace with condominium developments with purchase prices starting at \$300-400,000. He has also heard rumors that include the involvement and partnership of the City in such a plan. Chair Jean-Baptiste assured those residents of the building in question that there are absolutely no plans to tear down existing affordable housing in the West Side Plan. He further assured that the City does not have the capital to build any affordable housing on their own initiative and also would not support any proposal to reduce existing affordable housing. He said the City does have HOME funds and the ability to approve use of those funds in support of assisting a developer with proposals to provide additional affordable housing units in this area. Chair Jean-Baptiste went through the list of CHDO's and not-for-profit organizations that the City has approved HOME funds for providing affordable housing projects through out Evanston. He assured that these organizations will have the opportunity to get involved in the West Evanston Plan with any proposals presented.

Chairman Jean-Baptiste noted that he and Ald. Holmes attended every community meeting held and that they both have supported the efforts made from the beginning of this process up to date. He assured on both their behalf's that there are not hidden agenda's for specific developments in this Master Plan area. The Plan is only to be considered as an advisory tool for the planning and future development process of this area and to be used as a guideline and jump-start tool to take advantage of the TIF designated opportunity for this area. Another option is for this Master Plan to become a standard in the Planned Development guidelines of the Zoning Ordinance to be followed and considered in future planning for this area. He stated that the City of Evanston is not in any way planning an urban renewal and regentrification of this area as well. He noted that the quote given in previous presentations by the Consultant of estimated purchase amounts of newly developed condo units at selling prices of \$300-400,000 are based on the current market value of new construction cost for condominiums in Evanston. He reassured that the consultants have only reviewed and did their analysis from copulated information they have received from neighborhood meetings and research of the market values in Evanston and the surrounding communities as well.

Chairman Jean-Baptiste concluded that his overview comments area an attempt to put this Master Plan in perspective and to help alleviate some of the concerns expressed by citizens from the last meeting. He reminded that the initial presentation from the consultants was at the January 29, 2007 meeting. He asked if the consultants have any new information to present at this time. Mr. Marino responded that he concurs with Ald. Jean-Baptiste's overview given. He reported that the consultants only new presentation relates to past concerns expressed and response provided on information regarding citizen participation throughout the process with additional information concerning other issues raised by citizens at the January 29th meeting. He referred the Committee to staff's memorandum dated February 19, 2007 where these issues are addressed. Mr. Marino

said the consultants will further address those issues after the conclusion of citizen comments this evening.

Citizen Comments

Chairman Jean-Baptiste called on all citizens in the order signed on the list.

Mr. John Cahill, owner of Cahill Plumbing Co. Mr. Cahill stated for the record that he was not aware of the past meetings involving the business owners with the consultants as indicated earlier. He considers his business as having a major impact in this proposed Master Plan which has been pointed out in the presentation given by the consultants. He further stated that he was taken by surprise because he was never informed of the future possibilities in the plan for redevelopment of his business site and the proposed street thorough-ways that run straight through his current property. He alleged that he has received no notices or invitations to attend any meetings as a major business owner in the designated TIF area to participate in any past meetings. He assured that if he had received any notice that he would have been present especially in light of the proposed pre-mature presumption of the planned redevelopment of his property. Mr. Cahill reiterated his comment made at the January 29, 2007 meeting that he has no plans of moving his business from their present location on Church Street, which has been there through 3 generations. However, now that he is aware of the proposed Master Plan he requested to be fully informed and vowed to stay involved in the future planning stages.

In response to Mr. Cahill's comments, staff assured that the Cahill business was mailed notice and have proof of this on the mailing list provided by the GIS Department. Staff also assured that there was no separate "special" meeting set for business owners only; all the meetings were open to the entire community to meet with the consultants. Ms. Guderley confirmed that the mailing list for the notices were sent to every address, residential and business, within a large radius of the designated West Side Master Plan area. She referred to the sign-in sheets from the community meetings which verifies attendance of a joint collaboration of property owners, tenants, business owners, etc. Ald. Holmes concurred with Ms. Guderley because she was in attendance at the meetings and has witnessed who was present and has also seen the notification mailing list. She mentioned many of the business owners that were present at the majority of the community meetings. Nevertheless, she requested that staff make a special effort to see forth that Mr. Cahill receive any future notifications and is informed throughout the planning stage.

Ms. Muriel Dunbar(?) gave comments.

Mr. Charles Uchtman(?) gave comments.

Ms. Joan Stafford gave comments.

Ms. Cindy Reed stated that she was aware of the neighborhood meetings and that she is not opposed to the Master Plan because the West Side definitely needs new development and revitalization. Her concern is for the youth involvement and requested that consideration be given to creating new jobs for the youth of this area to be involved in any new construction and redevelopment. She would like to see this enforced as a condition for developers and contractors as the Master Plan progresses.

Ms. Ike Dickson, 2327 Church stated that she attended the neighborhood community meetings throughout the entire process thus far and assures that the meetings were well attended by a combination of home owners, tenants, business owners, and other interested parties. She further

assured that all who attended those meetings were given an equal opportunity to give their input. She feels this Master Plan is a means to begin merging the East side/downtown with the West Side and bring the two areas together. Ms. Dickson expressed her support for the proposed plan and views it as a development guideline. She strongly feels it would be a dis-service to the West Side and Evanston as a whole if the plan were not approved to go forward.

Mr. Jeff Smith, 2724 Harrison stated that he is an active member of the Central Street Neighbors Association and can relate to what is going on with the neighbors and property owners of the West Side who will be affected by this Master Plan. He wished to express his solidarity in support of the West Side neighbors. He is a strong advocate in considering the needs and desires of the residents and this should be the first priority. Mr. Smith raised the question of who is the proposed new residential development for. It does not seem economically feasible for the existing community of that area. In his opinion more demographical impact study needs to be done. Also, he pointed out that land values follow the zoning for any area. He requested that the Committee allow more time for further review and consideration of the “real” needs that would benefit the existing residents of the West Side TIF area and that entire community.

Ms. Roberta Hudson, 1941 Dewey reiterated her previous statement that sufficient notice was not sent out by the City nor received by a large number of residents in the affected area. She strongly feels that this proposed Master Plan will only benefit the developers and not the people who live in the Ward. She mentioned several proposed changes and proposed new developments and infrastructure changes to the designated area that present many questions and concerns for the actual involvement and financing to accomplish these goals. She said eventually the actual cost will fall on the existing residents/property owners of the area who will not reap any real benefits from this proposed Master Plan. Ms. Hudson read from a prepared statement. In summary, she stated concerns for the youth of this area and the lack of recreational facilities in Evanston for them. The youth of Evanston have to go outside of their own community to give them a variety of options and activities to choose from. She strongly urged the Committee to consider providing more recreational and community business development versus more residential development in this Master Plan. This will benefit the youth in this community and provide more job opportunities as well. She also pleaded for the Committee to take into consideration the real needs of the residents that will be affected by this Master Plan.

Maxine Edwards seconded all of Ms. Hudson’s concerns expressed. In addition, she requested the Committee also consider proposals for improvements in the area of security and additional police involvement. She described an incident that occurred in close proximity to her property and felt that proper response was not received from the Police Department. Ms. Edwards also expressed concerns with what she saw in the plan for the proposed zoning for the alley directly behind their property adjacent with the Bishop Freeman site. She does not agree with the plan to make this alley a thorough-way by widening it as street.

Ms. Betty Sue Ester said that she has concerns for some of the proposed zoning changes pointed out in the plan. She feels the neighbors/residents have never had the opportunity to discuss or have any input into the proposed zoning changes considered within the Master Plan. She has further concerns for the possibility of imminent domain for some of the west side properties in order to accommodate some of the planned developments for this area. Ms. Ester stated that this Master Plan should facilitate what the neighbors and residents of this area desire and want for their community; it should not be a plan that is forced upon the community for future development plans.

Ms. Mary Rosinski, 1729 Chancellor, said that she owns property on Simpson. She feels this Master Plan would be a good guideline for developers to use. However, she questioned what ever happened to form-based code; has this idea gone to the wayside since the first neighborhood meeting? She feels residents should be involved in establishing what zoning needs fit their neighborhood.

Mr. Carliss Sutton, said that he views this Master Plan in the long run will result in eliminating the future residents of this area, as it is being proposed. He welcomes diversity; however the proposed residential development shown in this plan will result in gentrification of the West side. Mr. Sutton read from a prepared statement.

Ms. Priscilla Giles recalled that some discussion back in the early 1970's that this area was sure to be involved in future urban renewal and she can see it beginning with this Master Plan. She expressed her concern with people from outside of the community, that do not even live in Evanston at all, being involved as consultants and analyzing what they feel would benefit the West Side area. She feels that someone from the community should have been used as a consultant along with a selected variety of neighborhood property and business owners in the form of a committee to coordinate the West Side Master Plan.

Ms. Susan Bradshaw, 1553 Darrow stated her opinion that this Master Plan should be used as a tool or guideline to be followed for future development and enhancement of this area. To make the Master Plan advisory at this point would be meaningless and a waste of all the time and input involved to come up with this plan, which she feels is acceptable for the designated area.

Mr. Al Swanson, 1561 Darrow noted that he lives in the area designated as Sub-area #3. He informed the Committee that he along with several other neighbors approximately 20 months ago cleaned the strip of land that was once the railroad tracks and the embankment area. He recalled that this area was full of debris and fly-dumping, which they cleared all away on their own. He said that this area is now green space and that he would like to see it continued as green space and a continuance of the park area. In his opinion, the planning process needs to continue further before committing to a final Master Plan.

Ms. Tina Paden, 1122 Emerson has a problem with the consultants and developers that don't live in Evanston who this Master Plan will benefit. She noted that generations of her family has lived in the same house for 160 years and have a long history and relationship with the west side of Evanston. She is concerned with the lack of low income housing being provided in this plan and is also concerned with the rise in property taxes that are already too high to provide affordable rents today. She feels all this development will fall back on the residents by way of raising their tax bills to cover the cost.

Ms. S. Blanos, 1720 Maple read from a prepared statement, in favor of the Master Plan.

Mr. David Dickson, 2327 Church said that there are some things that are unfair about the plan, for instance he recalled Mr. Cahill's comments and what the plan exhibits on his property. Overall, he is very much in favor of the Master Plan and supports any new development and revitalization of the West Side that is in dyer need to upgrades and improvements. This side of town needs to catch up with the downtown revitalization since it is a main entryway into the City.

End of citizen comments.

Ms. Leslie Oberholtzer, of Farr Associates gave a brief overview of the Master Plan for Sub-Areas #1 and #2 and a compilation of the community involvement throughout the process and from the neighborhood meetings held.

Mr. Brad Winick gave a brief overview of Sub-Are #3 of the Master Plan and explanation of the Preferred Plan for that area.

Planning & Development Committee Discussion and Comments

Ald. Wollin said that she is more in favor of the Master Plan as presented by an advisory tool, not mandatory at this point. At any rate she would like to move forward with the plan and is in favor of it.

Ald. Tisdahl said that she is not ready to make anything mandatory and also would be much more comfortable with the plan being on an advisory level.

Ald. Holmes feels that some of the road situations need to be more clarified, other than that she is very comfortable with the majority of the Master Plan as presented. She feels this plan should be used as a development guideline with some points being mandatory and some being advisory, which are still issues to be reviewed and dealt with as the process continues. She very much prefers to move forward with the acceptance of the presented Master Plan.

Chairman Jean-Baptiste said, in response to Ms. Hudson's previous comments, that there is a newly formed Youth Engagement Program in the City of Evanston that will be working on achieving the goals she suggested earlier. Ald. Wollin agreed that this program is very important and also mentioned that they will be sponsoring a Youth Summit in the spring.

Mr. Wolinski responded to comments made earlier regarding the consultant's stand on this Master Plan. He assured that the consultants did not come up with any of this plan on their own intuition but were guided by all the input provided from all the neighborhood/community meetings copulated together.

Ald. Rainey suggested that this plan needs to be broken down by Sub-Area, and by sections of land to review step by step and figure out what should be advisory and what should be mandatory. She requested that staff do this and provide to the P&D Committee what their opinions are on what should be mandatory and what should be advisory, including street improvements and other infrastructure changes. She feels that all this is too much to absorb at once for anybody including the members of this Committee, residents, business owners, etc. Chairman Jean-Baptiste agreed. Ald. Bernstein also concurred that this too overwhelming. He even suggested that they walk the area and take maps along to get a feel of specific areas that you can't make a clear judgment from the drawings. He is also very concerned with Mr. Cahill's comments that the drawings that appear to have streets planned to go straight through his property for new development; this should not be presented if the business owner has not been informed or involved in any such plans. At this point, he does not feel comfortable or ready to make any decision on this plan until they have had a change to review further in smaller stages.

Ald. Hansen feeling is that there is a misconception of what this Plan is trying to accomplish. She reminded that this began with development concerns from the Church Street Station development and the concern for further development and density in the immediate area. She does not understand why there is so much misconception because it should be understood that this is only a plan for future developments to come forward in this specified area and should be used as a

development guideline tool. She does agree with Ald. Rainey's suggestion to take pieces of land at a time and decide what should be under a mandatory guideline for that property. She is in favor of specifying the mandatory and that the final Master Plan should not just be an advisory tool. Ald. Wollin agreed with Ald. Hansen in the fact that the whole idea and purposes of this planning was to form a vision for the area; however she does not feel comfortable with making anything mandatory unless specified under zoning.

Recommendation

The P&D Committee recommended to give this back to staff to take sections at a time for each Sub-Area and to provide their recommendations on what should be mandatory or advisory for the Committee to review. The Committee also requested to remove this item from P&D's agenda until staff is ready to report back.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee