

Presiding Official: Alderman Tisdahl

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Tisdahl called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 26, 2007

Ald. Wynne moved approval of the March 26, 2007 minutes, seconded by Ald. Rainey. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion (Ald. Moran not yet present).

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Chair Tisdahl changed the order of the agenda to give Ald. Moran time to arrive and participate in discussion of item (P3).

(P6) Sidewalk Cafes for Two (2) Type 1 and one (1) Type 2 Restaurants

Ald. Wynne moved approval of all three requests for sidewalk cafes. Ald. Bernstein seconded the motion.

Ald. Bernstein said he received one call from a concerned constituent regarding the BAT 17 and if the width of the sidewalk was wide enough at that location. Mr. Wolinski assured that Engineering has inspected the sidewalk area and signed off on the application. Ald. Wollin said that she also was concerned about the sidewalk width for this restaurant. However she is satisfied with it as long as there is definite and sufficient room for pedestrian passage. Mr. Wolinski informed the Committee that the Health Department has taken over sidewalk café permits this year and he introduced the Supervisor, Ms. Carla Bush, who is in charge of accepting the applications and enforcing compliance of the sidewalk café rules.

The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

(P2) Ordinance 37-O-07 – Landmark Designation for 1414 Davis Street

Ald. Jean-Baptiste moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Mr. Carlos Ruiz introduced the owner of the property Ms. Rebecca Kuchar who would like to give a presentation on the nomination of her property.

Ms. Kuchar gave a presentation through a series of slides illustrating her property and listing the Criteria for Designation. The property is located in the Historic Ridge District, was built in 1908 and is an excellent example of a craftsman-style house resembling the Stickley style. She said they were supposed to meet at least one of the criteria in Section 2-9-4A, which they submitted
three and were approved by the Commission on those points. She noted that the listed architect of the home is Mr. George S. Lord and the original builder of the home was the well-known Evanston-based builders of Connor & McCann who built for many famous architects; these builders also constructed the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. Ms. Kuchar noted that Mr. Lord was married to Ms. Edna Hurd Lord who was a prominent Evanston socialite and developer who made significant contributions to the area around the turn of the century. She reiterated the home is an example of an architectural type, specifically Craftsman-style.

Ms. Kuchar gave an overview of the restoration work that was done on the house. She first noted that they restored the structural integrity of the home which had considerable termite and water damage on the first floor and in the basement. She showed a series of slides of the interior and exterior which demonstrate the many original features of the house. She gave a brief bio of the Connor & McCann history, showing several buildings constructed by their company and designed by such prominent architects as Daniel Burnham, Dwight Perkins, and George Maher.

Ald. Holmes commended Ms. Kuchar and her husband on the restoration work done stating that it was absolutely beautiful. Chair Tisdahl thanked the Preservation Commission on the recommendation to designate this home as an Evanston Landmark, which was exceptionally presented by Ms. Kuchar.

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

(P1) Ordinance 36-O-07 – Special use and Major Variation Request for 1560 Oak Avenue

The applicant, Mr. Cameel Halim gave a presentation of his collection for the proposed cultural museum. He explained that he is a collector of time pieces and Tiffany glass windows. He claims to hold one of the rarest and biggest time piece collections in the world with over 1,100 items from watches, clocks and chronometers. He showed some samples of his collection from the photographs presented; some are dated back to the pre-1800 period and present the development of time. He said a big part of the collection came from the time museum in Rockford, which was closed four years ago and the City of Chicago tried to keep it and had the option to buy the collection, however they could not raise the money so the auction was sold to New York. He was able to buy 25% of the collection from the last auction in New York. On top of that, Mr. Halim said that they hold the Tiffany glass windows and mosaic collection, which is over 75 pieces. He feels his collection and museum will be a valuable asset to Evanston, Illinois, and the entire United States to keep in America since many pieces have already gone to England and other parts of Europe. Mr. Halim also feels it is a valuable asset to keep the house at 1560 Oak, which is a Victorian house of historic significance. He declares to restore the house to its original beauty of the time when it was built and feels that the historic splendor combined with the time pieces and tiffany collection will compliment each other and add to the museum quality.

The architect, Mr. Adam Wilmot, gave an overview of the proposed new 3-story addition. The addition maximum height will be lower than the existing building and the design is a contemporary style that will make a clean separation from the existing historic Victorian house. He stated that their approach here is to preserve what is there and restore the existing building and then to create the clean separation to clarify the two different buildings and what is being added on for the sake of housing Mr. Halim’s collection. Mr. Wilmot noted that the addition is need because the collection is too large to house in the existing structure, also some of the pieces are larger than what would be permitted in typical Victorian spaces, therefore the more open contemporary style was idea for the addition. He noted that the addition will be built to the rear of the existing structure and the square footage is virtually equal. The use is currently the
Catholic Women’s Club, so they are asking for a special use for this particular zone, however the use will be very similar in a sense. Mr. Wilmot said that the applicant does propose flexible use of space on the third floor for occasional special events that could be catered, as the existing house is used now. He said for those types of events the plan is to accommodate parking through valet parking, which he believes is the methods used now for special events at the Catholic Women’s Club. He noted that they have been approved for the zoning variance for the parking.

Ald. Bernstein expressed his support for this proposed use as a museum of fine time pieces and Tiffany glass. He feels the use is appropriate for the historically designated building and location. However he questions is there will be kitchen facilities on the premises that could be used for cooking and preparing foods for special events or a café use. If so, Ald. Bernstein said that he could not approve of any restaurant-type use or facility at this location in the basement. Mr. Halim responded that they will have kitchen facilities in the basement to keep food warm and in a proper preparation state for special events. Also they would like to have a place for visitors to sit and eat lunch, especially field trip events for school age children, and to be able to offer coffee and sell some sandwiches. In some cases, larger groups may bring in a catered hot lunch and they will be able to offer kitchen facilities to prepare food. Ms. Nafaretta Halim, Mr. Halim’s daughter, assured that the use of the proposed kitchen facility in the basement will be utilized for catering events and some use for sandwiches and lunch items for patrons only; there will be absolutely not open to the public to stop in a purchase a cup of coffee or buy lunch.

Ald. Bernstein reiterated his support for the museum and loves the use for this location. He appreciates preserving the existing house structure. He does feel that the valet parking for special events should be a condition to this ordinance. He pointed out that the valet parking system does seem to work with the neighboring restaurant.

In response to a question, Mr. Halim said that the museum will be open 6-days a week to the public and special bookings. Ald. Rainey noted that she talked to Mr. Halim and his daughter some time ago about their desire to open this museum and find a suitable location. She stated that this location is begging for redevelopment of a tall residential building that has the possibility of generating a lot more traffic congestion and people to this neighborhood. Therefore, she fully supports this use and also appreciates the preserving of this historical structure as well. She feels the proposed new structure in the rear is much less harmful than any new residential development for this location. Ald. Rainey also pointed out that there is no application at this time for any use of the basement space, therefore it is inappropriate to discuss this evening. If further use is desired such as a café use, the applicant would have to come back to request a special use.

Ald. Holmes said that she was present at the SPAARC meeting when this case was before the Committee, and she does not recall any mention or discussion of a restaurant/café use in the basement. She believes that only kitchen use would be utilized for this museum use. She also supports the museum use for this location versus a more dense use such as a residential building for this site.

Ald. Wynne asked how many visitors came to the museum at the Rockford location. Mr. Halim responded that approximately 2 million people visited the museum over the 15 year time period it was open there. In response to another question, Mr. Halim responded that if approved this evening, they would make plans for construction on a schedule to open within one year from this summer.
Ald. Hansen asked if the neighboring restaurant is still using the existing house for their catered events. The Halim’s affirmed that they are plus other private events as well. Ald. Hansen asked about the main entrance for the museum and the addition of handicapped accommodations. Mr. Wilmot responded that the main entrance will remain at the front entrance of the existing house structure off of Oak Avenue. He pointed out a new entrance in the proposed addition that will have handicap accommodations as well and provide an additional entrance to the exhibit area.

Mr. John Cleave, 1109 Grove raised concerns for parking problems for the neighboring residential buildings, which is already a tight situation in that area. He noted that sometimes he has had to park several blocks away. Mr. Wilmot responded that valet parking will use other nearby lots for special events, but they do not see any real parking problems created during the hours of operation of the museum and using street parking. Many patron groups will come by bus, which will put no further strain on the street parking availability. Mr. Cleave expressed concerns for additional traffic in the alley, already congested with the residential buildings and business uses in that block. Ald. Wynne stated as Chair of the Parking Committee, that she will bring these traffic and parking concerns to the Committee for further review. Mr. Cleave’s last concern was for precautions to be taken while under construction. He pointed out that his building suffered some structure damage when the building at Oak and Grove was built. Mr. Wilmot assured that the development of this building requires light weight construction meaning it does not require any piling. Mr. Wolinski pointed out that it does depend on soil conditions as well.

With no further discussion, Ald. Bernstein moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wollin. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

(P1) Request for time Extension and Project Phasing for the Planned Development at 1603 & 1629 Orrington Avenue

Mr. David Reifman of DLA Piper, Attorney for the applicant, Mr. Lee Golub of Golub & Company, and Mr. Steven Yas, Architect, were present for this case. Mr. Reifman acknowledged the original City Council approval for the planned development under Ordinance 57-O-05, to allow redevelopment of the existing plaza area located at 1603 Orrington Avenue with new street-level retail space, redevelopment of the existing building located at 1629 Orrington with new retail space, and relocation of the existing access ramp which currently serves the below grade parking garage at 1603 Orrington. At this time, Mr. Reifman said that they would like to go ahead with only the south retail portion of the project surrounding the existing rotunda. As stated in his letter dated March 29th, Golub has been working on finalizing their development plans for the project and is now in a position to proceed with the construction of the plaza area retail work in accordance with the original plans. Because this work can not be completed by the December 27, 2007 original completion date, Golub is requesting a time extension for the completion date of the plaza area to be extended to December 31, 2008. Mr. Reifman also noted that the original agreement to relocate the existing ramp to the underground parking garage is not economically feasible to do at a very high cost and still no tenants for the 1629 Orrington building at this time. However, if they could move forward with the south Plaza area it could attract a very good anchor and tenants for the north retail building. Mr. Golub added that they have looked at several different plans over the years for the north retail building but have not come to a conclusive agreement due to lack of interested tenancy for the retail space. This area is still under consideration and they are requesting that the project be completed in phases at this point. He reiterated Mr. Reifman’s statement that the ramp is entirely unfeasible economically unless the City could assist in some way to accomplish this goal.
Mr. Yas briefly went over the construction plans for the south retail area using illustrated examples before the P&D Committee. He feels the development of the south plaza will really strengthen the entire project and bring in valuable tenants for the north retail building. In response to a question from Ald. Wynne, Mr. Yas went over the landscaping plan for the south plaza and explained that there would be no change from the originally plan that covers the site north to the existing edge of the 1603 Orrington building. Ald. Wollin asked what the timeline expectation is for the renovation and new construction of the entire project. Mr. Golub stated that they will still go forward with the renovation of the existing building and gutting of the 1629 Orrington building, entire renovation and new landscaping as planned and the new retail space to the south. Ald. Rainey asked what types of retail they are targeting for. Mr. Golub responded mostly service retailers and would really like to see some restaurant activity as well. Mr. Yas completed his brief overview of the construction plans and drawings and also pointed out that the new retail space aligns with the Chandler Plaza across the street which will compliment this plaza square area.

Ald. Bernstein feels this plan has already been approved; the applicant is simply asking for an extension to do the project in phases at this point. He moved approval, seconded by Ald. Hansen. Mr. Wolinski reminded the Committee that the original planned development was approved in total, not in phases. He noted that without the inclusion of the ramp relocation that was approved with the original ordinance and project, this case should technically go back to the Plan Commission. Mr. Reifman said in the applicant’s defense that they are providing numerous public benefits with the renovation of this plaza from its current state and other accommodations that could be considered rather than to go back before the Plan Commission; it is essentially the same project that was approved originally.

Ald. Moran reiterated his opinion from the original planned development approved two years ago; he feels this is a mistake to do from the beginning. He explained his position in further detail and stressed the need to preserve open space in the downtown area. They should not create walls to the Fountain Square Plaza. Mr. Yas responded that the plaza in its current state is a bleeding space with a totally un-contained design. Ald. Hansen said that it does appear that the applicant is now asking for two different things also staff is recommending that Council require a commitment for a date certain for completion of all phases of the project. Mr. Wolinski said it appears that the applicant is asking for some relief from the conditions for the north side of the development plus to be exempt from relocating the existing access ramp for the underground parking garage. Mr. Golub reiterated his position that it has become apparent that because of the very costly construction to relocate the ramp, it has become very economically unfeasible at this time. He again pointed out that it might be possible with some City assistance. The Committee asked for Legal opinion at this point. Mr. Hill informed the Committee that the oral request at this meeting is more substantial than the letter of request received.

Ald. Rainey expressed her opinion that in view of the given improvement of the current conditions of the bank plaza square, she has no problem in approving the time extension and to go forward with the south retail plaza and to finish out the project in phases for the other retail area. Ald. Bernstein agreed with this as well. Ald. Jean-Baptiste questioned if there would be any legal problems regarding notice of this change in the original ordinance for the planned development.

Upon further discussion regarding the questions raised and Legal’s interpretation, the Committee consensus was to hold this item in Committee for further review of the original Planned Development Ordinance. Ald. Wynne moved to hold in Committee, seconded by Ald. Wollin. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.
(P4) Request for a Subdivision Plat for 1037-41 Florence Avenue
Mr. James Murray, attorney representing the owner of the property, Ms. Melinda Hollingsworth, stated that this request is for a plat of resubdivision to create two lots of record to be used for the existing single and two-family residential uses located at 1037 and 1039-41 Florence Avenue. He said that the applicant proposes to create an open-off-street parking area at the rear of the two-family dwelling unit building to provide the required parking spaces for the use. He stated to the Committee that this is only a ministerial act, approved by law, and that they have complied with signed off by all City Code requirements and involved departments.

Mr. Steve Engelman, attorney for the neighbor, Mr. Miller, stated that this request for resubdivision is premature for this Committee to act on this matter because his client has filed an appeal of the Zoning Administrator’s opinion that is still pending. In his legal opinion, this case would be appropriate to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals first.

The Committee called on Legal opinion. Mr. Hill stated that the Zoning legal requirements for resubdivision of property meet the standards in this case. The question of if the appeal has any weight in the approval of the resubdivision by this Committee, there is a legitimate question in the determination of an easement issue between the two properties, however it should not interfere with the ministerial act by the Committee on the resubdivision of this property. He does agree that both parties have very strong opinions and that the City Legal Department did intervene with mediation between the parties, but was not successful in coming to an agreed conclusion. Ms. Jackson informed the Committee that this appeal is not of the resubdivision, but of a statement made by mistake regarding the easement. Since then the Law Department has acknowledge the mistake made at that time and apologized for the misinterpretation.

**Ald. Rainey moved approval of the resubdivision plat, seconded by Ald. Wynne. The vote was 7 in favor of the motion and 2 voting nay (Moran, Tisdahl).** The majority of the Committee felt that the disagreement between the neighbors on the easement issue needs to go before the court to come to an agreement. Also a statement from the Law Department in writing to Mr. Engelman’s client would be very helpful at this point.

(P5) Ordinance 39-O-07 – Extension of West Side TIF Moratorium
Ald. Wynne moved approval of the 35-day moratorium extension, seconded by Ald. Rainey. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee