

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Minutes of June 23, 2008
Council Chambers – 6:30 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center**

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

Alderman Absent: M. Wynne

Staff Present: D. Marino, J. Brownlee, J. Chambers, K. Cox, B. Dunkley, R. Russell, L. Woods

Presiding Official: Alderman Wollin

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Wollin called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 9, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

Ald. Holmes moved approval of the June 9th, 2008 minutes, seconded by Tisdahl. The minutes were approved with a vote of 8-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Chair Wollin changed the order of the agenda to put the item with less controversy first.

(P2) Temporary Signage Request for American Craft Exposition

Ald. Bernstein moved approval, seconded by Ald. Rainey. Ms. Carol Cyrus was acknowledged in attendance as a representative for the Auxiliary of the Evanston Northwestern Healthcare. **The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.**

(P1) Ordinance 79-O-08 – Special Use for Dormitory – 1620 Central Street

Mr. Jack Lawler, attorney for the applicant (National Louis University) noted that he is also resident of Evanston since 1969. He informed that there was 3 hours of testimony between two meetings before the Zoning Board of Appeals resulting with an approval recommendation from the ZBA. He acknowledged in attendance with him is Mr. Bill Roberts, Vice President of Operations for National Louis University, who will give an overview of the proposed improvements to the building and a few amendments to the original plan that were made in response to the concerns expressed by the adjoining neighbors. He also acknowledged in attendance the architect, Mr. Matthew Hidgeons(?), who can further address specific improvements to the building.

Mr. Roberts informed the Committee that he has worked for National Louis University for 16 years and the Operations office is actually located at 1000 Capital Drive in Wheeling. He is responsible for all property land use matters for the University and his is aware of all the neighbor's concerns, primarily with privacy since the east and west. In response to the neighbor's concerns, they propose the following amendments to be made: 1) privacy glass window dressings for the east and west side windows which will help address the concern with the close proximity to the residences and being able to look in each others windows, and 2) extensive upgrade in landscaping to provide further privacy and separation from the adjoining

residential properties. He noted that they will actually be taking away some of the parking spaces from the current number of spaces in the lot. Mr. Roberts turned further comments over to Mr. Hidgeons for more details of the building improvements.

Mr. Hidgeons explained in detail the proposed new windows and window treatments to be made on all windows on the east and west walls of the building which face residential properties. He further described in detail the proposed additional extensive upgrade to the landscaping that would provide further privacy between the dormitory and the adjoining residential properties on the east and west sides of the building. He distributed to the Committee members an amended landscaping plan and building plan showing the new privacy window treatments. Mr. Hidgeons also noted the new window openings on the parking lot side of the building that would not affect the sides of the building that adjoin to residential properties.

Mr. Lawler stated that their request for special use for a dormitory of the subject building is in compliance with the oCSC Central Street Corridor Overlay District. He noted that Evanston is a very diverse community and he feels especially confident that in this specific area of Evanston, in terms of diversity, that the PACE Program would fit in due to its close proximity to public transportation and pedestrian friendly shopping accommodations all along Central Street. Mr. Lawler feels that the adaptive use for this building will only enhance the revitalization of the community and that the proposed use will be consistent with the goals of the Central Street Corridor Plan. He noted that this proposed use will not coincide or disrupt pedestrian or vehicle traffic during peak school hours of St. Athanasius. He said the proposed dormitory use would have a lesser accumulative impact than a commercial use for this property. He strongly supports that the proposed dormitory use will not diminish property values on the surrounding residential properties. In conclusion, Mr. Lawler assured that the original colonial style façade of the building would not be changed with any of the proposed improvements to the building.

Mr. Cox at this point, informed the Committee that the amendments to the Ordinance would need to be read for inclusion into the ordinance. These changes include the modification approved by Ald. Tisdahl with the amended landscaping and window plans. He noted these changes are made to the draft ordinance distributed to the Committee this evening on pages 3 and 4 under Section 3.B. Landscape Plan: The Applicant shall submit a landscape plan, subject to review and approval by the City's Superintendent of Parks and Forestry. Upon receiving approval from the Superintendent, the Applicant shall install, or cause to be installed, all plant material and other features depicted on the aforementioned landscape plan. Section 3.C. Landscape maintenance: The Applicant shall submit a landscape maintenance plan, subject to review and approval by the City's Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, that shall guarantee that, upon written notification to the Applicant from the City, any plants, planted in accordance with the aforementioned landscape plan, that die, shall be replaced by the Applicant during the earliest planting season thereafter. Under Section 5: add the sentence to the end which reads: However, should the Applicant transfer or lease the Subject Property to another educational institution, the Subject Property shall not be utilized for a dormitory use unless the new owner or lessee obtains a new Special use from the City Council. **Ald. Tisdahl moved to include the noted amendments read by Mr. Cox into the original Ordinance, seconded by Ald. Holmes. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.**

Citizen Comments

Jacqui Black, 1626B Central – noted that she has heard nothing addressing the tax situation since the property will become exempt if National Louis purchases the property. This will be another property taken off the tax roll by a not-for-profit organization causing those property owners who

pay taxes even more. She said that the amended changes were not made aware of to the surrounding residents which they should have been notified if the original plan presented has been amended in any way. Ms. Black also noted that this building was never intended to be a dormitory use and was original built for office use. She strongly feels this proposed dormitory use will not add to the diversity in this immediate area and would not be in keeping with the new Central Street Corridor Plan.

Mr. Statton, 1626 Central, agrees with comments made by Ms. Black, especially concerned with another property being taken off the tax roll with no agreed payment-in-lieu of.

Joe Beaulieu, 2530 Ashland, said that he is concerned with the process here and how this property became allowable for dormitory use at the "11th Hour" because this use was not an original use in the Central Street Plan. A dormitory use does not fit in the character intended for the Central Street Corridor Plan.

Ken Bailey, agrees with Mr. Beaulieu concerning the process in which the dormitory use was added as an allowable use in the "11th hour." He clarified his opinion of the PACE program being a very well ran and beneficial program, however a dormitory use by any school or program is not appropriate for this location. Mr. Bailey stated that the Planning & Development Committee members are responsible for upholding the law and protecting the citizens and this is what should be considered in this case; including another big issue and concern with taking this building off the tax roll which will affect property tax paying citizens. Mr. Bailey went over the definition of Office Use for ground floor spaces on Central Street.

Rona Fanker(?), is a parent of a PACE Student that will be in the program and living at this site if approved. She read from a prepared statement that basically expressed in disbelief the comments and protest against the PACE dormitory being located at this site. Even though many have stated that this has nothing to do with the PACE program itself, she senses a strong apprehension from the current area residents that the neighborhood would be harmed by these students living in such close proximity. Ms. Fanker assured that the PACE students are not criminals or sexual deviants and recommended that the neighbors attempt to visit the PACE program to see first hand of what type of curriculum and people belong to this program.

Amy Rogers, 2524 Ashland, raised a question regarding the heated sidewalk from the building to the parking lot. She wanted to know if this new sidewalk was talking up current green space. She also wanted to know if there will 23 or 24 parking spaces. Mr. Roberts responded that the new heated sidewalk will replace where there is currently asphalt. Also there are 36 parking spaces in the lot now, the original proposal was for 20 parking spaces, and the plan has been amended by adding back 4 more spaces, which are actually 3 handicapped spaces.

End of Citizen Comments

Ald. Tisdahl stated that all dorms are not created equal. She agrees with the neighbors concerns with the closeness of window to window between the building and the adjoining residences. However, she feels the applicant has addressed the privacy concerns with the new window treatments and the added landscaping. She noted that the PACE program and students have been in the 7th Ward for a long time and have always been good neighbors and an excellent well-ran program. Therefore, she supports this special use request.

Mr. Roberts also informed the Committee and audience that they will also install a closed-circuit T.V. monitoring system for the parking lot and will have a card access security system for the students that will be living in the dormitory.

Ald. Hansen expressed her concern with the dormitory being used or leased to other educational programs during the summer months. Therefore, **Ald. Hansen moved to amend the Ordinance by adding a condition of the special use that the dormitory is for the PACE Program only, seconded by Ald. Jean-Baptiste.** Discussion followed amongst the Committee with concerns that this condition would limit educational training use during the summer months. **Ald. Holmes then motioned to amend Ald. Hansen's motion to the condition of the special use can be used by the PACE Program from September through August for dormitory use and educational and training purposes that benefit the program. The amended motion was seconded by Ald. Hansen.** Mr. Dunkley clarified that the special use states that the building is to be used primarily as a dormitory use, which include the summer months as well. Ald. Moran feels this amendment to the ordinance will significantly alter the special use application. He read from the Special use application for certainty.

Ald. Rainey expressed her opposition to this special use application specifically with regards to the tax situation and the building being removed from the tax roll. She noted that the applicant has expressed their unwillingness to negotiate any type of payment-in-lieu of agreement and this position by the applicant, is what caused her to be opposed. Otherwise, she is a supporter of the PACE Program and has always had a high regard for the work they do with their students and how the students conduct themselves in society.

The vote on the amendment to the ordinance was 7 in favor and 1 (Rainey) against the motion.

Ald. Tisdahl moved approval of the amended ordinance, seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 7 in favor of the motion and 1 voting nay (Rainey).

(P3) Amendment to Conditions of 1963 Special use for 1233 Central Street

Ald. Tisdahl informed the Committee that she has not had an opportunity to meet with the neighbors by having a joint neighborhood meeting with the applicant present due to their time restraints with extensive traveling schedules. She wanted this known before the applicant's presentation and any deliberation by the Committee is conducted.

Mr. Dunkley gave a brief background chronology on this case and he brought attention to the updated site plan distributed this evening to the Committee from the applicant.

Mr. Geoff Wilson, designated agent on behalf of the National Council for the Baha'i explained their hardship with parking issues since they original bought the building in 1978. He noted that conditions have changed tremendously since that time and they need to upgrade and expand their lot to accommodate their employees and services offered at this location. He pointed out that the present lot has 57 parking spaces of which 3 are handicapped. The proposal is to expand to 71 spaces, which is an increase of 14. Mr. Wilson explained that they propose to narrow down the existing 27' landscape and add densely planted hedges and fencing. He said there will still be approximately 9.6' from the street side lot line along Asbury Avenue where the minimum of 27' is required and approximately 3' from the north property line where a minimum of 5' is required.

He pointed out that the existing shrubbery is old and in bad condition and the new proposed shrubbery would be an arboreta(?) shrub and is very dense and a good source of screening from the main streets. Mr. Wilson concluded by requesting the Committee's support because they are experiencing a parking problem, especially with the restricted parking in the area. The close proximity to the CTA and hospital further add to the parking situation because so many park nearby and walk to both of these facilities.

Chair Wollin feels that a lot of new information has been added this evening; however she wanted to let give the applicant an opportunity to give their presentation. Her position would be to hold this item due to time and needing to go into the City Council meeting. This was also the consensus of the Committee members. Ald. Tisdahl asked to even hold this item over to the second meeting in July which would give her a chance to hold a neighborhood meeting with the Baha'i as soon as they can agree on a date. The Committee members all agreed.

Ald. Tisdahl moved to hold this item in Committee until the July 28th meeting, seconded by Ald. Hansen. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

COMMUNICATION

(PD1) Letter of June 12, 2008 from Stan Janusz, Assistant Director, Housing Rehabilitation & Property Standards, addressing his 27 years of service with the City upon his retirement on June 20, 2008

Mr. Janusz letter was acknowledged and the Committee expressed their appreciation for all his hard work done over his 27 year tenure.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee