

**Planning & Development Committee Meeting
Minutes of September 22, 2008
Council Chambers – 7:00 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center**

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

Staff Present: J. Chambers, K. Cox, B. Dunkley, D. Marino, J. Murphy, B. Newman,
A. Stuart

Presiding Official: Alderman Wollin

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Wollin called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m., a quorum being present.

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 8, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

The Committee voted unanimously, 8-0 to approve the September 8, 2008 minutes.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Ordinance 101-O-08 – Modifications to Special Sign District for Uncle Dan’s retail store at 901 Church Street

Consideration of the recommendation by the Sign Review and Appeals Board to approve modifications to the Special Sign District for Uncle Dan’s at 901 Church Street. Staff recommends approval and requests suspension of rules for introduction and action at Council.

Ald. Moran noted that there was a discussion about advertising on the east wall of Uncle Dan’s at which it was decided that it would not be allowed. He said several businesses wanted to advertise there and if they permitted them all, it would become a massive variegated billboard. He added that he appreciates the long term contribution Uncle Dan’s has made to the community but expressed concern over the number of businesses who wanted to advertise on the east wall of the Uncle Dan’s site, and the problem of the City’s response to future requests.

Ald. Wynne acknowledged Ald. Moran’s concerns but said she believes this is acceptable and appropriate and that they will have jurisdiction in the future, at which time they can say no.

Chair Wollin noted that this is the only building that needs an east facing sign. She added that in the many discussions about this wall, a conclusion was never drawn about whether to put art there, etc.. Ald. Moran replied that the outcome of the discussions was to leave the wall blank. Ald. Bernstein agreed with this. Chair Wollin pointed out that the sign is at street level. Ald. Bernstein agreed that the decision made at the discussions was precluding the panoramic view, not the street level.

Ald. Moran concluded that the community has done a good job of approaching commercial signage prudently and he doesn’t want it to get out of hand in the future

The Committee voted by majority 7-1 with Ald. Moran opposed, to approve the ordinance.

(P2) Motion to Approve Plat of Subdivision of 604 Judson

Property owner requests a subdivision plat approval to subdivide the single lot at 604 Judson Street into two lots, for the purpose of constructing two single family detached dwellings. The two lots would be in compliance. Staff and the Preservation Commission recommend approval.

Chair Wollin commended the architects on behalf of the Preservation Commission for varying the architecture of the two proposed buildings.

The Committee voted unanimously, 8-0 to approve the motion.

(P3) Sidewalk Café for Type 1 Restaurant – 1512 Sherman Avenue

Consideration of the Site Plan and Appearance Review Committee recommendation for approval of the sidewalk café request from “Jamaica Jamaica” restaurant.

Chair Wollin asked that the owner be sure to keep the sidewalk café within its boundaries. He agreed to do so.

The Committee voted unanimously, 8-0 to approve the motion.

(P4) Ordinance 99-O-08 – Special Use for Convenience Store – 2536 Ewing Avenue

Discussion of conditions requested during the September 8th Planning and Development Committee Meeting.

Chair Wollin called Mr. Tom Romanello, Operations Manager of 94 7-Eleven stores in the Chicago area, to speak.

Mr. Romanello requested a meeting with the Central Street Business District Association to discuss the conditions of the Ordinance. He said that he had not heard of the controversy until after the last P&D meeting, and that he had overseen the White Hens for 25 years prior to 7-Eleven buying out White Hen, and that they hadn't had a problem in the neighborhood before this. He asked for a clear definition of the lighting requirements. He agrees to abide by all the other requirements in the Ordinance.

Mr. Dunkley, Zoning Administrator, said that he went to the site and agreed that there needs to be further discussion because the electricity is on the same circuit as Blockbuster so Blockbuster will be affected, there will be no identifying signage after 9:00 p.m. if the sign on Central Street as well as above the store is turned off, and the fluorescent lights under the eave across the front of the building are necessary for security cameras. He suggested a continuance of the case while he arranges for a direct, primary contact from 7-Eleven and a discussion to clarify the details of the lighting requirements.

Ald. Moran asked for the clarification of the conditions in writing by 7-Eleven to be presented at the next P&D meeting.

Mr. Cox noted that this item was introduced at Council and can only be held for one meeting. The ordinance will have to be withdrawn or tabled if it is not voted upon at the next meeting.

Chair Wollin thanked Mr. Romanello for coming to the meeting.

The Committee voted 8-0 to hold the item in Committee until the October 13, 2008 meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

(PD1) Memorandum Regarding Appraisal Practices of the City's Housing Programs

Ald. Rainey explained that the request for appraisal practices came about from the fact that numerous appraisal charges appeared on a recent bills list. She also asked whether the appraisal charges were folded into the loans.

Mr. Jeff Murphy, Assistant Director for Property Standards, stated that all of the fees for the loans, including appraisal charges are currently being paid by CDBG funds, but that he is considering changing this trend. The appraisal done by the first lien holder is often 10 to 15 years old and it is very important to get a current, accurate appraisal of the property. If we are in 3rd position, it cannot exceed 80% of the appraised value; if we are in 2nd position, it cannot exceed 95%. The appraised value plus other criteria determine whether the loan will be dispersed.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste asked the interest rate, to which Mr. Murphy replied, it is 0%.

Ald. Rainey suggested that the CDBG Committee should make a recommendation to City Council to roll the appraisal fee into the loan rather than have it funded by CDBG funds. The Committee agreed.

(PD2) Downtown Plan Update

Chair Wollin explained that the September Plan Commission meeting was cancelled and the next Plan Commission meeting is on October 15th, 2008. The next P&D meeting after that is on October 27, 2008.

Mr. James Woods, Chair of the Plan Commission, stated that he will present a draft memo reflecting the changes that have been made since the review of the Downtown Plan began, and assured the P&D Committee that the Plan Commission will vote on the Downtown Plan at the October 15th, 2008 Plan Commission meeting.

Chair Wollin pointed out that three big issues have been on the Plan Commission's agenda for over a year: the Downtown Plan, the Chicago Avenue Plan and the West Side Plan, and urged the Plan Commission to move forward.

Mr. Woods assured the Committee that the Plan Commission is ready to move forward on the Downtown and West Side Plans.

Chair Wollin thanked Mr. Woods for coming to the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bobbie Newman