Planning & Development Committee  
Minutes of January 9, 2006  
Room 2200 – 6:30 p.m.  
Evanston Civic Center

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

Alderman Absent:  M. Wynne


Presiding Official:  Alderman Rainey

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Rainey called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. The meeting was moved from Room 2200 to the Council Chambers due to the large crowd in attendance.

APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 12, 2005 MEETING MINUTES

Ald. Holmes moved approval of the December 12, 2005 minutes, seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Ordinance 139-O-05 – Amending the Affordable Housing Demolition Tax Ordinance
Chair Rainey stated that information was forwarded this evening from staff that there is a problem with some wording in the ordinance that needs to be added to reflect the three year prior that a homeowner must have lived in the property before demolition and must live three years after reconstruction of the new house in order for the demolition tax to be waived. Ms. Szymanski assured that this amendment to the ordinance would be ready for the January 23rd meeting.  Ald. Moran motioned that this item be deferred until that date, seconded by Ald. Bernstein. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

Mr. Wolinski informed the Committee that the original demolition tax that was approved in December and is currently in effect. The Community Development Building Division has already collected from one tear down job so far.

(P2) Ordinance 5-O-06 – Planned Development – Mather Lifeways, 1615 Hinman Avenue/422 Davis Street
The P&D Committee acknowledged the Suggested Rules of Procedure for the Planning and Development Committee of the City Council for the Mather Hearing.  Ald. Moran
motioned to accept the suggested rules of procedure, seconded by Ald. Tisdahl. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

THIS ITEM WAS TRANSCRIBED BY COURT REPORTER LAURA BERNAR, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE KLAEREN RULES. THEREFORE DETAILED MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE WITHIN THE TRANSCRIPT. A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION THAT TOOK PLACE FOLLOWS IN THE MINUTES PROVIDED.

Chair Rainey requested to all that are signed up to speak to not repeat any testimony already given in the past transcript which has already been accepted into the record. She explained the order of the hearing would begin with the applicant’s presentation, followed by the Mather Neighbors opposition argument and presentation.

Mr. David Reifman of Piper Rudnick Gray Cary, stated that he is representing the petitioner/applicant, Mather Lifeways. He gave chronological information on the organization up to its current status and occupancy rate. Mr. Reifman continued his presentation using a slide overview showing multiple renderings of the current buildings as well as drawings of the proposed project. He brought a representative from KLOA who conducted a traffic study which concluded that no added adverse effect would emulate from vehicles generated from the proposed project and new parking facilities. In fact, the proposed addition of underground parking would actually result in a positive impact on the overall parking situation in the immediate area in view of the fact that the majority of the residential buildings within the two blocks do not provide the required number of parking spaces in compliance with the current zoning regulations.

Mr. Reifman did a synopsis of the requested zoning relief for the proposed project. He pointed out that with all the zoning relief requested, it would make very little, if any, negative impact on the immediate area or neighboring residential community. He reviewed the key objectives raised by the neighbors in opposition, first of all the request to build-by-right of the R6 regulations. He pointed out the comparisons of the proposed buildings versus the R6 regulations and that if the project were built as-of-right, the resulting building structure would have a negative effect on the surrounding buildings. He said that the proposed design would actually relieve some of the current conditions that have a harmful effect on the adjoining buildings and residential area. Mr. Reifman went over the benefits of having the proposed underground parking facility and pointed out that the Comprehensive Plan addresses the issue of providing more concealed parking to relieve some of the parking dilemmas that currently exist throughout Evanston. Mr. Reifman gave his closing comments and assured that the Mather Lifeways Foundation has no desire to leave Evanston, however the existing facilities are inadequate and are in serious need of rehabilitation. He reminded that many of the residents that live in the facilities are lifelong residents of Evanston or the surrounding community and still have family and friends that live here. He noted that the adjoining Waterford Building has 18 of their resident owners that actually support this project.
Chair Rainey gave a 10 minute break before hearing the opponents/Mather Neighbors Group comments.

Ms. Jill Wortman, 411 Grove, opened comments in representation of the Mather Neighbors Group. She clarified that the majority of the group is not in opposition of rehabilitation construction to the Mather and genuinely support the project in principal. However they would like to see this project built within the as-of-right building envelope for the site and consideration given to the adjoining residential district and Hinman Avenue neighborhood that surrounds the Mather buildings that would be immediately affected by the proposed new construction. Ms. Wortman read from a prepared statement and then turned the presentation over to Mr. Reynolds.

Mr. David Reynolds, 204 Davis, gave a presentation on behalf of the Mather Neighbors Group. He presented and reviewed their key points of concern to the Committee. In summary, the concerns consisted of building within the requirements for the R6 zoning and concern for the adjoining R1 residential zoning district that is immediately affected by any development on Hinman. He continued with concerns for the context of the surrounding neighborhood, open space concerns according to the ordinance definition, the adjoining Lot #6 next to the Homestead building directly north and the lose of valuable open space for the Hinman Avenue Streetscape in that area, the result of urban canyonism effect. Mr. Reynolds also stated concern for the downtown development influence creeping up on the Hinman Avenue neighborhood and overtaking the current ambience that exists in this area. He stressed the very specific zoning requirements for R6 abutting directly adjacent to one of the lowest R1 districts within the same block. This is a concern that he urged the Committee to take into consideration. Mr. Reynolds gave his arguments on the proposed parking garage and some of the negative impacts it will have on Hinman Avenue. He also made several points of concern on the public benefits claimed by the applicant for this proposed project. Mr. Reynolds made a strong argument regarding the Mather Lifeways Foundation not providing a financial projective study on the economic viability of the project. He feels that precedence was set with Three Crowns Park that did supply such a report and study before the P&D Committee and Council and that the Mather should be required to provide the same information as well.

Mr. Ross Link, 2306 Orrington, gave comments in support of the businesses within the Mather Neighborhood Group. His business is Marketing Analytical located on the 10th floor of the 500 Davis Building. He noted that he along with members of the American Massage Therapy Association located on the 9th floor attended many meetings regarding this matter. Both companies have spent millions of dollars on relocating to the 500 Davis Building and decorating their offices, which will now be negatively effected by the Mather project. He stated that he is in favor of rehabbing the Mather buildings but within the R6 zoning envelope with no further additions to the current height or mass as the buildings exist today.

This concludes comments from the Mather Neighbors Group.
With no further time remaining, Chair Rainey stated that the Committee deliberations will begin first at the next regularly scheduled P&D Committee meeting on January 23rd. The Committee members concurred. **This item was held in Committee until January 23, 2006.**

(P3) Resolution 3-PR-06 – Manual of Design Guidelines
This item will be moved to the January 23, 2006 agenda.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee