MINUTES
EVANSTON PLAN COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 14, 2004 / 7:00 p.m.
Evanston Civic Center
City Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT Douglas Doetsch, Albert Hunter, Steve Knutson, Larry Raffel, Alice Rebechini, Lawrence Widmayer

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS PRESENT Richard Cook, Steve Samson,

MEMBERS ABSENT Sharon Bowie, John Lyman, Kenneth Rodgers,

STAFF PRESENT: Arthur Alterson, Dennis Marino, Mary Baaske

I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
Lawrence Widmayer, Chair noted a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

II. CONTINUATION OF PROPOSED PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND UNIQUE USE ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT PUBLIC HEARING
An application by Asbury Ridge, LLC, property owner, for a Unique Use and a Planned Development as a form of special use permit including such development allowances, exceptions to development allowances, and other relief as may be necessary to allow redevelopment of an area within the RI Single Family Residential District. The applicant requests that the City grant a unique use and planned development on the above-mentioned property to allow for its redevelopment. The project includes the renovation of the existing mansion and coach house to create six condominium units and the addition of eleven townhouses.

James Murray, attorney for Asbury Ridge, LLC, summarized what has occurred since he was last before the Commission. He said there have been several meetings/discussions and reaching out to the community through the offices of Ald. Bernstein as a means to achieve a conciliatory pathway that would permit the project and development of this project to go forward. While not meeting the goals of all the people involved, including the City, the residents and the developer, there would at least be an understanding where all parties could say there was an achievement of an understanding and result.

Mr. Murray said that as a result of those interchanges, a new plan was presented to the Zoning Department, a revised site plan that varied from the original site plan. The revised site plan calls for 7 single-family lots, with the mansion and coach house being divided into condominiums. He said the 7 lots meet the area requirements of the R1 district. An application has also been filed with the Preservation Commission for the review of subdivision plans.
In response to a question from Steve Knutson, Mr. Murray replied that the option of building homes on the 7 lots or just selling the lots and letting the buyer of those lots build the homes are both options opened to Mr. Niazmand. Mr. Niazmand said that he was aware that any new home that would be built would have to be approved by the Preservation Commission.

Chair Widmayer asked what was being asked of the Plan Commission tonight. Mr. Murray said that the Plan Commission could conclude this evening on a vote of the Commission that the unique use was applicable as a resource to the developer of this property as a means by which to preserve the two existing designated landmarks on the site.

Chair Widmayer and Mr. Murray discussed the multi family use and unique use aspects of the zoning ordinance as it pertained to 1314 Ridge.

Member Doetsch moved that in light of the large size of the Asbury/Ridge parcel, the historic significance of the Dryden Mansion, the physical deterioration of the Dryden Mansion under the ownership of District 65, the prominence of the location and the interest of the City in preserving the Dryden Mansion, that the “Unique Use” zoning designation be available to the Asbury/Ridge Development to permit the Dryden Mansion to be subdivided into no more than four residential units subject to: 1. The developer submitting a revised complete application of the development of the entire parcel to the Plan Commission and all other applicable authorities and subsequent receipt of all applicable approvals from the Plan Commission and all other applicable authorities. 2. Receipt from the City Law Department of an opinion that the Plan Commission has not exceeded its jurisdiction in so applying the unique use zoning designation. Motion seconded by Member Knutson. Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

Proposed Planned Development And Unique Use Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Public Hearing was continued to the next regularly scheduled meeting in February, 2004 of the Plan Commission.

A verbatim transcript of the proceedings of this Plan Commission case is on file with the Evanston Zoning Division. The Zoning Division is located in Room 3700 of the Evanston Civic Center.

III. CONTINUATION OF PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT PUBLIC HEARING ZPC 03-09-M&T
of the City presently within the B3 District in the vicinity of Main and Sherman and/or to remap all or parts of the following indicated area from the B3 Business District into the B2 Business District or the C1a Commercial Mix Use District or other appropriate zoning district, or to apply the oRD Redevelopment Overlay District or other appropriate overlay district.

The properties that are the subject of this Plan Commission hearing comprise, more or less:
- all properties a portion of which abuts Main Street east of the Union Pacific right of way and west of Hinman; and
- all properties a portion of which abuts Chicago Avenue from a point approximately 200 feet south of the center line of Main Street to a point approximately 200 feet north of the center line of Main Street.

These properties, which include all intervening rights of way, are identified by the following street addresses:
- all Main Street addresses from 500 Main through 603 Main;
- all Chicago Avenue addresses from 933 Chicago to 835 Chicago; and all even numbered Hinman Avenue addresses from 904 Hinman to 860 Hinman

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Chair Widmayer swore in all those wishing to speak at the meeting tonight. He then called members of the audience that wanted to speak about this development. The following members of the public spoke regarding this proposed zoning ordinance text amendment:

Doug Geyer, 811 Chicago Avenue
Maureen Glasoe, 901 Hinman
Hans Vija, 811 Chicago Avenue
Debbie Hillman, 1118 Sherman
Judy Freeman, 937 Sherman
Katherine Saccany, 926 Judson
Justine Cho, 515 Main
Gerald Gordon, 1228 Lake Street

The public testimony reflected the following concerns: traffic conditions regarding Chicago and Main and Chicago and Dempster; copies of an overlay district were distributed detailing how some neighbors would like to see this area developed. Speakers also commented on the following: the sidewalks were too narrow; they encouraged the Plan Commission to down zone this area; there are areas that would always be in shade; impact of growth including environmental impact; overcrowding; and one was against mast arm traffic lights currently being planned for Chicago Avenue.
Chair Widmayer said that while the Commission is receiving individual traffic analysis, what is needed is a comprehensive traffic study in the Chicago Avenue Corridor. Dennis Marino said that he would follow up on this with David Jennings, Public Works Director.

In response to a question regarding the status of the proposed signalization project for Chicago Avenue, Dennis Marino said that he would speak to David Jennings and report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Member Knutson read a statement that John Lyman (Mr. Lyman was Chair of the Neighborhood Committee for the Chicago Avenue Study) made at the last Plan Commission meeting knowing that he would not be attending the meeting tonight. The statement included the following about the downzoning reference for the Southeast Main/Chicago B-3. “… the comment I would make besides the fact that I think it is zoned properly and that it is zoned to reflect what ought to be taking place … the biggest concern for this Commission ought to be the policy of agreeing to a zoning change about two years ago and in less than two years deciding that your going to change the zoning again. I think that is bad public policy. I think that zoning changes should hang in there for eight to ten years.”

Member Knutson said that heavy dense development within less than ½ block of two rail stations is absolutely good public policy and planning. He said he was not in favor of revisiting this zoning at all.

Commission members discussed the pros and cons of building to lot line, the desirability of open space, larger sidewalks, and pedestrian friendly communities. Agreeing with a statement from an audience member, Chair Widmayer said that according to a study taken of multiple family housing in Evanston in 1998 it was found that even if people used public transportation Monday through Friday to get downtown, they still had two cars.

Chair Widmayer referred this to the Zoning Committee on the overlay and the overall reference. A member of the audience asked for an explanation on the overlay. Chair Widmayer replied that as it is conceived at the moment, the underlying zoning would give it some definition to what is allowed on the property. But everything that is done in one of these districts has to come as a planned development. Member Knutson said that with a planned development the general spirit or requirements of the zoning is in place, but there is a give and take.

Commission members continued this matter until the next regularly scheduled Plan Commission meeting.
IV. PROPOSED PLANNED DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING

ZPC 04-01 PD 413-421 Howard

An application by Bristol Chicago Development, LLC by William Patrun, associate for a Planned Development. The applicant is the contract purchaser of the property commonly known as 412-421 Howard located in the B3, Business District. The applicant requests that the City grant a planned development as a form of special use including such development allowances, exceptions to development allowances and other relief as may be necessary to provide the applicant with the zoning relief necessary to allow the redevelopment of 412-421 Howard and the 16 foot alley north of and abutting that property for multi-family residential.

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Arthur Alterson, Zoning Administrator read the proposed planned development into the record. Jack Lawler, attorney for the applicant, introduced Bill Walsh and William Patrun. Mr. Lawler stated that the applicant proposes to construct a high quality multi-family residential facility on this subject property which would be an attractive gateway to Evanston. This site is within the Clark Street and Howard Street proposed TIF, which is currently under consideration by the Evanston City Council after an extended planning effort. He introduced architect Jim Curtin of the the Soloman, Cordwell, Buenz & Assoc., Inc. Architectural firm, Mr. Don O’Hare of the KLOA traffic consulting firm and appraiser John Yaeger of the Appraisal Research Counselors Ltd.

Mr. Lawler said that at the December 7, 2003 SPAARC meeting, a motion was granted to give concept approval, and today SPAARC granted preliminary approval for both the site plan and the project’s appearance. He said that the property being purchased is 413 Howard, the site under contract is approximately 397’ by 85’ containing approximately 25,271 feet altogether. He distributed a copy of a map showing the alley adjacent to the property. He said the project contemplates a vacation of approximately 281’ by 16’ alley. In order to continue alley service to the property owners east of the site the project is dedicating a 15’ alley to the City from the private sector real estate the applicant has under contract.

In vacating the alley the site of the development becomes 281’ wide with a depth of 101’ containing 28,400 feet altogether. He explained that the CTA’s rail yard is to the north which is in a general industrial district, immediately to the east are two and three story mixed-use residential and commercial buildings typical arterial buildings along the north side of Howard Street extending to the El station, to the south of the site lies the CTA’s Howard Street Station, a new parking facility, the Gateway shopping center and a six story building at the intersection of Howard and Chicago that is being converted to condominiums.
There is an auto repair shop and a book shop west of the proposed development. The goal of this development is to provide a southern gateway to Evanston and put more people on the street to supplement the redevelopment that is already occurring. Mr. Lawler then placed the public notice published in the Evanston Review on December 24, 2003 into the record as Exhibit 1, the mailed notice issued by the City of Evanston per the requirements of the ordinance as Exhibit 2, their application as Exhibit 3, the plat of dedication and vacation that explains the alley system as Exhibit 4, and Jim Curtin’s resume as Exhibit 5.

Jim Curtin gave a presentation of the buildings design. He explained the streetscape planned for the development included trees, pavers and planters. Mr. Curtin presented the plan for parking for the development, there will be 245 parking spaces including 7 handicapped spaces. The building will be 17 stories and have 221 units. He gave the general layout of the apartments that will be in the building, including the fact that most apartments will have a balcony. There will be one and two bedroom apartments as well as some studio apartments. The presentation included the materials that will be used on the façade of the building.

There followed a question and answer period between the developers and the Plan Commission members. One member had concerns regarding the lack of retail on the first floor, one felt the building is too tall. Another member suggested that retail might not be desirable.

Michael Land, stated he serves on the staff of Chicago Alderman Joe Moore. He said that Ald. Moore regrets he could not attend tonight’s meeting due to a previous engagement. However, he wanted it known that he views this proposal with a great deal of interest.

Chair Widmayer stated that this hearing would be continued to the next regularly scheduled Plan Commission meeting of February 11, 2003.

A Zoning Committee hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 27 at 8:00 a.m.

V. COMMITTEE UPDATES AND REPORTS

- Neighborhood Planning Committee
  Member Hunter reported that the Committee is hoping to have a report to Plan Commission at its March meeting.
Economic Development Committee
No report

Planning and Development Committee
Chair Widmayer said that P&D would have a special meeting on January 20, at 7:30 p.m. to go over the bulk standards. They also will meet from 6:00 p.m to 7:30 p.m. to discuss Kendall College on that same date.

VI. ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business before the Commission, it adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Baaske
Planning Division